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## *Sathya Sai Education in Human Values, UK*

# *Newsletter June 2001*

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Welcome to the June 2001 Issue.

### CONTENTS

	<i>Page</i>
<i>News:</i>	
SSEHV Training in Israel	2
Sathya Sai Institute	2
<i>Lesson Plans:</i>	
Compassion (Discussion Exercise)	3
Sharing (Story)	4
Special Project: Creating a quiet garden in a school)	6
Equanimity/Peace (Poem)	9

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## NEWS ITEMS

### SSEHV Training in Israel

Two facilitators from the UK were invited to give SSEHV training in Israel for 5 days during May 2001. The training had been organised at the request of Ora Karov, SSEHV co-ordinator for Israel. Carole Alderman, UK coordinator, and Isobel Ritchie, a facilitator from Scotland were the volunteers from the UK. The training took place in a school on the outskirts of Hadera, a town mid way between Tel Aviv and Haifa.

Participants in the workshops averaged at 34 daily and an interpreter was used to help deliver the training modules, as many of those taking part did not speak English. Professions of those taking part were varied, including holistic health, psychology students, a psychologist, a school nurse, carer, architect, head teacher, salesperson, and newspaper advertising, to name a few.

Isobel Ritchie reports: "The modules went very smoothly and there was much hilarity for the group storytelling and lessons. While we could not speak to all the participants in Hebrew, nor they to us in English, we did manage to communicate our love and respect for each other by our gestures, our hugs, and our smiles. A wonderful energy was raised..."

These were the first SSEHV training modules given abroad by a team from the UK.

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### Sathya Sai Institute

The Institute of Sathya Sai Education was established to integrate the ideals of Sathya Sai Education in Primary and Secondary schools, colleges and universities.

The aims of the Institute are to be a centre for training and to assist in coordinating the training of teachers around the world. The Institute is also responsible in helping and encouraging the establishment of Sathya Sai Schools.

The Institute has recently launched its own website where further information is available.

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**DISCUSSION EXERCISE: Value - Compassion**

Compassion.

By Kay Challenor, KaiAMEa

*The following is a brief narrative on compassion designed to stimulate discussion, which can be handed out and then used in conjunction with questions that follow below.*

Compassion comes in many guises and follows many pathways. Compassion can be shown to another human being, regardless of age, sex, colour or creed. Compassion can be shown to animals, regardless of whether their looks appeal or whether you find them “useful.” Compassion can be shown to plants, whether they are foodstuffs, beauty in the form of flowers, or strong and noble trees.

Compassion is a value that helps to create a loving society of mutual trust and understanding. In order to be a compassionate being, you also need to give love and understanding to the self. To know that we are all equal at the spiritual level, all encompassing beings of light and love, and that if we truly seek to be compassionate and to tend for others and the plants and creatures within our environment, we also need to love and tend for ourselves.

Exercise on compassion

1. How do you show compassion to others?
  2. How do you show compassion to plants?
  3. How do you show compassion to animals?
  4. What benefits does compassion have?
  5. How do you show compassion to yourself? (Self love, self-acceptance, living your truth, trusting your intuition, allowing yourself to be creative and express your truth.)
  6. Draw a picture of a special landscape. An inner place where you would be happy.
  7. Look at the pictures collectively. What are the similarities? Discuss how we all see and sense fundamentally the same ideas if we look inside and connect to our inner messages.
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**STORY: VALUE- SHARING**

The Garden *by Kay Challenor*

Once upon a time there was a boy who had a beautiful garden. It was a lovely garden full of flowers and lovely trees and bushes. All year round something blossomed and so the garden was always a picture of colour.

In the centre of the garden there was a pond full of orange fish. Their scales would gleam and sparkle when the sunlight caught them and the boy would sit and watch them from under the shade of an old cherry tree.

You would have thought that the boy was happy. However, in spite of his garden the boy was sad for he had no one to share his garden with. He kept it a secret.

After school he would work in his garden and all weekend too. In fact all his spare time was spent weeding the flowerbeds, cutting the grass, planting seeds or just watching the fish swimming around the pool.

He hadn't told the other children about his garden because he thought that they would laugh at him. He did not show them because he thought that they might pick the flowers that he had spent so long looking after, or play games that might spoil it and undo all his hard work. So even though he felt quite lonely, the boy continued to keep the garden a secret.

The seasons passed, flowers blossomed, the trees lost their leaves and then grew new ones and still the boy worked alone in his garden, setting new plants, until the garden was more beautiful than ever and yet, the more beautiful the garden became, the more lonely the boy began to feel.

One evening the boy sat beneath the cherry tree by the pond and picked a handful of red cherries. He looked at them as they lay in the palm of his hand, looking soft and succulent. He could smell their sweet scent.

"What are you going to do with them?" a small voice enquired from above his head.

Looking upwards the boy saw a Mistle Thrush sitting in the lowest branch of the tree. Her eyes were sharp and bright, the light seeming to dance within them.

"What are you going to do with those cherries?" She repeated.

"What do you mean?"

"Well, are you going to eat them? Or are you going to take them home and put them in the fridge? Or are you going to leave them on the side and look at them?"

A dilemma! For if you eat them they will be gone. If you put them in the fridge you will have them but will be unable to experience them and when you do decide to eat them they will be cold and will have lost some of their sweetness. If you leave them on the side you will see them but they will go mouldy and perhaps will have been wasted. What are you going to do?

The boy thought about it, turning the cherries over within his hands. The juice began to ooze from one, leaving sweet syrup on his fingers. His mouth began to water.

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“Why, I’ll eat them,” he declared.

“A good decision. Indeed, a very good decision for it would be a pity to miss the experience of such perfect fruit. Leaving them for the future would be a disappointment, for the moment would be lost, they would be passed their best. No, it is right to enjoy them now when they are fresh and juicy. This moment is perfect. It is right to eat them now!”

The thrush tilted her head on one side and looked expectantly. The boy popped a cherry into his mouth. Then holding out his hand he offered a cherry to the thrush. She hopped down beside him and began to break the cherry with her beak. The boy watched, enjoying the experience of sharing the fruit with someone else. Then slowly the wisdom of the bird dawned on him.

He would never lose his garden. The heart of the garden would always exist because he was the heart of his garden. If flowers got picked or damaged then he would be able to plant new ones. He would always be able to keep his garden looking pretty. To truly experience his garden he needed to experience it in the moment and enjoy each precious minute.

So the boy began to share his secret and invited other children to come and see his garden. Do you know, they loved it! Although occasionally some children picked the flowers, the other children shared the work and helped to plant new seeds and to keep the garden looking neat and tidy. Now the boy was truly happy. He felt richer for having the admiration for his efforts and loved the experience of sharing his dream with the other children. The garden grew bigger and bigger and became ever more colourful and alive.

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## **SPECIAL PROJECT FOR TEACHERS: CREATING A QUIET AREA IN SCHOOL GROUNDS**

*Please note that school 'years' of children referred to below relate to those in England. Please apply appropriate year groups in other countries.*

The theme is Silent Sitting and how it can be encouraged at Secondary Level through the creation of a 'Special Quiet Area' in school grounds.

It incorporates all the five HUMAN VALUES as follows:

**LOVE:** acceptance, care, compassion, consideration, dedication, devotion, forbearance, gentleness, interdependence, patience, reverence, sacrifice service, sharing, thoughtfulness, and unselfishness.

**PEACE:** attention, calm, concentration, contentment, equanimity, focus, happiness, harmony, optimism, patience, reflection, satisfaction, self-acceptance, self-confidence, self-control, self-discipline, self-respect, understanding and inner silence.

**TRUTH:** Accuracy, curiosity, discernment, intuition, optimism, quest for knowledge, reason, self-analysis and self-awareness.

### **RIGHT CONDUCT:**

Self-Help Skills: Care of possessions and self-reliance.

Social Skills: good behaviour and helpfulness.

Ethical Skills: dependability, determination, duty, efficiency, ingenuity initiative, perseverance, punctuality, respect for all and responsibility.

**NON-VIOLENCE:** Psychological - benevolence, compassion for others, consideration, co-operation, forbearance and joy of life. Social appreciation of other cultures and religions, environmental care and respect of property.

### **PRACTICAL GUIDANCE AND TIPS**

**Step 1:** Sounding out opinion throughout the school.

Research could be carried out by a team from year 8 as part of their maths lesson. The task would involve devising and carrying out a survey through the school to:

- assess the amount of interest in and potential support for the project
- assess the best area to locate the Quiet Garden
- suggest ideas and give practical tips
- suggest ways of carrying out the work that would keep costs to a minimum
- give suggestions as to fund raising techniques.

**Step 2:** Researching Information.

Year 7 could do this as part of English skills, i.e. library skills and letter writing - requesting information from relevant authorities on the subject.

**Step 3:** Designing a layout.

A competition could be set up in the school; designs could be drawn, or painted either during art or design technology lessons, or pupils could do the designs in their spare time. Prizes could include tapes on silent sitting.

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**Step 4: Final design.**

A committee could be set up, or the school could use existing pupil /teacher councils. Pupils and teachers could look at the suggested plans and review any positive or negative comments on the scheme. Advice and comments could also be sought through the parents and governor bodies before the final plans are drawn up .

**Step 5: Plans and Models**

Plans and models to be delegated to older students. These could be prepared in supervised art and technology lessons under the guidance of teachers.

**Step 6: Display of Final Design.**

A scale model and plans could be displayed in a prominent place in the school. Students could be invited to look at the plans and write comments which could be posted into a suggestion box near the model.

**CONSTRUCTION OF THE QUIET GARDEN**

Responsibility for the work involved in setting up the garden could be delegated through the school, not only in terms of pupil year, but also in terms of subject

Here are some suggestions:

**Design Technology**

Designing and constructing benches, wind chimes, mobiles, arches and screens from living willow, bamboo and other natural products, water features and solar-powered light units.

**Art**

Pottery - designing and making large urns, sculptures, pots and other interesting garden objects.

**Fine Arts**

Looking at colour in terms of setting a peaceful mood. (Suggested Reading: Healing Gardens by Romy Rawlings- ISBN 0-297-82374-4 ).

Making designs for flowerbeds in terms of colour, shape height, texture, light and shade. Designing pathways and looking at the kinds of materials that can be used.

**Science**

Examining the durability of path materials; investigating how ecological considerations could be the basis for all materials uses in the scheme, animal friendly, non-toxic, taken from renewable sources, using recycled materials and so forth. Looking at plants and flowers that would be suitable to grow locally - suitability to climate, aspect and soil types.

Investigating which plants and flowers would encourage wildlife.

Looking at plants in terms of therapy, smelling attractive and raising the spirits

**Maths**

Calculating the size of areas for paths and beds.

Investigating the cost of different parts of the project.

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**Physics**

Supporting design work on arches and screens by investigating load bearing, stress factors and weight distribution.

**Religion**

Looking at the ways in which different religions use quiet time.  
Discussing the value of silent sitting and introspection.

**English**

Writing reports and newsletters. The best of these could be circulated round the school to keep the school up-to-date with the progress of the project.  
Writing poems and articles on the theme of the Silent Sitting Garden. Prizes could be given as incentives.

**VALUE OF THE PROJECT**

The project ties in with all five Human Values, as shown earlier. It not only encourages children to take an active interest in their immediate environment, but it would also foster the spirit of teamwork. Children would be working with others, not only in their own year, but also with others from different years. The school as a whole - pupils, teachers, assistants and parents could be involved in a common goal; thus encouraging the attitude of unity in diversity. The project offers a wide variety of activities which can be pursued at different levels of ability; for example children with learning or behavioural difficulties could be allocated tasks appropriate to their capability and thus promote feelings of greater self-esteem.

At a time when there is so much pressure on teachers and pupils alike, to meet National Curriculum Targets and P.S.H.E. criteria, a Silent Sitting Garden would provide a place where pupils and teachers could go to withdraw from worldly pressures for a while. The garden could act as an oasis of calm during the busy school day and as a safety valve for those feeling depressed or stressed. The garden could also provide a quiet place for encouraging inspiration, creative thinking and self-renewal.

The upkeep and maintenance of the garden would in itself provide opportunities for pupils to take responsibility at a very practical level and to interact with each other in a positive and creative way. One of the great values of this project is that it would be on-going and open ended and could be extended, added to, improved or modified at any time according to changing circumstances.

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## POEM: VALUES - EQUANIMITY/PEACE

## TIME TO BE

I'm always busy doing  
I never have time to be,  
Nor time to sit and look at  
A flower, a bird, a tree.

I'm waiting to be happy.  
I think I'll feel better when  
I get a new P.C. or  
When my brother's age is ten!

I'm always busy doing  
I never have time to be,  
Nor time to sit and look at  
A flower, a bird, a tree.

I can't wait for that party  
I've just got to have that dress.  
If I could score some great goals  
I really would impress.

I'm always busy doing  
I never have time to be,  
Nor time to sit and look at  
A flower, a bird, a tree.

If only Mum would understand,  
If my Dad would show he cared,  
If only Sis left me alone  
And brother of me was scared!

Would I then be so busy doing?  
Would I then have time to be?

## Questions:

1. What is this poem about?
  2. What values is it trying to highlight?
  3. What in your life makes you stop 'just being'?
  4. What could you do to reduce the impact of these?
  5. How can we practice the values the poem highlights?
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