



November 2012 Edition

Quote

The Upanishads say that the human is a spark of Divine Love, encased in five sheaths: the Anna (Gross, material, food component), the Praana (vital air, breath), the Mana (the mental, emotional, volitional), the Vijnaana (rational, discriminatory intellectual) and the Aanandha (blissful, equanimous, balance). It is the fragrance of that Love that emanates from him as love towards things, beings and ideas. That Love is ever urging and surging for expression, enlargement and enclaspings. But the tangles of fear, greed, egoism and aggrandizement do not allow the spark to grow and illumine the sheaths as well as the world around. This day is the Festival of Light; that is to say, of Love. Knowledge too is praised as light, but it is often a clouding fog, a weapon of offence, a burden on the head, a drag on the hand of charity, a shackle on the feet. It ripens into a liberator only when it is earned through love and put into practice through love. Love alone gives Light.

~ Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba

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Editorial

Dear Love and Light Readers
Jai Sai Ram

October will stay as a memorable month for the many devotees who were blessed and fortunate to embark on 'Sai Jyothi', their Pilgrimage to the Divine Light, the abode from where Bhagawan continues to shower His boundless Blessings and Grace. Whilst basking in the joy of being in the Divine presence, one is wonder struck with amazement, respect, humility and veneration since everything one witnesses around in Prasanthi Nilayam involved His personal and direct Hand at some point, an expression of His Will.

The pilgrims were abundantly rewarded with gems of experiences from the many long standing and ardent devotees of Bhagawan. A visit to Brindavan, near Whitefield was indeed icing on the cake for the many. This sacred place emanates fragrance of His Divine Presence and remains another of Bhagawan's abode for posterity. Its uniqueness is beyond description since every fragment of this place embodies a story of Divine Glory, one that caught everyone's attention was the cricket pitch where Swami had hit 6 sixes! One would fail not to mention Sai Ramesh Hall which brought back many wonderful memories, and the 'Kalyana Mandapam', not to forget the highlight of the whole tour, namely an opportunity to sit in the sanctum sanctorum and sing His Glory, the most sacred of places where Bhagawan used to seat amidst students and chosen devotees when He used to visit Brindavan. The culmination of the pilgrimage was the UK devotees offering of their Love by way of performances in Sai Kulwant Hall.

Those who stayed back were blessed to participate in Dasara (Navaratri) festival, focusing their minds on our Divine Mother. The youth were doubly blessed to take part in Grama Seva, service to the villages which involved visiting villages and serving up to 50,000 people every day, for 9 days, an activity which was very close to Bhagawan.

The month of November made its debut with the All Saints' Day, the Christian Holy Day.

For Sai Devotees, November 10/11 are important dates when devotees globally will be singing the glory of God's name 'Akhand Bhajans' in their places and countries and in their own time. Please check your nearest centre to take advantage of this opportunity.

With the pilgrims all back, I pray the Divine Light of our Beloved Bhagawan that they have brought back lights up the homes of all Devotees to culminate in the Diwali Festivities, the Festival of Light on November 13th. May it sanctify and bestow happiness and prosperity to all our Devotees from the Hindu community and bring everyone closer to Bhagawan.

November 19th is 'Ladies Day' dedicated to Ladies.

Finally, we will be celebrating the 87th Year of Advent of our Divine Master, Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba. The special birthday programme will take place on Saturday, 24th November 2012 (11-5pm) in Leicester.

I am also very happy to announce that Dr Samuel Sandweiss, along with his wife Sharon, will be our guest speakers on this special day. Dr. Sandweiss needs hardly any introduction to the Sai family worldwide. As an ardent devotee for over 40 years, Dr Sandweiss has a wealth of experiences and insights that Bhagawan has so graciously granted him on numerous occasions. He is an eminent Psychiatrist who authored many wonderful books on Bhagawan Baba, such as 'The Holy Man and the psychiatrist', Spirit and Mind, 'With Love, Man is God', to name a few. The day would also include prayers, cultural programme and the traditional Jhoola Ceremony. Please ensure you register to avoid disappointment:

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

As last year, we will also be celebrating National Christmas Celebrations. This is planned for 16th December (11-4pm) in Cheltenham and we welcome everyone. Please ensure you register to avoid disappointment:

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

Finally, 2013 is looking like a fantastic year for the UK. Please be sure to make a note in your diaries for next years national events.

Sai Smaran Bhajans - Saturday 12th January

National Orientation & Welcome Day - 2 day conference 19th and 20th Jan for all current and previous office bearers and active members

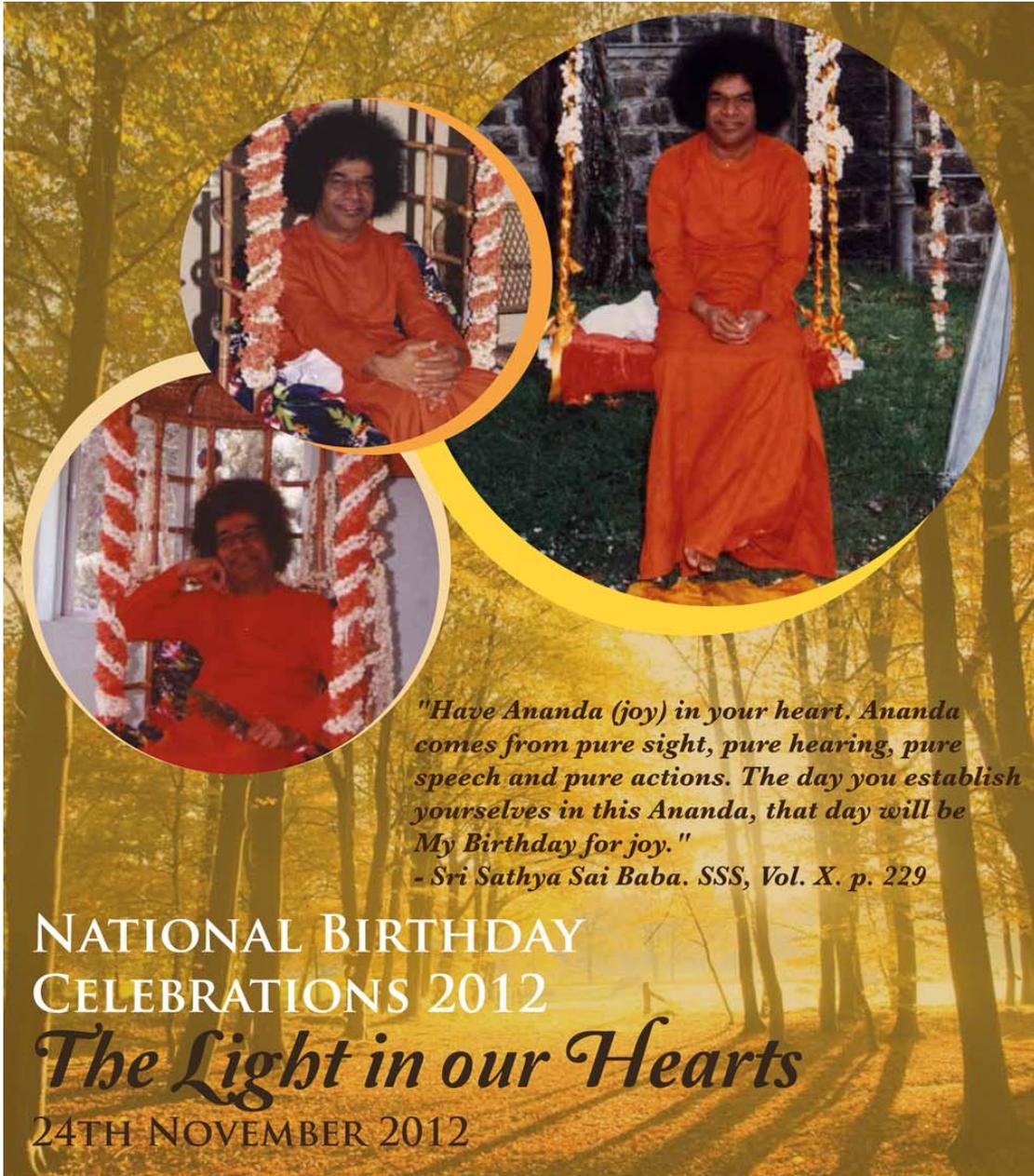
National Youth Conference 22nd - 24th February

National Sai Remembrance Day - Saturday 27th April

National Eswaramma Day - Saturday 4th May.

Details and registration for all these events will follow shortly.

Dr Kiran Patel,
National Chair Person.



"Have Ananda (joy) in your heart. Ananda comes from pure sight, pure hearing, pure speech and pure actions. The day you establish yourselves in this Ananda, that day will be My Birthday for joy."
- Sri Sathya Sai Baba. SSS, Vol. X. p. 229

NATIONAL BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS 2012

The Light in our Hearts

24TH NOVEMBER 2012

Programme will include guest speaker - Dr Samuel Sandweiss, jhoola ceremony and cultural programme

Programme 11.00am-5.00pm
Maher Centre
15 Ravensbridge Drive
Leicester
LE4 0BZ

Please register at:
<http://www.srisathyasai.org.uk/national-programmes/>

For more information please contact:
Mukundbhai Patel on 07803 372633
or Ketan Gokani on 07846 334536



National Christmas Celebrations 2012

Sri Sathya Sai Service Organisation, UK



Sunday 16th December, 11.00am - 4.00pm

Cheltenham Ladies' College, Bayshill Road, Cheltenham, GL50 3EP

Please Register at: www.srisathyasai.org.uk/national-programmes

For more information please contact: Mukundbhai Patel on 07803 372633 or Kumi Pillay on 07966 284872

Bhagwans Birthday: A festival of love

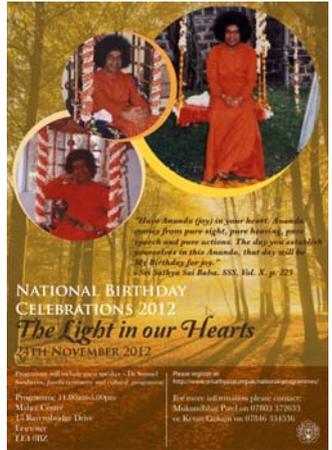
Aum Sri Sai Ram

On 23rd November 1926, the great saint Aurobindo came out of his meditation and ran around in his ashram proclaiming ecstatically that Krishna consciousness has descended on earth. He was thrilled that the very embodiment of truth, goodness, and beauty has come to be in the midst of humanity as Bhagwan Sri Sathya Sai Baba to guide, guard, love, and lead all.

The Sai family celebrates this glorious occasion every year with great joy and splendor. People from all walks of life and from all corners of the world come to Prashanti Nilayam to be with Bhagwan and bask in His infinite love. Prashanti Nilayam embraces millions of devotees in days leading to this joyous occasion, whole hearts pulsate with His name and eyes thirst for a glimpse of His sweet form. On the birthday, as chirping birds sing a heavenly birthday melody and the cool early morning breeze tries to soothe the hearts of the teeming millions who eagerly await the arrival of Bhagwan, like a brilliant sun, magnificent and blissful, Bhagwan emerges gently from His residence to a thunderous applause from His devotees. A procession of vedic chanters, His beloved Geeta, musicians, institute brass band, and colorful children brings Him closer to His devotees who relish the great good fortune of getting a glimpse of Bhagwan. Benevolently blessing, with a beautiful smile, Bhagwan appears to give vishwa rupa darshan to everyone with the sahasra sheersha purushaha relishing the beauty of His own sweet form.

As Bhagwan takes His place at the center of this universe, the rapturous crowd tries to quench its thirst by getting His darshan. After a few moments, Bhagwan delivers His divine birthday discourse. In the discourse he reveals another master plan of selfless service to society for hundreds of years to come. Looking at the vast sea of humanity in front of Him, He affirms that it is His love that has invited everyone to come. The flood of His infinite love brings tears of joy to many eyes. Bhagwan reminds that birthday is for the body alone but He is the timeless indwelling spirit that resides in every heart that has no birth and no death. He declares that His real birthday is when we discover Him in our hearts. After the discourse, He signs a bhajan in His nectarine voice and the assembled humanity joins in chorus. Heaven seems to rejoice at this sight of supreme love between the lord and his devotees. Bhagwan cuts the birthday cakes prepared by His students and staff working at His institutions. He blesses everyone with His abhayahasta and the grand procession takes Him to His residence.

In the evening, Bhagwan entralls His devotees by His presence at the cultural programs presented by eminent musicians from around the world. Fireworks lit up the sky in jubilation and the devotees pour their heartfelt gratitude for blessing them with the bliss of His proximity. As aarathi is given to Bhagwan, every heart wishes that this day and this divine romance with never ended.



Eduction Wing - My Swami and I: Poem I

I am extremely lucky to know Swami and He has helped me in many ways. For example, when I was waiting to take my piano exam, I prayed to Swami earnestly and He helped me throughout the exam. Sometimes I even have dreams about Him.

When Swami left His physical form, I felt very sad as I never got the opportunity to see Him in that form. But now I have realised that He is always there as He is omnipresent and He will help me all through my life and will never give up on me. I see Him within myself, my parents, my brother and my friends as He is within each and every one of us.

I love you Swami with all my heart and will always love you.

Janani Mohan
SSE Student
Region 8

Eduction Wing - My Swami and I: Poem II

As I sit there,
In that brightly lit hall-
Waiting for Him to come-
I feel the peace and love...

Suddenly the hall is silent
As He enters,
Blessing all that He sees,
Loving all that He sees.

His feet glide across the cool marble floor,
While His hands rise up to bless all those who come.
His lips curl into a beautiful smile,
While His eyes sparkle in joy.

For once my mind doesn't wander
And I feel His presence.
So pure is His love that even at the back of the hall
I can feel His love.

He glides round the hall
Collecting letters and notes from devotees
from around the globe,
Until He finally sits in His chair and the bhajans begin.

That's when I realise that the connection really is 'heart 2 heart'
Because I feel His love
And I think I feel bliss.

By Priyanka Ram
SSE Student
Region 8

Journey to the Divine Light

The much anticipated pilgrimage 'Sai Jyothi' became a reality as the U.K devotees queued excitedly in front of N7 in the divine and serene surroundings of Prashanti Nilayam on the glorious morning of 7th October 2012. From the moment we stepped into the portals of our spiritual birthplace, our Divine Mother's home, it was a home-coming that will remain forever etched in our hearts.

Sunday 7th October 2012

Whilst the first day being a Sunday saw the magnificent Kulwant Hall swell and reverberate with the chants of the vedam by Bhagavan's children from His institutions, our group was very fortunate to be seated facing the Maha Samadhi to witness the gentle opening of the curtains at 8 a.m. for what was our very first darshan of our Lord.

As bhajans and arathi concluded the morning session and with the sweet form of our Beloved Bhagavan imprinted in our hearts, we dispersed to sort out our mundane tasks only to re-assemble at 10:30 am at the Double Decker building for our first official group meeting in Prashanti Nilayam.

Our Chairperson, UKCC, Dr Kiran Patel addressed the pilgrims and reminded each one of us of the good fortune we had been bestowed with by our Lord in allowing us to be part of His Divine Mission and the opportunity we were fortunate to be bestowed with to serve our fellow brethren wherever we were and in a manner that would please our Swami.

This was followed by a quick over-view of the programme proposed for the duration of the stay in Prashanti Nilayam. From 6th evening onwards the darshan sessions at Kulwant Hall for the remainder of our stay were very precious times that every pilgrim utilised to pray, chant, sing, introspect and strengthen their Sadhana whilst seated in the Divine presence.

Our first guest speaker Sri Sudhir Bhaskar shared his beautiful experiences with Bhagavan and enthralled us with some of his stories relating to the Grama Seva that Bhagavan initiated in the year 2000 for the students of His institutions. The session having concluded as it was past 9 pm, briefly vetted our appetite listening to His glory.

Monday 8th October 2012

The heavens opened in the early hours of Monday morning which meant that we could not sit inside the Mandir for Omkar and Suprabhatam. Of, course this was in no way a deterrent to our group members and in a short space of time the U.K. office in N7 was reverberating with the sound of Om. Our group was most privileged to have been given the permission to sit inside the Mandir for Omkar for our entire stay.

Keeping with the darshan schedules in Kulwant Hall, Monday morning also saw the start of our first formal practice in the Double Decker building of the medley of English songs we were hoping and praying we would be permitted to offer as a token of our gratitude and love at the Bhagavan's Lotus Feet.

Nadia Eley, Region 6 Chair, UKCC ably and most humbly played the role of the choir mistress and kept the motivation and spirits up of the pilgrims during all the practices.

Our next guest speaker after dinner was the esteemed Sri Rangarajan, Faculty, SSSIHL, Prashanti Nilayam campus. His

heartfelt and inspirational talk transported us to the immediate presence of Bhagavan.

Tuesday 9th October 2012

Today was another wet morning; however, the pilgrims braved the downpour and enjoyed the divine ambience of the Mandir during the Omkar and Suprabhatam. They were also able to participate in the Nagarsankirtan offering their obeisance to Lord Ganesha at the start and end of the Nagarsankirtan.

Very quickly the skies cleared and a warm sun shone on Kulwant Hall as if waiting with the rest of the devotees gathered there to catch the first glimpse of the Lord.

This morning's speaker was someone everyone was looking forward to meeting and listening to. He was someone who was blessed to have been born in the same family as our Lord. He was Sri Ratnakar, son of Sri Janakiramaiah, brother to the physical body of our Lord. Sri Ratnakar also serves as a member of the Sri Sathya Sai Central Trust, Prashanti Nilayam. Sri Ratnakar spoke at length on his personal experiences with Bhagavan. There was an opportunity to ask him questions which he patiently answered and shared more of his personal experiences with Bhagavan.

The evening darshan in Kulwant Hall began at 4 pm sharp to the divine chants of the Rudram. Following a scintillating bhajan session, the Maha-Samadhi darshan began with the Sai Gayatri being chanted devoutly by all those assembled.

Our post dinner session was another magical evening spent listening to faculty members from the SSSIHL, Prashanti Nilayam campus sharing their own journeys to His Divine Lotus Feet.

As the day drew to a close, there was an air of excitement and anticipation amongst the group as the next morning we were embarking on another journey, a journey from the Lord's Office, Prashanti Nilayam to the Lord's Home, Brindavan in the bustling suburb of Bangalore.

Wednesday 10th October 2012

After a quick bite to eat, 7:30 am was the departure time for our road trip to Brindavan. A very comfortable coach and an 8 seater transported a very excited group of our U.K. devotees to the sublime Home of Our Lord. The singing enthusiasts grabbed the opportunity to practice the medley of songs.

We arrived at the Gokulam residences situated opposite the SSSIHL, Brindavan around 10 am to a very warm and loving welcome party of Bhagavan's instruments who had meticulously planned every minute of our stay in Brindavan.

We stepped off the coach, only to be ushered into the canteen for another hearty breakfast and a fine cup of tea! Rooms were quickly allocated and after a quick freshening up, the journey to the divine abode began.

Swami's eye for detail and perfection in whatever He undertook was very evident in the way all the needs of the devotees in our group were being met by his devoted and loving instruments assigned to take care of us. Two cars were at our disposal and the two brothers whose cars they were stayed with us throughout our stay that day and ferried our elderly and infirmed members to and fro from the various venues.

The first stop was the Sai Ramesh Hall, the holy ground that held the footsteps of the Lord as he walked amongst his devotees. We were able to sit quietly and enjoy the serenity and peace that permeated through the hall. Sri Sanjay Sahni, Director, SSSIHL, Brindavan campus took us through the history of Brindavan and regaled us with stories of the Lord in His Home. What happened next was a complete surprise to the group and a joyous one at that! We were all taken into the outer precinct of Trayee Brindavan, the Lord's residence. The group circumambulated Trayee, absolutely awe-struck and so ecstatic at this once in a life time opportunity.

The Gokulam, nestling behind Trayee, home to Swami's cows was also visited. The guest house built for Bhagavan's guests and often visited by the Lord Himself was also seen. All along the way, Sri Sanjay Sahni provided us beautiful insights and stories of Bhagavan which drove home so many invaluable and important messages.

The Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Learning, Brindavan campus was our next port of call. This campus was visited many a time by our Lord and many glorious hours were spent with His Students here. The Summer Courses also referred to as the Summer Showers in Brindavan were held here under the direct guidance of Bhagavan.

A video presentation was shown to us on the silent transformation that Bhagavan brings about in His students where by they translate the Lord's message of 'Maanava Seva is Madhava Seva' into direct action by planning and executing a programme of sustainable developments to improve the lives of the inhabitants of the nearby villages around Whitefield. These were being undertaken by the students during their university holidays, foregoing their visits to their home towns.

Our minds and hearts were filled to the brim by this time or so we thought..... Swami made sure that our stomachs were also filled to the brim with His prasadam which could be likened to a wedding feast by all accounts.

Our next two visits post lunch was the Sri Sathya Sai Institute of Higher Medical Sciences, Whitefield and the Home for

the Aged (Vrudhashram) managed by the Sri Sathya Sai Central Trust.

The visit to the super speciality hospital was an awe-inspiring experience both for the first-timer and the seasoned pilgrim. The scale, magnitude and scope of medical treatment offered absolutely free of cost in an atmosphere of love, dedication and service to the most needy was a humbling experience to say the least.

The next visit to the home of the elderly was a very moving and humbling experience as we were welcomed most warmly and lovingly by the residents who also played the perfect hosts by ensuring we were all served hot Badam milk and biscuits. We sang a few bhajans in their shrine room which Swami had visited a few years ago. We bid farewell to the delightful residents thinking to ourselves the significance of the reassurance Swami has given us when He says 'Why fear when I am Here'.

As we drove towards Brindavan for the evening bhajan session, we were in no way prepared for the wonderful treat we were in for! We hurried off the coach to be ushered into the Trayee Brindavan lawns and the next thing we knew was that we were seated in the Divine Abode at His Lotus Feet in the central circular hall of Trayee. The next two hours were spent in prayers, bhajans and listening to three very inspirational speakers from Bhagavan's institutions. They were Sri Sanjay Sahni, Director, SSSIHL, Brindavan campus, Sri Ashwin from the SSSIHMS and Sri Ravikumar, Warden and Faculty, SSSIHL, Brindavan campus. There was not a dry eye in that room that evening.

The evening ended on such a high note that we would have happily gone to bed with not a thought on dinner. Of, course Swami had other plans and another hearty supper was served with ice-cream and fruit salad to cool down the night with.

Thursday 11th October 2012

With an opportunity to participate in Omkar, Suprabhatam and Nagarsankirtan in Trayee Brindavan, we departed to Prashanti Nilayam at 7:30 am after a sumptuous breakfast in Gokulam. Bidding farewell with a sense of immense gratitude to our perfect hosts in Brindavan, we drove into the portals of Prashanti Nilayam at 10:30 am.

In the afternoon we had the good fortune of listening to Sri Chakravarthi, formerly Secretary to Prashanti Nilayam and currently Trustee, Sri Sathya Sai Central Trust. In spite of his busy schedule, Sri Chakravarthi spent a couple of hours with the group in an informal dialogue exchanging thoughts and experiences pertaining to Bhagavan, his Message and Mission.

The first of the musical offerings titled 'Sai Anandam' was rendered by sister Roopa Panesar and her fellow artists in the sublime Kulwant Hall.

The night was still young as we assembled in the Double Decker building to practice our medley. Swami, our inner motivator and source of inspiration encouraged us silently to find our hesitant voices and belt out the numbers!

The musicians continued to practice as the rest of us retired for the night. Brother Sonum Gyantso, alumnus of SSSIHL and musician offered us his whole-hearted encouragement and support for the duration of our practices.

Friday 12th October 2012

Keeping to the darshan schedule, the rest of the morning was spent in intense practice with heartfelt prayers being sent to our Lord to give us the strength and confidence to sing in His presence. Swami made sure that our strength was kept up by making sure even the Bakery made a special allowance and permitted us to get pizza slices and cakes in spite of it being well beyond their closing times!

As the time approached to be seated in our places in Kulwant Hall for the second musical offering by the U.K. devotees, there was a strange sense of calm and joy amongst us as we waited our turn.

With immense gratitude to Bhagavan the devotees poured their hearts out and the divine magic woven by our world-class musicians Sister Roopa and her fellow artists rendered our humble offering a small place at His Divine Lotus Feet.

The first phase of the pilgrimage drew to a close that evening when we all met in the Double Decker building to recount and express our thoughts and feelings with each other and thank our Beloved Swami for the most blessed and special pilgrimage since the Maha Samadhi. The group unanimously agreed that this should become an annual event for the SSSSOUK!

National Pilgrimage: Visit to Brindavan

Sai Jyothi

Journey to the Divine Light

Brindavan, Whitefield

Each trip to Prashanti Nilyam is a spiritual adventure of mammoth proportions and the UK Pilgrimage 2012 was no exception.

Wednesday 10th October - Thursday 11th October

At 7.30am the UK group, packed and very excited left Prashanti Nilyam for an overnight stay in Brindavan. The journey through the Indian countryside seemed to take no time at all as we sung bhajans and practised our English devotional songs. On arrival at the ashram, we received a warm welcome by Sri Sanjay Sahni, Director of the Campus, and his team. For a first time visitor to Brindavan like myself, it was immediately perceptible that the atmosphere of this ashram is very different to Prashanti with less hustle and bustle of people and a wonderful sense of calm. We were informed that it was commonly considered that Prashanti was Swami's office where as Brindavan was His home which explained the difference in the energy beautifully.

Having been allocated our light and airy rooms, we were all taken for a walking tour around the complex. Despite the amount of traffic that surrounds Brindavan the venue was incredibly relaxed and peaceful. We arrived at Sai Ramesh Hall - an open Mandir (much smaller than Sai Kulwant Hall) that was cosy and very welcoming. We sat in front of the altar on a huge plush rug and soaked up the wonderful atmosphere. The energy was incredible!



The tour continued through the Sathya Sai College for Men where we could peek into the classrooms and were shown a presentation about a summer seva project organised by the students. They designed and fitted lights made from filled water bottles into the roofs of village houses and generally assisted the village in improving their living facilities in ingenious ways, as well as creating a play area for children.

A visit to the cow sheds where they lovingly look after the elderly cows once their milking life was complete was followed by a walk past the cricket pitch. Here Swami had been once encouraged by the boys, we were told, to play cricket and despite saying he didn't know how, the students suggested he could try bowling under arm. Swami promptly bowled the student out with one attempt. Not wanting Swami to leave they then asked him to bat and lo and behold Swami hit a six: Truly the ultimate cricketer! ... wish we had been there to witness that!

After lunch we visited the Super Speciality Hospital - a grand healing temple of epic proportions. Just in the entrance is a vast and beautiful hall with an immense glass chandelier hanging in the centre dome. It was so very different to hospitals in the UK! Everyone is treated there for free with tender loving care no matter what their circumstances.



We then called into Sathya Sai Home for the Aged, a home for elderly Sai devotees to meet and interact with them and share a cup of tea. We sung bhajans and were shown around their lovely residence.

On returning back to the ashram we walked through the grounds only to be directed to a building in the centre of lovely grounds. As we went through the door into a beautiful round hall we realised we had walked straight into Trayee - Swami's home!! Everyone was stunned, thrilled, shocked and in awe of this awesome opportunity - the visit had been kept a secret from us and what a lovely secret! It was a small and beautifully decorated hall with a balcony all the way round - it was easy to imagine Swami standing on the balcony keeping a loving eye over us all. We all sat in front of His chair by the figure of Lord Ganesh ... and then we all sung bhajans ... there were not many dry eyes in the house.

Swami truly spoiled us with so much love and attention. We stayed in there for two glorious hours as we listened to the experiences of two ex-Sai students- Dr Ravi Kumar who is currently the Warden of the Boys Hostel in Brindavan, and Ashwin a faculty member- who relayed their many experiences with our beloved Swami. The energy in the hall was amazing and some smelt Jasmine in the air. We were allowed Padanamaskar and touched Swami's Jhula in the next

room. None of us wanted that moment to end! We were given delicious prashad before we left ... everyone walking very slowly out of the grounds to soak up the atmosphere and extend the visit for a few moments longer.

After a sumptuous dinner at the ashram ... with birthday cake for pudding (one of the group was celebrating a very special 50th birthday) there was a video of Swami before we all collapsed for the night - it was to be an early start in the morning! As dawn approached we went back to Sai Ramesh Hall for Suprabhatham - what an incredible place to be sat listening to this beautiful prayer. We all then joined in Nagar Sankeerthan around Trayee - three times we went round ever hopeful we might see Swami looking out of His window!

Sadly this particular spiritual adventure had to come to an end. It had been an incredible and very special trip that will remain in our hearts forever. Swami, the most loving and generous host had invited us to His home, what more could we want?

Jai Sai Ram.

Jenni Robson
Region 4

Region 1 - Youth Age Link Party

Service expresses the divinity hidden in man. It broadens one's heart, it destroys narrow-mindedness, and it gives delight. The evil qualities and tendencies in us can be driven away through service. - Baba



On a slightly rainy Sunday afternoon on the 4th of November, a group of devotees from Region 1 dressed as cowboys and cowgirls in their checked shirts, boots and, of course, cowboy hats gathered at Tooting Sai Centre, Fircroft Road, who hosted this event. Volunteers arrived early to arrange tables, unpack sandwiches and brew many cups of tea and coffee. By 2pm, everything was in order and the volunteers of Region 1 excitedly anticipated the arrival of the elderly guests from all over South London, for cowboy themed afternoon filled with songs and games.

Events commenced with a sing along of 4 songs including "Amazing Grace" by Gayatriben and Serenaben of Tooting Sai Centre, who played the ukulele. This was followed by the game, "name that song" featuring the greatest artists of their time. This quickly descended into a free-for-all dance to some iconic tunes from the era of rock'n'roll, including Elvis! Following this was a beautiful violin performance by Johnbhai of Tooting Sai Centre SSE that was thoroughly appreciated by onlookers and was an inspiring sight.



Karaoke was next up, where volunteers and guests had fun singing some true classics, especially Doris Day's "Que Sera Sera". Following this, was the much loved game of Bingo, orchestrated by Fred Flintstone and Mario (Brother Andrew and Brother Saran), with many prizes being awarded to the lucky winners. Bingo was succeeded by a good, old fashioned barn dance, found to be very entertaining by both the volunteers and guests, one of whom demonstrated how a true barn dance was to be performed. A final round of karaoke wrapped up the evening's entertainment in style.

Both the guests and the volunteers enjoyed the Region 1 Youth cowboy themed Age Link Party immensely. As with all Age Link events, the exhaustion of everyone in the hall bore testament to the level of participation and enjoyment throughout the day.

Seva activities like these are golden opportunities to put into practice Bhagawan's teachings and seeing the smiles on

the faces of the guests really made all the work worthwhile. The youth of Region One will be meeting again in December to pack hampers for the homeless at Christmas time. All are welcome to join.

By Harishanan Surendran
Tooting Sai Centre
Region 1 Youth

Region 4 - Laksharchan

After a wonderful Laksharchan at the National Retreat, the Divine Light was brought to Coventry by our most beloved brother Vadgama who gave us another opportunity to chant the name of Bhagawan in such an uplifting manor. Through his unwavering faith, we received Swami's Prasadam of Divine Light once again.



The day began with the offering of Prayers and Vedam chanting. Bhajans were sung to purify the atmosphere, bringing each soul together in unison. The air was filled with the fragrance of Prashanti, with the yearning hearts of the devotees pleading to Swami to come and take the Divine seat and give us Thy blessing.

Uncle Vadgama instructed each one to the methodology of the offering and its sacred meaning, how to chant and as the power of the blessing lies in singing as One entity, not as individuals. Everyone eagerly awaited the start as our fingers emptied the rice into the given plastic trays, with Swami's Photo, a pendant and a vibhuti packet.

For the first time in my life, I felt every offering was offered to Swami from my heart, and I left it to Him to cleanse me; bless me with whatever He feels is necessary for me in my journey right now.



After every two 'malas' (rosary beads circle), uncle Vadgama encouraged us to sing bhajans. He said that Swami had instructed him in this way, saying that people get tired and lose concentration and singing bhajans is a very good way of refocusing our minds. Devotees from Rugby, Nuneaton, Birmingham, Leicester, Luton and even as far as London joined in with the singing.

After the Laksharchan offering had finished, uncle Vadgama narrated some of his treasured and closest experiences with Swami. The hall was filled with laughter and applause as he told us about his more recent experiences in London when he was visited by different forms of God, to which everyone gasped in amazement. He told us about his illness and how he was admitted to a hospital in London and through this experience, his consultant was given a book on Swami called 'Man of Miracles'. Everyone was so eager to hear more stories but it was time to take some Prasadam after Aarthi.

Aarthi was then offered and uncle Vadgama concluded the session by giving each family, a gift of 'Sri Sai Satcharitra' book along with Swami's Photos and vibhuti. Mahaprasadam was enjoyed by all as the ladies had spent not only the early hours of the morning but the day before, preparing the food with so much love.

Over 250 people had attended the event and what I saw on their faces was a feeling of gratitude, love and reverence for our beloved Lord Bhagawan Baba. They had received their Prasadam.

For me, I felt my batteries had recharged, I was full spiritually and I could continue my life with extra exuberance, confidence and a feeling of 'inner' happiness that had left when Swami took Maha Samadhi. Thank you Swami for

bringing Divine Light to Coventry!

Submitted by Vina Mistry - Coventry

Region 5 - Health Awareness Day: October 2012

With the Grace Of our Bhagawan, Region 5 of the Sri Sathya Sai Service Organisation (UK), in conjunction with Pennine Care NHS Foundation Trust and Oldham Council (Greater Manchester), successfully hosted its 2nd Health Awareness Day on 6th October, 2012. The event was inaugurated by the Mayor of Oldham, Councillor Olwen Chadderton who was also joined by Oldham's Director of Public Health, Mr. Alan Higgins.



This event was planned and run entirely by volunteers acting upon Swami's message of Love All, Serve All. Over 100 volunteers ranging from medics, therapists and general volunteers contributed their time and service in raising awareness on the importance of maintaining a healthy lifestyle and pointing out any serious medical issues of which they may not have been aware.

This service was offered to the general public and community in Oldham and surrounding areas. They used this opportunity to have various medical assessments which were available. The assessments offered included the measurement of body mass index (BMI), blood sugar and blood pressure. The public also had the opportunity to visit volunteer dentists as well as have their vision and hearing checked by trained professional volunteers. There was also an opportunity to discuss any concerns with GPs and pharmacists. Throughout the day, various workshops and complementary therapies were offered, including homeopathy, back care, stress management, massage, meditation, and yoga.



Our collective aim was to use this opportunity of rendering selfless service as a means to improve our own progress in the path of spirituality and to put into practice many of the teachings we have learnt on the value of Selfless Service to all. We are blessed in having Bhagawan as our Guide in our pursuit of spiritual sadhana and using Selfless Service as the means for us to realise Divinity in humanity.

Swami, we offer some of scenes from this event at Your Lotus Feet, which shows the type of services we rendered to promote Love All, Serve All. We also offer to You two experiences which have been shared with love and humility by the volunteers at the Health Awareness day. We wish to share these experiences with the spirit of caring and sharing, to all our brothers and sisters in the UK, so they may also feel the joy from the service rendered.

Swami, please continue to guide us and provide us with more opportunities to Share Your Divine Love.

Personal experiences of two volunteers from Region 5's HAD, 2012

Personal account by Nirali Sisodia, Leicester (Region 4)

My humble pranams at the Lotus feet of my beloved Bhagwan Sri Sathya Sai Baba.

It was Saturday 6th of October 2012 in Oldham Library, that the blessed Health Awareness day took place. The day was cold, but the hearts of all were full of love, excitement and enthusiasm. There were health care professionals, organisers and volunteers from all over the country and from different areas of work. We all shared a common goal; Love all, serve all. Service to man is service to God.

What were your main duties on the day?

It was the first time that I had taken part in a Health Awareness Day and I was glad to be a part of it. Being a pre-registration pharmacist, I was nervous yet enthusiastic to help people in whichever way I could. I was assigned the duty of checking people's BMI (Body mass index) and advice on how they could possibly change their lifestyle and the risks associated with having an increased BMI. It is a sensitive topic for most people especially if they had previously had a heart attack or surgery. The most important part of the process was positive reinforcement; to give people the encouragement and motivation to head in the right direction.

What was the feeling throughout the day?

It was an overwhelming sight to see, once the public had filled the hall. There were people attending from all walks of life. They could also feel the love throughout the room as we carried out the work. It was humbling to see the grateful faces of all the people who had their various checks. One person had even said that they had learnt so much about their health on this day and how to better their lifestyle for their benefit.

Not only was it helpful to the people who attended for a health check, but also to health care professionals and organisers who learned new skills and gained experience in trying something new, as I have.



I would like to encourage everyone, whether you are a health care professional or not, to come and participate in this amazing experience, which is not only uplifting to those you help but to yourself as well; most of all, we put into practice the teachings of our wonderful Swami - Love all, serve all.

I thank my dear Sai Maa for enabling the volunteers of the Health Awareness Day to serve with selfless service and love.



Personal account by Radha Measuria, Region 5

'Love all, serve all'; Swami's most prominent message to us all. He is in everything and everything is within Him. We are all on this spiritual path but we live in a physical world, so we must begin our Sadhana on a physical level, by helping the body. What a better way to do such service than by enabling others to look after their health and their bodies!

The Region 5 Health Awareness Day brought together the love and happiness from all Centres in the region to help in one common goal, to serve the community. Although the day was based on medical checks and a lot of medical professionals from the Organisation were there as volunteers, there were many general volunteers there to ensure the day went smoothly.

What were your main duties on the day?

As a medical student I was helping with the medical side of things. There were several stations to check people's general health including their blood pressure, BMI, blood sugars.

What was the highlight of your day?

The Health Awareness Day brought all such specialists together providing the community with at hand professional advice and help. The day was very successful as several people who would have otherwise not gone to see specialists came to get checked and were found to have conditions which can be detrimental to their health but also easily controlled such as high blood pressure. It was great to see all the volunteers, both from a medical and non-medical background, coming together with the common goal: to help others with love.

What was the feeling throughout the day?

I found that there was a distinct positive atmosphere throughout the day. Informing someone that they have problems

with their health can be a difficult task, however, everyone present had one goal, improving health and wellbeing of the community. Love conquers all, and I feel that this was the take home message from this day. If one faces every task in life with Love and faith in the Lord, then there will be no worries or hardships as all work is His work and our Worship.

"Believe your experience; what gives you peace and joy, the bliss of Aatma anandham - the joy of the Inner Self. Believe in that. That is the real basis for faith."
- Sathya Sai Baba

Swami wants us to detach ourselves from this world and merge with him, but it is also our Dharma to help others to attain immortality. Relieve suffering in others. By helping all with unconditional love and joy, you are not just helping their physical health but also their mental health. Embracing others with our love brought great joy within as we saw Swami in each individual that we met and treated them as Swami.



Sai Jyothi Performances - A reflection by Roopa Panesar

I had been earnestly yearning to go back to Prashanti since my last visit in 2011, so when we were invited to join the Sai Jyothi group and perform again, I was filled with excitement and gratitude. I felt the deepest gratitude to Swami in having listened to my yearnings as He always does. It was requested that I be joined by some more musicians so that we could represent the UK and to give opportunity to young talent in this country to visit the Lord's Abode.



It was fairly instant that we started feeling the grace of Swami as brothers, Kaviraj Singh (Santoor player and vocalist), Gurdain Singh (Tabla player) and Kirpal Singh (Taar Shehnai player) all happily and graciously accepted the invitation and felt honoured at having such an opportunity. Bearing in mind the title of the pilgrimage, the initial thought was to somehow perform "Antar Jyothi Jalao Swami", a beautiful bhajan composed in Rag Yaman Kalyan, a Raag that denotes an auspicious beginning. With further inspiration, we decided to take the theme of celebration, grace and joy and so took the popular bhajans "Hum Sab Mil Kar Mangal Gaye" and "Om Hari Om Hari Om" as the theme for playing further. It felt appropriate as these two bhajans are composed in Raag Megh which is a Raag of the rainy season and we interpreted this as a Raag that can signify the showers of Grace. Finally we felt inspired to end the piece with Raag Bahaar in which the pieces were composed by my Guruji (Ustad Dharambir Singh ji). The Raag is traditionally played in the Spring season but we felt that we could relate this to any time of the year when we visit Swami as He gives us a new beginning and a fresh lease of life.

For me personally, I felt Swami's unbound kindness in allowing me to perform there with my brothers and having been given such an honour. We were carried from start to finish and it was an experience that will stay with us forever. Although beloved Baba left His physical form, His presence is evermore present. His miracles are also still at play. There were a couple of things that happened during the performance which made us sure of this. At the end of our performance, on the very last note, my string broke! It was truly a miracle that the string had not broken earlier and literally snapped at the very end of the performance. It was clearly Swami's grace that it held until that very last point. Gurdain (the tabla player) later shared that during our performance he played a very difficult tukda (a short tabla composition) which he had never played before but had only heard in a recording long ago. All of the musicians left Prashanti having felt the grace and peace of Prashanti and said that it was the most memorable performance of their lives. We further felt the love of Swami through His beloved students who were so encouraging and it was so humbling as they wished to learn Sitar and to hear our experiences via a Radio Sai interview.



The day after the first performance, we had another opportunity to perform again with the UK group. It was a beautiful experience to come together with our UK brothers and sisters and sing and play.

I was deeply honoured as I had a third opportunity to play during part 2 of the pilgrimage. It was so moving to see the Grama Seva boys in action and to witness Swami's Work.

Finally I will forever be indebted to the UK Sai Organisation, Ajit uncle from Heart Valve Bank, all my UK brothers and sisters, my Guru, my parents and most of all Swami for everything that has been possible. This trip will be an unforgettable experience which I will cherish forever.

Sairam
Roopa Panesar

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