



October 2013 Edition

Quote

It is now Dasara festival time. What is Dasara? The celebration of Dasara festival is meant to purify the actions performed by the dasendriyas (5 senses of action plus 5 senses of perception). Every human being in this world has to perform some kind of karma. The presiding deity or the driving force behind these actions is Devi , who is the personification of energy. She is the bestower of all kinds of energy to perform various kinds of karma by the human beings. Goddess Lakshmi bestows various kinds of wealth like money, food grains, gold, different kinds of objects, vehicles for movement, etc., to human beings so that they can lead a happy life in this world. The third facet of the divine female principle is Saraswati, the goddess of learning and intellect. Thus, the Trinity of Durga (goddess of energy), Lakshmi (goddess of wealth) and Saraswati (goddess of learning and intellect) are worshipped during this festival of Dasara. This is the underlying principle of worshipping this Trinity of Durga, Lakshmi and Saraswati during this Navaratri (9 day) festival. It is essential that man worships all these three facets of the Divine Principle.

~ Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba

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Editorial

**Dear Love & Light Readers,
Aum Sri Sai Ram!**

As we enter the last quarter of 2013, we look ahead to more exciting and uplifting programmes to help maintain our focus upon Baba and share in the joy of His Love and Glory.

In September we were very blessed by the visit of Sri Rathnakar to the UK. Devotees across the country were able to listen to his intimate and personal experiences with the Lord, as he untiringly travelled around fuelled by his Love for the Lord and his unswerving commitment to His Mission. It was a real eye opener to understand that although Sri Rathnakar had the greatest good fortune to be born in the same family as our Lord, his life, if anything was not as easy as one would have assumed, as he was constantly placed under the microscope, not only by the world, but by the Omnipresent and All Knowing Lord. But yet with all this, he had an unruffled calmness and serenity that ensued with his deep inner connection with our Lord and by the blessings of His Grace.

October promises to be an invigorating and energising month with the launch of the global project, 'Serve the Planet' on 20th October when we celebrate our beloved Baba's Avatar Declaration Day. Various activities are planned in the UK to mark this momentous occasion by way of supplying food items to the local food banks, serving food at the local homeless shelters and Laksharchana to commemorate the occasion. Excitement amongst our centres and groups is building up with devotees enthused and excited for this opportunity to serve Him by sharing Love with everyone around.

The Hindu community this month is also observing the ten days of Navaratri (Dasera) festival signifying the triumph of good over the evil qualities in us namely lust, anger, attachment, greed, pride and jealousy. The air in Prasanthi Nilayam by the divine presence is also filled with the scent of festivity with devotees in contemplation to mark this joyous occasion. In keeping with the tradition that Baba had started, thousands of people in the remote villages around Puttaparthi are lovingly served with food and clothing as part of Grama Seva (village service).

Looking further on, we expect November to be another month full of activities when devotees celebrate the birthday of our Lord and engage themselves in the global akhand bhajans and Ladies Day.

Please take note of dates of forthcoming events for your diary:

National Birthday Celebrations – Saturday 23rd November 2013

National Christmas Celebrations – Sunday 15th December 2013

National Sathya Sai Orientation Conference – Saturday 25th January 2014

Sathya Sai National Human Values Day – Saturday 26th April 2014

National Easwaramma Day – Saturday 3rd May 2014

JAI SAI RAM

Senthil Kumarathevan - Region 2 Chair

Education Wing - ...Feeling Closer to Swami

The Sai Smaran Bhajans that took place on the 21st of September 2013, were the first Sai Smaran Bhajans that I have attended. I felt that the venue for the bhajans was fantastic and also the number of people that attended and took part in this national event was brilliant. A warm welcome from the National Chairperson, Kiran Patel set the tone for the occasion. The musical performance from Rajaram on flute and Girish bhai on tabla was melodious and very apt for this grand occasion.

Before the bhajans, the entire group chanted the 1st Anuvaka of the Rudram. It was really powerful and energetic as it was done in unison. This was followed by the bhajans that began at around 11 am. Every single bhajan, according to me, was sung at the highest level of ability and intensity. I was sat at the front during the bhajans and had an opportunity to play the dholak for few bhajans. I, personally, learnt a lot just by sitting next to the other brothers and watching them play the instruments.

The dedication with which they played the instruments in turns throughout the event was very inspirational. In fact, I was enjoying the bhajans so much that I didn't want them to end! I really enjoyed the bhajans and I came away feeling even closer to Swami than before. I am looking forward to participate in next Sai Smaran bhajans and am confident that it will be another invigorating and successful programme.

Prahalad Nadella
SSE Halifax

Education Wing - My Baba and I

Swami plays an integral part in my life and I hold on to the fact that He says: "I shall be with you, wherever you are, guarding you and guiding you. March on, have no fear." Through all life's adversities and successes, Swami has been that constant presence in my life, especially when I needed Him the most., knowingly and unknowingly.

I was fortunate to have been born into a family of Sai devotees, and with my father being a Hindu priest, my upbringing was considered to be more "stricter or restricted" compared to that of my friends. As I was growing up my parents lovingly instilled in me the values of duty, discipline, love of sacred scripture, service to community and involvement in many of the temple activities and the activities of the Sathya Sai Organisation of South Africa, especially in the SSE programme in Durban. With Swami's abundant grace and the loving encouragement from my parents, I excelled on the sports field and academically too as a student, both in school and university.

Now, being a SSE teacher has enriched my everyday work with focus and joy, by helping to entrench the important human values in my life, as I endeavour to be an example and to teach the children these very lessons. In life we all have to face hardships in our family life, workplace, in our relationships and friendships - so how do we keep our faith and experience His presence in our daily lives?

For me , it is by attending and getting involved in centre/group activities, in Regional and National activities, attending SSE trainings, helping at Health Awareness Clinics and medical camps, doing my own personal Sadhana (Silent sitting especially helps to quieten my mind) and reading Sai literature (which helps give me the answer when I most need it!). All of this gives me the strength, focus, courage, confidence, motivation and acceptance of what life has to offer. It is certainly not as easy as it sounds, but it gives me the encouragement to continue on my spiritual journey.

An important lesson is that Swami is always with us as the Eternal Witness, and be it whether I'm at work or with friends and family, I have to watch what I say, think or act.

I am eternally grateful, humbled and thankful that I have Lord Sai in my life, and all my accomplishments is due only to His Grace. My prayer to Swami is that He remains always in my life, guiding me along my spiritual journey ,helping me to practice what I have learnt and to serve others to the best of my ability, working as His instrument.

As Swami says :” All work is God’s :- He inspires, He helps, He executes, He enjoys, He is pleased , He reaps, He sowed.”

Nuleen Panday
SSE Teacher and Regional SSE Coordinator
Region 6

Service Wing - Avatar Declaration Day Celebrations – "Serve the Planet"

Jai Sai Ram,

On October 20th in 1940, Bhagawan out of His infinite Love and Compassion announced His Avatarhood to the world. He declared that the purpose of His Advent and Mission was the transformation and redemption of mankind through Love. All through the 85 years of His sojourn on earth, He was engaged in this Mission of Love through selfless service to humanity. In fact, His central message 'Love All, Serve All' has been the shining light, guiding millions of devotees and followers around the world in their spiritual journeys.

"I always conduct Myself in accordance with the principle of Help ever, Hurt never. This has been My motto. I never harmed anyone. I derive great joy in helping others. That is why I tell the devotees to always pray, Loka Samasthah Sukhino Bhavantu (May all the people of the world be happy!) All should be happy, healthy and blissful. With such sacred motive, I have been spreading the message of love to the entire world." -Sathya Sai Baba 20th October 2002

This was a momentous discourse that Bhagawan had given about His early life on the occasion of the 62nd Anniversary of the Avatar Declaration Day.

Devotees all around the world are celebrating this joyous occasion in prayers, devotional singing, undertaking service etc with the direction of Prashanthi Council.

The UK will be celebrating this joyous occasion by participating in the ‘Serve the Planet’

project.

<http://www.srisathyasai.org.uk/servetheplanet/>

There are various ways devotees in UK can participate:

1. **Narayan Seva:**

Food Banks

All centres in the UK will be providing food items to their local Trussell Trust food bank. Food items will be delivered week commencing 14th October as part of the lead up to Avatar Declaration and then continued on an on-going basis as agreed by the centre.

Many centres have now made contact with their local Trussell Trust Food Bank Manager to ascertain what items are in need locally. Presentations and announcements have been conducted in numerous centres and Regional programmes of what items are needed; as well as presenting more details on Serve the Planet initiative.

An inspiring video has been compiled which describes how the food donated to food banks reaches those in need and the video has some wonderful clips of Swami serving the poor, a wonderful example of how we should put Love in Action. Please click below to see this video.

A copy of the presentation can be found on the Serve the Planet website. Please click [here](#).

Serving the Homeless

On the Avatar Declaration Day of the 20th October, all Regions of the SSSSOUK will also be conducting Homeless Shelter Feeding. Please contact your Regional Service or Youth Coordinator if you are interested in participating in this activity [<http://www.srisathyasai.org.uk/servetheplanet/contact.php>]

2. **Naama Seva:**

Also on October 20th 2013 there will be a Laksharchana (chanting the divine name) which will be led by our revered elder Uncle Vadgama.

Date: Sunday 20th October 2013

Time: 11:30am to 2:00pm

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

Registration to attend the Laksharchana is required. Please click on the link below to register. http://www.srisathyasai.org.uk/servetheplanet/laksharchana_registration.php

Excitement is certainly building up as we soon approach 73rd Anniversary of the Avatar Declaration Day!

Let us all join hands and participate wholeheartedly as an offering of our loving gratitude to our Divine Master, Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba on this special day.

With Love,

Mukund Patel [National Service Coordinator] & Shyam Jamnadas [National Youth Coordinator]

Servetheplanet@srisathyasai.org.uk | <http://www.srisathyasai.org.uk/servetheplanet/>

Service Wing - Grama Seva

"Fill the Heart with Love; the Head with Wisdom; and Engage the Hands in Service" – Baba

This year's Dasara Festival marks the 13th Anniversary of the Grama Seva Project, and provided me an opportunity to reflect on how this very sacred project, that was initiated by Bhagawan, has impacted on my life, and the lives of many of my brothers from the UK who have been Graced with the good fortune, to participate in it. Even as I write this article, there is a group of 18 youth from UK led by Sri Ajitbhai Popat who are now in Prasanthi Nilayam and participating in this thrilling Service.



Grama Seva is a manifestation of Swami's infinite Love and Grace, and provided us an opportunity to establish kinship with thousands of villagers through the act of selfless service. By Bhagawan's Grace, it has been possible for groups of UK youth to join the teachers and students of the Sathya Sai Institutions during the Grama Seva Programme, gifting us the opportunity to expand our hearts and develop compassion for others. This very enriching experience conferred immense Joy and a wonderful feeling of satisfaction, and has left an indelible mark on each of our hearts.

Journeying in convoys of cars and lorries, singing loudly the Glories of the Lord, we would arrive in remote villages to deliver Prasadam of clothing, rice and ladoos to every household. The grateful villagers, would raise their hands in gratitude to Bhagawan, for remembering them and so lovingly sending His Blessings.



Participating in Grama Seva, sensitised us to the living conditions of our brothers and sisters in rural areas of India. We often read about the plight of others, or watch stirring images on television, however there can be no substitute for the first-hand experience of the challenges that face so many people in rural villages. We return full of gratitude for how blessed we are, and with a heightened sense of social responsibility, and awareness of the need to control our own desires and greed for material possessions; and to use what we have been blessed with to help others.

An incident from the life of President Abraham Lincoln, illustrates well the spirit of Service. President Lincoln was on route to address Congress. He insisted that his driver stop to allow him to rescue a squealing pig that was stuck in mud. This made little sense to onlookers. When he was later praised for saving the pig from its suffering, President Lincoln commented, that he had acted only to benefit himself. Had he ignored the pig's plight, he would have, himself been pained, knowing he had done nothing to help; so he acted to save himself from that anguish and pain.



We are the true beneficiaries of the Service that we have the opportunity to render, and I cannot think of a more direct experience of this than Grama Seva. Swami would personally oversee every aspect of the project and then bless us as we departed each morning, thereafter eagerly awaiting our return and lovingly enquiring about the villagers. His direct involvement strongly reinforced that during Service, it is God who is the provider and God who is the recipient also; we are but the instruments to whom He gives the opportunity, so that we may redeem our lives – How very fortunate we are?

As we approach the auspicious occasion of Avatar Declaration Day, let us remind ourselves of His words, which capture the Spirit and the essence, of this Sacred Grama Seva

Programme:



"This Sai has come in order to achieve the supreme task of uniting the entire Mankind as one family through the bond of brotherhood, of affirming and illuminating the Atmic Reality (The Divine Self) of each being, to reveal the Divine which is the basis on which the entire Cosmos rests, and of instructing all to recognise the common Divine Heritage that binds man to man, so that man can rid himself of the animal and rise up to the Divine, which is the goal."

Dr. Kumi Pillay
Chairperson, Region 7, SSSSO UK

Spiritual Wing - An Evening in the Company of Namdhari Sikh Community

On the 29th September, we were honoured to have been invited to a special Ardas and Kirtan session (prayer and hymn-singing) at the Namdhari Sikh Gurudwara in Birmingham. This prayer session was a part of the 109th annual session of Jap Prayog (Meditation on the Name of God), a 40 day period of prayer and meditation which Naamdhari Sikh communities all over the world observe every year with great vigour and dedication. A group of five of us joined the Sangat (congregation) of the Naamdhari Sikh community on this occasion.



The meaning of Naamdhari Sikhs is ‘One who invests oneself with the name of God (Naam Dhari); through the name of God, who has oneness with God’.



True to the name, I found the members very spiritual who strictly adhere and follow the teachings of the Sikh Gurus (teachers) under the Holy Guruship of Guru Ram Singh. The Naamdhari Sikhs are easily recognisable by their white clothing and by their method of tying the turban horizontally across their forehead. They also wear a rosary made of wool which helps in chanting the name. In fact, I found all of them seated cross legged, both young and the elderly in whites engaged in chants with the white rosary in their right hand. They are a very charitable community too, doing service projects in Africa and India.

It was a very humbling experience seeing their simplicity, broad heartedness, soft and sweet spoken language and their good mannerism.

It came to us as a surprise when Dr Veeru Mudigonda, our National Spiritual Coordinator was asked to share a few words with the congregation. Dr Veeru elaborated on the teachings of Bhagawan Baba in relation to the unity of all religions and of all humanity, based on Love for God and the Love of God. He shared with the gathering the importance that Bhagawan Baba gives to Naamasmarana (Chanting the Name of God) and Sankeerthana (congregational singing of the divine name), as these help us in connecting deeply with God and His Love wherever we are. He also highlighted Bhagawan Baba’s reference to Guru

Nanak as the personage who introduced and popularised Bhajans (group devotional singing) and their potency in creating vibrations that purify the environment around and one’s mind.

Dr Veeru concluded his short talk stressing on the importance of practising to live in Love with our fellow beings in our society, and thanked the organisers for the opportunity to interact on behalf of the Sathya Sai Organisation, which he hoped would be a lot more in the future.

Dr. Kiran Patel

Spiritual Wing - National Sai Smaran Bhajans

The Scriptures lay down Bhajan (group devotional singing), Naamasmaran (Remembering God's Name) and Sankeerthan (devotional music) as the Saadhanas (spiritual practices) of this Age. Bhajan is the process of singing your prayers to God, praising His glory and compassion, and pleading that He may fill you with His Grace. Prayer has a highly curative effect on the body and mind of man. That is the result of constant Bhajan and recital of the Name. Bhajan has to be a thrilling experience, which must leave the participants full of pure energy and elevated enthusiasm.

Sathya Sai Speaks , Vol 11

Lord Maha Vishnu once said to Narada, "Naham vasami vaikunthe yoginam hridaye na cha, mad-bhakta yatra gayanti tatra tishthami narada", i.e., "I do not dwell in Vaikuntha nor in the hearts of the Yogis, but I dwell where my devotees sing my name, O Narada!"

Sankeertan is singing God's name with feeling (Bhava) and faith (Sraddha). Sankeertan destroys the sins and fills the heart with love and devotion thus bringing the devotee face to face with God.

The Sai Smaran Bhajans in UK are being conducted at regular intervals since April 2012 as a national offering of love and gratitude to our beloved Bhagawan. The sixth in the series were held at Sandbach on the 21st of September, and like the previous ones, this event too was a thrilling session of Sankeerthan indeed!

Sandbach is a beautiful town in Cheshire and this is probably the first time in the recent past that such a divine gathering took place here. The venue was the Sandbach High School which got a complete facelift for the grand occasion. The caretaker of the school was very impressed with all the arrangements and later admitted that he hadn't seen such a unique and wonderful celebration at the school in his entire career spanning 20 years.

The Altar was beautifully decorated and it was a spectacular sight as we entered the Bhajan hall. It was very welcoming to all the eager spiritual aspirants. It felt as if we were in Prashanthi! The event began at 10.30am with Omkar and Vedam. The vibrant Rudram (first stanza) was chanted and this was the start of the divine extravaganza.

The Region 5 Youth Co-ordinator, Dr Nishal Govindji invited the UKCC Chairperson, Dr Kiran Patel, to inaugurate the special day. Dr Kiran Patel welcomed one and all warmly. He said that whatever we offer Bhagawan as gratitude, such as the Sai Smaran bhajans, is still just a drop in comparison to the Love, Blessings and Bliss we received from Him. He aptly reminded the gathering how Bhagawan declared His Avathar and sang the bhajan "Manasa

Bhajare Guru Charanam” exhorting all humanity to contemplate on the Divine Lotus Feet of the Supreme Guru and always follow in His Footsteps. Dr Patel encouraged all devotees to follow our Divine Lord with steadfast faith and participate in Bhagawan’s divine mission with enthusiasm and dedication. He concluded by quoting Swami’s guidelines about bhajan singing and how a true singer should surrender to the lord with humility.

This inspiring talk was followed by a melodious flute recital by Mr Raja Ram which set the mood for the bhajans. Mr Raja Ram played two Carnatic classical pieces, one in Raag Hamsadhvani (Vaatapi Ganapathim by Sri Muthuswami Dikshithar) and another in Raag Dhanasree (a Thillana- rhythmic piece- composed by Maharaja Swathi Tirunaal). He was accompanied by Girish Mistry on the tabla.

The Bhajans began at 11am and finished at 4.30pm. The bhajans were sung with a lot of fervor and enthusiasm that continued unabated throughout. Singers came from all the parts of the country and every singer wanted to make the best offering to the Naadabrahma (Lord of Sound). All the eight regions of the country were represented and the whole place was filled with positive vibrations and an ardent sense of devotion. The bhajans were sung in the right key and rhythm which made all those present sway in harmony. In the background, Swami’s darshan videos from Prashanthi were being shown which added to the beauty of the entire event. The instrumentalists too took turns to play and offered their best to the Lord.

Volunteers worked relentlessly to serve the devotees with love and care. As the bhajans continued, a delicious lunch was served. Bhajans ended with Bhagawan’s darshan video and aarthi. Vibhuthi was distributed.

Mr Kailash Venkat, Region 5 Chairperson, in his concluding remarks shared the feelings of joy and peace that the bhajans had created. He requested everyone to preserve these sacred feelings in our hearts with great care and carry these vibrations back to our homes and centres. Mr Sanjay Vaja in his unique style thanked Swami and all those who worked hard and supported for the success of this fantastic event. The catering team with the help of the youth made take away bags of Prasadam for the devotees on their journey home.

Thus concluded a very uplifting spiritual event, that I found to be immensely energising and unifying. I felt very privileged to be working with and learning from so many fellow devotees of Bhagawan, both regionally and nationally, whilst preparing for this sacred programme. Let us all remain ever grateful to Bhagawan for granting us such divine opportunities, and look forward to the next Sai Smaran Bhajans in January 2014!

Dr Vijayanand Nadella
R5 Spiritual Coordinator

Spiritual Wing - Navarathri - Dassera

"All festivals observed by Bharatiyas have marvellous inner meanings. But men in general view them in terms of external observances and celebrate them with feasts and frolic. These festivals were really intended to be used for the exclusive worship of the divine, to enjoy the bliss of that devotion and overcome pain and sorrow. These holy days were instituted for the purpose of getting rid of ignorance and cultivating right knowledge, the higher wisdom and cosmic consciousness."

The festival of Navarathri and Dassera (literally meaning Nine Nights and Ten Days respectively) is a very special occasion that highlights the spiritual significance of worshipping God as Mother, and God as the Primal Divine Energy (Shakthi). To many Sai devotees around the world, Dassera is also a time to offer love and gratitude to the Trinity of Sai Avatars: Shirdi Sai Avatar who took Mahasamadhi on the Vijayadasami day in 1918; Sathya Sai Avatar who as the embodiment of Siva Shakthi walked amidst us showering immense love and bliss; and Prema Sai Avatar who, our Lord Bhagawan Sathya Sai has said, will grace the earth as an embodiment of Shakthi!

Dassera brings to mind many glorious events in the Divine Presence of our Lord in Prasanthi Nilayam. If in the 1940s and 50s it was the famous 'palanquin processions' when many devotees experienced the darshan of Bhagawan Baba as Mother Goddess Lakshmi, then in the latter decades it has been the unique weeklong Yagna (Veda Purusha Sapthaha Jnana Yagna) that was presided over by our dear Lord Sathya Sai Himself and conducted by an army of renowned Vedic Scholars and Sages for the welfare of humanity. Bhagawan Baba would herald the inauguration of this sacred festival by hoisting a flag, and said on one occasion-

"To celebrate the Navarathri, new(Nava) as well as nine(Nava), at Prasanthi Nilayam, is indeed a rare chance, replete with wonder and joy. For this is the Abode of Peace, the peace that ensues when six enemies are destroyed forever. The Prasanthi flag, which now will be hoisted, is the symbol of this consummation-the conquest by man of the six enemies and the illumination within him of the flame of wisdom installed in the Lotus of the Heart. It is the flag of Swaraj, dominion over oneself, the true independence, when you genuinely claim to be the Master of the realm most related to you." SSS 9-20

Other events around this majestic festival- such as the Poornahuthi (Final Offering) when our dear Lord would create precious gems to the wonder and amazement of the multitudes gathered, and offer them in the Sacrificial Fire of the Yagna as ordained in the scriptures; the Abhishekam (sacred bathing) of Shirdi Sai Idol that He would perform to the delight of everyone in the Poornachadra auditorium; the Narayana Seva (feeding the poor) in which He took special interest and personally participated in feeding the poor in their thousands; the various performances by renowned artists and poets in the evenings; the numerous scintillating Discourses that Bhagawan Baba delivered during this period to educate and uplift all mankind; and in more recent times, the Grama Seva (Village Service) during which more than 50000 rural homes are visited and the people are given fresh food and new clothes with great love and care by His Students under His Direction- all these and many other associated happenings feasted every eye and filled every heart with love, happiness, courage and vigour.

In Bhagawan's Divine Presence, we learnt thus that Navarathri is a festival which celebrates the victory of good over evil. Not just in an external sense, but more importantly in each of our hearts. Swami explains to us that the celebration of the Dassera festival is meant to encourage us to control our senses, thereby purifying the actions performed by our dasendriyas (5 senses of action and 5 senses of perception).

"During the ten days of Dasara, the Rakshasas (demons) in the form of wicked qualities have been routed. Rakshasas do not mean demonic beings. The bad qualities in men are the demons. Arrogance is a demon. Bad thoughts are demons. Ravana is depicted as the king of Rakshasas. He is said to have ten heads. He was not born with ten heads. Who is this Ravana

and what are his ten heads? Kama (lust), Krodha (anger), Moha (delusion), Lobha (Greed), Mada (pride), Maatsarya (Envy), Manas (the mind), Buddhi (intellect), Chitta (Will) and Ahamkara (ego) - these ten constitute the ten heads. Ravana is one who has these ten qualities." SSS 24-25

Bhagawan also reveals to us that Para Shakthi, The Divine Primal Energy that pervades the entire cosmos, is in fact inherent in each one of us as Dynamic Action (Kriya Shakthi), Will Power (Iccha Shakthi), and the Intellectual Power of Discrimination (Jnana Shakthi). He points out Kriya Shakthi is related to our inert body which is material, Iccha Shakthi to the mind that activates the body and makes it vibrant, and Aathma is Jnana Shakti that induces the vibrations of Iccha Shakthi. With the help of these, He assures us it is possible for each one of us to achieve the much coveted victory of good over evil.

"Navarathri is celebrated in honour of the victory that the Parashakthi (the goddess of energy, immanent in the microcosm and the macrocosm) achieved over the Asura of evil forces, as described in the Devi Mahatmayam and Devi Bhagavatam. That Parashakthi is in every one as the Kundalini shakthi, which is able to destroy, when awakened, the evil tendencies inside the mind; so the Navarathri is to be dedicated by all, for the propitiation of the outer as well as inner divinity, in order that the outer and the inner worlds may have peace and joy. By means of systematic spiritual exercises (sadhana) it is possible to tap the inner resources that God has endowed you with, and elevate yourselves to the purer and happier realm of the reality." SSS 7-30

During the Dassera festival, it is traditional to adore God as the Divine Mother in the forms of Durga, Lakshmi and Saraswathi. Bhagawan explains that Mother Durga is the embodiment of Supreme Energy (Shakthi Swaroopini) who confers on us physical, mental and spiritual powers; Mother Lakshmi is the embodiment of Supreme Prosperity (Aishwarya) who confers on us the wealth of Life (Prana Aishwarya), Knowledge (Vidya Aishwarya) and Wisdom (Jnana Aishwarya); and Mother Saraswathi is the embodiment of Supreme Wisdom who confers on us the power of intellect (Viveka), the power of discrimination (Vichakshana) and the power of word (Vaak).

"Every human being in this world has to perform some kind of karma. The presiding deity or the driving force behind these actions is Devi, who is the personification of energy. She is the bestower of all kinds of energy to perform various kinds of karma by the human beings. Goddess Lakshmi bestows various kinds of wealth like money, food grains, gold, different kinds of objects, vehicles for movement, etc., to human beings so that they can lead a happy life in this world. The third facet of the divine female principle is Saraswati, the goddess of learning and intellect. Thus, the Trinity of Durga (goddess of energy), Lakshmi (goddess of wealth) and Saraswati (goddess of learning and intellect) are worshipped during this festival of Dasara. This is the underlying principle of worshipping this Trinity of Durga, Lakshmi and Saraswati during this Navaratri (9 day) festival. It is essential that man worships all these three facets of the Divine Principle." SSS 41-16

Whilst it is no doubt important to worship these Supreme Deities with great faith and fervour, Bhagawan Baba cautions that these efforts to earn the Divine Grace will be futile if one neglects or is disrespectful towards one's own mother.

"Navarathri festival is intended to make us realise the importance of the mother, to love our mother and to go on the path that will please our mother. On the other hand, people buy some

flowers and offer worship to the idols of Durga, Lakshmi and Saraswathi, ignoring the aspect of one's own mother. Mother who has given birth to you is the very embodiment of Durga, Lakshmi and Saraswathi. We should never make our mother shed tears."

In accordance with our dearest Bhagawan's directions, during the ten days of Dasara festival, lets us strive to convert our Ichchaa Shakthi (Will power) into a yearning for God, our Kriyaa Shakthi (dynamic action) into a force for doing divine actions and our Jnana Shakthi into the Divine Itself! Let us offer this worship as our loving gratitude at the Divine Lotus Feet of our Divine Mother.

Wishing all brothers and sisters a Happy Dassera!

Dr. Mahesh Narayan
Chairperson, Eastbourne Sai Group, UK

Youth Wing - Global Youth Offering for Swami's 88th Birthday – Swami's Treasure box

Jai Sai Ram

There is a wonderful golden opportunity for all youth of the UK to participate in a global youth offering for Swami's 88th birthday this year, called Swami's Treasure Box.

Below is a circular sent from our Zonal Youth representatives on the International Youth Council that details this offering.

To be involved in this global youth offering for Swami's 88th Birthday

1. If you wish to participate in this wonderful opportunity, please inform your Centre/Regional Youth Coordinator, or email youthwing@srisathyasai.org.uk by mid October to help anticipate volume.
2. The cards for Swami need to be sent to your Centre/Regional Youth Coordinator by 3rd November who will pass onto National Youth Coordinator.
3. If you are unable to get your letter to your Centre/Regional Youth Coordinator then please post it so it is received by 9th November to: UK Sai Treasure Box, 2 Pine Close, Epsom, Surrey, KT19 8FN
4. Please note that any cards received after 9th November has no guarantee that they will be part of the offering therefore please plan accordingly to these timelines.

This is a wonderful opportunity for us to join together as youth in expressing our love, prayers and gratitude to our Beloved Bhagawan; offering Him a Garland of Love, made by all His children around the world.

If you have any questions, please contact your Centre/Regional Youth Coordinator, or email youthwing@srisathyasai.org.uk

With Love,

Shyam Jamnadas
National Youth Coordinator

Swami's Treasure Box - Youth Offering to Swami 23 Nov, 2013

Dearest Sai Youth,

Loving Jai Sai Ram to you all. We pray you are all shining bright with Swami's divine grace.

My Students are My Wealth - Swami's Treasure Box

Our Beloved Bhagawan has on many occasions reminded HIS youth that we are HIS wealth, knowing that truly it is He who is our Greatest Wealth! With this in mind, the International Sathya Sai Youth Council would like to present Swami a treasure box consisting of birthday messages from ALL Youth around the world. These messages will be compiled into one booklet and placed into a golden treasure box, which will be offered to Swami. The treasure box with our messages inside will be presented to Swami on 23rd Nov 2013 by a few representatives of the International Sathya Sai Youth Council. One of the aims of the International Sathya Sai Youth Council is to bring the Sai Youth of the world together as ONE. In this offering, cards from different countries, cards made with unique ideas, cards painted with selected colours and cards filled with chosen vocabulary will be put together as ONE into a treasure box. This implies that we are God's Treasure when we all work as ONE with a common objective. Offering the card to Swami as Sai Youth of the World is one of the many ways we will come together, celebrating our Lord who brings us so much Joy.

Card Guidelines:

1. 120 GSM A3 paper is to be used. Kindly stick ONLY to this weight of Paper that compilation will be systematic and easy.
2. Any colour of paper can be used.
3. Cards have to be prepared in LANDSCAPE format on A3 paper. PORTRAIT format is not encouraged due to the orientation of the treasure box and presentation of the cards.
4. Messages, paintings and any form of creative art work is welcome however, use of beads and other 3D objects on the cards should be minimal, so as not to affect the thickness of the card.
5. Digital creations on the card are also permitted. A 30mm (3cm) margin is to be created on the left side of the landscape paper, for binding purposes. A 1 cm margin must exist on other sides of the paper.
6. Personal/ Family cards will not be included in the offering

This offering is purely representative of the youth and their own creative ideas, messages and efforts. We are hoping to bind these A3 cards into one big book. Please include messages wishing Swami a Happy Birthday, expressing our love, prayers and gratitude. Let's try this time not to ask Him for anything, but instead offer Him a Garland of Love, made by all his children everywhere. Keep in mind this is an offering from His Children all over the world,

so let us try to get all the Youth from ALL the centres all over the world involved.

We hope the information provided above helps you in preparing a beautiful, heartfelt offering to Swami that can be put together with our brothers and sisters from other countries.

Please send your cards to your National Youth Coordinator.

Om Jai Sai Ram,

**With Love,
Sharvanie Sooriah and Deviesh Tankaria
Zone 9A International Youth Coordinators
International Sathya Sai Youth Council**

Youth Wing - Sai Smaran: The Connection between You and God

Sai Smaran, was a memorable day of powerful reverberating bhajans that recharged our spiritual batteries and helped us contemplate on our dear loving beloved Bhagawan. Amidst the rush of our busy and chaotic daily lives, the Sai Smaran event was the perfect ticket to a place of peacefulness, an atmosphere of pure love and a chance to meditate on our Lord for hours on end.

After travelling from far and wide, brothers and sisters from all 8 regions all over the country were welcomed into the wonderfully decorated venue at Sandbach (region 5) with Swami's beautiful picture set up everywhere to watch us and guide us through the unforgettable event.

There was a sense of passion and excitement on arrival as smiles stretched across devotees' faces waiting for the event to begin. Walking into the exquisitely decorated hall and sitting down in front of Baba brought a new feeling. As more and more devotees settled into the hall, there was a feeling of wholeness, a sense of the Sai family being reunited, a feeling of joy and happiness.

The event started with a surge of sublime energy. Vedam chanting brought a strong feeling of Unity and set the spiritual mood and positivity that carried on throughout the day. A short musical medley with flute accompanied with tabla was played to create a peaceful atmosphere and a chance to internalise. And then the time we had all been waiting for came, the hours of continuous bhajans were about to begin and the excitement could be felt by all as it filled the room.

All through the event, a dynamic video of Swami was projected on the screen for all to enjoy. Not only were our hearts filled with joy at seeing our divine Mother's endless Love but it also created a feeling of Swami's omnipresence. He is always there watching and guiding us on the right path. One need only look up at moments where the monkey mind was taking over and concentration was going astray to see our beloved Baba and bring us back on the right path. For devotees who could not make it to the event, the program was streamed Live online and over 750 people were able to feel the vibrations from afar and soak up the powerful energy.

When singing Bhajans, there is a feeling of indescribable bliss. When we fill our hearts with the love for God, nothing else around us matters. We are transported from this materialistic world and taken to a place of pure love with Baba. Our Swami gives us endless Love, instantly. It only takes a few minutes to sit up straight, close our eyes, contemplate on the Lord and feel His presence around. There was an exhilarating atmosphere all through the Bhajans. The instrumentalists played with so much enthusiasm and kept it going for hours on end. Devotees sang their hearts out.

Not only was there food for the subtle and causal bodies, but also our physical bodies were fuelled with a scrumptious breakfast that was made with so much love. The delicious lunch further fuelled us through the day and the food bags to take home were a delight.

What was particularly memorable was the picture of Baba at the altar. Upon admiring the picture, Baba's eyes were particularly striking. It felt as though He was looking directly at you. As though the connection between you and God was one so powerful that it could not be severed. It reminded me of what was most important in my life; the relationship between me and my beloved Bhagawan. We all have such unique relationships with God but what we all are so fortunate to have is His endless Love and Grace. If we keep the Lord with us at all times, He showers His Love and helps us through times of difficulty.

Hours flew by, and as the closing Bhajans began, I couldn't help feel a little sad that it would be over. But then, Swami reminded me that this doesn't have to end. Such is the Love of Baba that we are fortunate to have so many activities all throughout the year. The goal was to take the vibrations and Love back to our homes and maintain it till the next time the Sai family will be united. No matter how difficult it would be, no matter how busy my life would be, I realised that the most important thing was to keep Swami with me at all times in my heart and He would guide me throughout my life. If we take one step towards Baba, he really will take ten steps towards you.

Sai Sreenidhi Ram
Sathya Sai Group, Liverpool

Region 1 - Brixton Sai Centre Ladies' Outing to the Buddhapadipa Temple

The Ladies' Forum of Brixton Sai Centre organised a trip to the Buddhapadipa Temple in Wimbledon on Sunday 11 August. This was the first Buddhist temple in UK built in traditional Thai design with its magnificent and stunning architecture. Gentlemen were also invited to join us. After our usual weekly group devotional singing programme which set the tone for this visit, a few cars started to make their way there.



The weather was sunny and very beautiful. It was indeed a glorious day to go out, with Swami's Grace. On arrival at the temple, all of us proceeded to the main hall. We went in and all sat down quietly as one of the monks was reciting some chants with the congregation. It was a thrilling and delightful experience for all of us to listen to the chants and the ambiance that had created. Having energised ourselves with the divine vibrations, we came outside and had a lovely picnic in the picturesque grounds of the temple which has an ornamental lake, a small grove, flower garden and an orchard. It was a very peaceful place to have lunch.

After our picnic lunch, we all went to a second prayer hall to do some silent sitting and meditation for about half an hour.

We finally finished and went our separate ways. It was truly an enchanting and

wonderful day which we will all remember.

Om Jai Sai Ram

Region 1 - Lewisham Centre Age Link Party

"Engage yourselves in service activity. Consider social service as service to God. This is the best way to earn God's Love. Love all and serve all. Your entire life will be sanctified thereby." – Baba

August is an important month in our annual calendar when we spend time with Age Link. On

Saturday 17th August, Lewisham and Bromley Sai Centres hosted this annual event which brought lot of joy and happiness all around. One of the highlights of the day was the large turnout of volunteers; over 15 devotees had committed their afternoon in this wonderful service activity which demonstrated the dedication of our Sai community. From 1pm, our team of volunteers helped arrange tables, chairs, food and beverages in preparation of entertaining our elderly guests to include men and women from around the surrounding areas.



From 2:30pm onwards, the guests were treated with delicious and mouth-watering bites of cakes, snacks such as samosas and spring rolls and uninterrupted supplies of tea, coffee and juices. Volunteers were going around, topping up beverages whilst mingling. It was wonderful to see children as young as seven year old connecting with the elderly which brought lot of delight and elation on the faces of our guests. Following the light refreshments and snacks, the main attraction of the day commenced – BINGO! This simple, but extremely enjoyable game had everyone in the hall laughing, smiling and feeling at home, making the whole event seem very special. After the Bingo session, the unity in the room was clearly projected as everyone joined in and sung a few universal songs before the guests started to depart.

Seeing people of all ages in one room and displaying a great sense of harmony and sharing Love of Swami was sufficient satisfaction for all of us. We eagerly look forward to another opportunity and can't wait for One thing we all agreed on is that none o linking again with Age Link!

Sita Sharma
Lewisham Sai Centre

Region 2 - YAP: "Life is a Challenge, Meet it"

On 28th September, youth from Region 2 gathered in Croxley Green, Hertfordshire for the second Young Adult Programme (YAP) of 2013. Following on from the theme of last month's YAP 'Life is a Game, Play it', the theme for this month's programme was 'Life is a challenge, meet it'.

The afternoon began with an orienteering challenge through the woods and countryside. The aim of the challenge was to complete the route in the shortest time possible without getting

lost! Along with the directions each group was also given a hypothetical scenario involving a challenging situation in their work place, university or family life to discuss. During the orienteering challenge, each group discussed the scenario given to them and came up with a solution to the problem. Once all the groups had completed the orienteering challenge each group acted out their scenario and the solution that they had come up with.



The orienteering challenge gave us the opportunity to do something different. As a group we benefitted spending time amidst nature, being surrounded by trees without a building in sight. The suspense of not knowing where we were going made this even more interesting and special. We identified various challenges we faced along the route; including time management, teamwork, getting lost, distractions and maintaining focus on the goal, fear, and letting go of control and trusting other team members. These are also challenges that we encounter in our everyday lives and as a group we were able to share ways in which we could face these such as working steadily, listening to others and playing to the strengths of everyone within the team, following Swami's teachings to stop us losing our way, reminding ourselves of our aims in life, having self-confidence and faith and ultimately surrendering everything to Swami.

Confronting the scenarios helped us to share solutions to common dilemmas that we face in our daily lives in a humorous way. Every group came up with a clear solution to the problem and each scenario sparked off much debate. Many youth shared personal experiences of when they had been in similar dilemmas and what they had learned from them. Common themes that emerged were that we have to follow our conscience when making decisions and have confidence in ourselves when doing so; good company is essential; we cannot change others by merely preaching, we should lead by example and make our lives His Message.



To conclude the programme we discussed our ultimate challenge which was to realise the divinity and oneness in everything through understanding love. As a group we agreed that we must remind ourselves of this end goal but the only way we will reach this end goal is by meeting all the challenges in accordance with Swami's teachings.

The action-packed afternoon gave us a chance to do something different, and take time away from our usual busy lives to spend time in Swami's Garden of nature. It gave the youth of the Region an opportunity to get to know one another and share their personal experiences and connect with Swami. As always, the time spent in good company left us feeling ready to meet all the challenges that come our way, reminding us that Swami is by our side to guide and protect us.

Anshi Dattani
Harrow East Youth Coordinator, Region 2

Region 6 - Family Values Day

Region 6 recently held its Family Values Day event on the 15th of September 2013 in the beautiful surrounds of Blunden Hall in Farnborough. Thankfully, with Swami's Grace, the day remained dry and pleasant.

It was attended in main by the SSE children and their families from Farnborough, Southampton and Rochester. Of course, other SSE teachers, parents and regional co-ordinators all helped to make this day a success.



On arrival the children were given different coloured badges representing each of the five Human Values: Red for Love, Blue for Peace, Green for Right Action, Yellow for Truth and White for Non violence.

The day started with a Treasure hunt where the children had to look for goodie bags (representing the different values), and these were hidden around the spacious ground area. This was followed by games such as the three-legged races, sack races, lemon on spoon races and a few more which helped teach the children about whole-hearted participation, co-operation amongst each other, team work and team spirit. What made it even more fun, was that everyone had a chance to participate - the children, teachers and parents.



Lunch was a delicious combination of different varieties of food brought by everyone that attended. Later in the afternoon, after the children enjoyed the play area, there was a cricket match followed by “Tug-of -Peace”.

All-in-all, a great time was had by everyone. There was much fun, laughter and cheering. The children and adults are most certainly looking forward to the next Family Values

Day!

A big thank you to everyone who helped make this day so enjoyable and our heartfelt gratitude to our Beloved Swami for bringing our children, their families, teachers and elders together from across the region stretching from Surrey, Sussex, Kent and Hampshire.

**SSE Team
Region 6**

Region 7 - SSE Students Visit St Bartholomew

On Saturday 28th of September 2013, the SSE students from Royal Wotton Bassett visited the St Bartholomew Church. In preparation for the visit, we had a lesson on Christianity, which included, the Life and the Teachings of Jesus Christ. We also learnt the hymn “Morning has Broken” and had a quiz afterwards.



As we walked to the church, we easily spotted the building which had a tall steeple and cross that was visible. We later learnt that the steeple pointed towards the heavens.



We were welcomed into the church by Father Thomas, who was very friendly and smiled as he greeted each of us, asking our names and where we came from. He took us to sit by the altar, and started by asking us to sit by the altar, and started by asking us to all join him in 2 minutes of silence. This felt very peaceful and quiet. Father Thomas then told us about the history of the church and explained the Bible stories that the stain glass windows depicted.

Father Thomas asked also about Swami's teachings and the SSE lessons we attended. He was most pleased to hear that we were taught that there was only one God and that we respect all religions and worship God by all names and forms. He was also very interested in the 5 Human Values that Swami has taught us to practice. He was also impressed to hear Swami taught us that God was in the hearts of everyone and told us that Jesus too taught that, "The Kingdom of heaven is within You".

Father Thomas said that the world was like an aquarium, and that we were all fish in it. All the fish were different looking and lots was going on, but also in the aquarium is God. He is the biggest fish and swims around quickly and we have to keep looking for Him and hope that we get at least a glimpse of him, or perhaps a glimpse of just his tail. And as we look into this aquarium from different sides, like the different religions, it may look different but is the same aquarium and we are all looking for that one Big fish, God.



One of the highlights of the trip for our younger brother and sisters was the opportunity to dress up in the church robes. They were very grand and colourful and Father Thomas explained the significance of the different colours worn on different occasions.

Father Thomas then played the church organ and we all sang, "Morning has Broken" together. It was a wonderful trip and we are eagerly awaiting our next visit. Father Thomas has given us an open invitation.

Urvika and Urvashi Patel

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