



# Zone 6 Youth Newsletter

SSO Zone 6 Youth Wing

Issue 5: January – February 2008

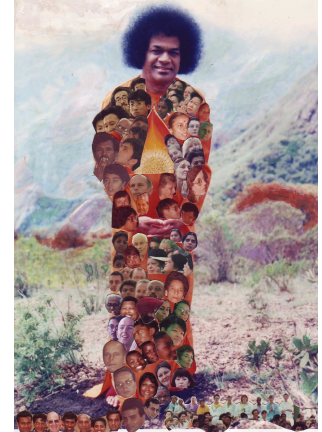
Dear Sai Brother and Sisters, Om Sai Ram!

I hope you all had an enlightening Mahashivaratri.

In this edition you will find the various activities taking place in our zone and you will discover more on one of the main topics: Unity in Diversity.

The Youth Committee decided to give our newsletter a name, there are already some ideas. We would like the youth to participate in naming the newsletter. You are all kindly invited to send us your suggestions at the following e-mail address: [sajasvilar@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:sajasvilar@yahoo.co.uk) Thank you all in advance for your help. May Swami inspire you all.

Enjoy the reading!



## Love All Serve All – an opportunity to experience

The National Retreat, organised by the Italian Sathya Sai Organisation during the weekend of the 16-17 of February in Pescara, was a great success from all point of views, a divine sign of Swami's blessing.

The topic "Love All Serve All – an opportunity to experience" gave the audience, of about 400 devotees and non-devotees, the opportunity to discover the Sai work done in Italy during past 30 years, hear about the wings activities and to listen to the divine messages given by Dr. Michael Goldstein – Chairman of the SSSWF, Dr. Narendra Reddy – Director of the SSSWF, Alida Parks – Zone 6 Chairperson, Marco Pesce – President of SSSO of Italy and Ivan Bavcevic – Zone 6 Youth Coordinator.

Unity as part of spiritual transformation was one of the most important topics touched in all the speeches. Dr. Goldstein explains the concept by saying "We strive to be the big I but we communicate and interact as the little I.

*Always when any devotee speaks, to the extent that he is true to His Mission, which is to achieve self realization, then he must speak from a perspective above ego, above selfish motives*

*and desires. He must speak with selfless love, recognizing that truly, in the highest and deepest sense, we are all one. God, out of Himself, made many. We are among the many striving to come together and restore our unity in God. God watches our adventure or misadventure.*



*He is the eternal witness. When we become obsessed with our separateness and wreak havoc on the collective welfare of mankind, God inspires us in His magnificent, invisible ways. He brings us together. When our ego fervor becomes fever and the fever becomes fanaticism that threatens the integrity, even the existence of mankind, then the Lord walks*

*among us and directly and indirectly makes repairs in our tendencies and our practices. He alters the course of our human affairs. He awakens the sleeping heart. He lights the lamp of love in our hearts which confers the warmth of Divine Love and the Light of Divine Wisdom."*

The retreat gave everybody the opportunity to get inspired and find the long waited for answers during the speeches and the conversations that took place during the spare time.



The youth – a group of nearly thirty people coming mostly from Italy and from other countries like Spain and Switzerland – presented the Love All Serve All project by singing three songs spread during the weekend. All the rehearsals of the songs and the moves until late in the night and the great effort by all the youth was worthwhile: the smiling audience appreciated the show very much.

Saja Svilar  
Regional Youth Coordinator, Switzerland

## Being yourself

Dear Sai devotees, dear guests, Sai ram,  
I am grateful for this wonderful opportunity to address this conference and offer my lecture to our beloved Teacher, Sathya Sai Baba.

My name is Ivan and I come from Dubrovnik (Ragusa) in Croatia. In Sai Organization I was given a task of coordinating youth activities in Zone 6, which is South Europe consisting of 14 different countries.

On an earthly level I do not speak Italian, but I speak it for you today because messages like these that come from the heart are best

The youth found the time for a spontaneous meeting to discuss the importance of the Youth Wing for each one of them. Most of the reflections were on Sai activities done so far, which made them realise their great élan to continue their work on the spiritual path and to increase it as well over all concerning the LASA project. Improving the unity nationwide and zone-wide, over all with the neighbour countries, was also part of the reflections.

A great thank you goes to Jessica Scarlato and Angelo delle Cave for their huge effort and patience for the Youth Wing and many thanks to all the people, which made this wonderful event possible.

Swami's lovely energy and the great joy invaded all the hearts present at the retreat, so that everybody left Pescara enlightened and enriched by a marvellous memory, a huge amount of enthusiasm, dying to work all together in Sai activities and really looking forward to meet soon again.

Following you will find the full version discourse held by Ivan Bavcevic in Pescara on the concept of being yourself and its meaning. For those of you eager to read the other enlightening speeches, please visit the Zone 6 webpage.

Sending you all the love and élan from Pescara.

understood in one's native language. I wanted to give this as a gift to all of you here.

Last summer in July I held a speech on "Surrendering to God" in front of Swami and another 20.000 people in Puttaparthi and after that I received numerous emails from around the world on how people were touched by the speech. Some devotees from the USA were proposing to their national leaders that every Sai center in America should do a study circle on my speech. I froze when I heard that and said to my self: "I better watch what I say from now on,

people actually listen to what is said!" But what is even more important that I realized is to watch what I say in front of the Avatar because He makes it come into reality. I sometimes ask myself whether it was the smartest thing in my life to speak about surrender in front of Him because ever since July I can see some invisible hand pushing me in that direction, wanted or not. There is no way back. So, learning from that experience I am publicly speaking about surrender again today.

Although surrender is the easiest thing in the universe it is actually the hardest for our mind and mental concepts. It is the easiest because you don't have to do anything, but be who you really are. It is the hardest because it requires the mind to stop being the illusion, to stop controlling our emotions and thoughts and to stop fooling us that we will die if it stops being what it is. It seems that it is easier for us to play the theatre roles we were given than to simply be our true selves.

I like bringing this concept of surrender to a practical level. Spirituality should be and is something practical and applicable in every day life. There is no need to make it abstract and useless to our lives. Spirituality has to be practical because there is no other way in which we can integrate it fully in our family life, working life, personal life or any other aspect that we live. Practical spirituality means living it 24 hours 7 days a week, not just when we sit in meditation or go to church.

When you bring surrender, my topic today, to a practical level it simply means listening to the silent voice which is constantly speaking to us from within (be it a gut feeling, intuition, the sense of right and wrong, etc.), it means being yourself, it means not fearing or worrying, it means being even minded in good or bad, it means trusting that everything happens for your highest well being, it means knowing that you have created every situation you experience and that nothing happens without God's will, which is your will since you and God are one.

So ask yourself these 4 questions:

Who am I that is surrendering?

Who is the one I surrender to?

Why do I surrender?

What does it look like when you surrender?

I will let you answer these questions in the silence on your hearts and your personal meditations.



For most of us it is very hard to accept that we are the cause of our lives and the situations that happen. It is hard to accept that we create our experiences, but that is what being a Creator means. In every moment of your life you are making a choice. Do I go left or right or straight back or do I stand where I am? Every one of those decisions will take you to a new decision and a new situation. And that is how it goes. But do not think that you are alone. Besides being under the influence of your own thoughts and decisions, you are under the influence of the collective thoughts and decisions of the groups you are in: family, work, social club, city, nation, planet, and others. Not too many of us are able to live our lives not influenced by our surroundings. I know only one and I am nowhere near that.

But we as devotees of God have a wonderful instrument and tool to help us in our lives. We have the Avatar Himself being within us and around us, reminding us that we are the very God, embodiments of Divine Love, the created and the Creator. He beautifully confirms: "I am guarding you as close and alert as the eyelids guard the eye. No matter where you go, always do your duty as you see it, and know that I will be there inside you, guiding you every step of

the way. You are my very own, dearer than dear to Me. I will never leave you and you can never leave Me. From this point on, do not hanker after anything. Do your duty with unwavering love, see all as God. Have the Lords Name on your lips always." I wonder how dare we fear after such a message from Swami?

To make all of this more tangible, I want to share with you several examples from my life when I acted as my true self. You would think that in 30 years of living one would learn to always get it right, but, as Einstein said, never doubt human silliness ☺. One of the many times when I listened to my inner voice was at the university. I just finished the first year and was given a choice of 2 jobs that I could take over the summer. One job was as a Cruise Manager on a river cruise ship in Russia going between Moscow and St. Petersburg. It was a fantastic job for someone of age 20 and the salary was 3.000 dollars a month. The other job was working for the university developing a study for 200 dollars a month. Everybody expected I would go on a cruise ship. But deep within I felt that I have to stay and work at the university. My parents thought I was crazy because we didn't have money to pay for this private university and I needed to earn money during the summer; my mind was telling me I have to go; everything was telling me I have to go, but I knew that I had to stay. So I stayed. The first day on work they gave me a big doctorate thesis paper from a doctoral graduate student in the USA and told me that I have to do something similar. I said: No problem! I went home, locked the door and starting screaming and wanted to hit my head on the wall. I was only 20 years old and was supposed to make a doctoral thesis for 200 dollars a month and I sure didn't know how to do it. But after a few minutes I was confident that I could do it. I said: "Dear God, I (You) put myself into this, now You help me get through it." I found people to help me and after 3 months I finished the work. The work was so good that they gave me a scholarship so I didn't have to pay for the university, they took

me on a 10-day trip to New York and I continued having a paying job with them. It turned out to be so much better than the cruise ship which seemed a logical choice in the beginning. I was so happy I listen to my self and took the risk.

I had many more experiences like that when I allowed myself to be myself and didn't listen to what others were saying. Unfortunately, I still didn't manage to maintain that state of being constantly. Our intuition always knows better. Whenever I listened to my mind and ignored the voice from within I regretted it. And I must notice that the older I get the harder it gets. I was more willing to take risks before and to listen to what I felt within. I was never wrong.

But ever since I started having a good job, a high salary, a nice big car, a nice house, I started thinking more and feeling intuition less. Fear and worry would come up thinking that I might loose all of this. I would use my mental power more than my spiritual power from within. I stopped trusting my inner guidance as blindly as I used to trust it as a child or a student. In 2006 I was sick of this state of my life. I felt like a slave of my own material success. I knew that fear and worrying are exactly the opposite of my true reality, which is Love itself. So I made a drastic move and quit the job, stopped living expensively and brought material insecurity which forced me to rely not purely on my physical and mental abilities, but on faith and the workings of my soul.

Of course it is important that we are successful and respected in the society. Swami expects His youth to be like lions, kings among the men. Courageous and just. Brave and glorious. He once said: it is so easy to live in a shack with nothing. It takes courage to achieve something in life.

Being a devotee of God is not just a privilege, but a responsibility as well. When Swami graciously manifested this ring for me many friends in Croatia called me on the phone to congratulate me and to tell me to stay away from them for the next few years. They said when

someone receives so much grace at once he has difficult times coming ahead, it is better not to be around you ☺. It is more of a joke. The responsibility that one has is that people will notice you and they will say "he is a devotee of Sai Baba." Or they will ask you about something and you will have no option but to say that you follow Swami's teachings. They will then expect certain behavior, character, honest actions and serving attitude. Three months ago I was parking my car in a foreign country and a 10-year old child came to ask me for some change and in return he would watch that nobody steals my car. He had beautiful smile and seemed so childishly happy. He looked at my hand and asked me why I was wearing a girl ring. I said that it is not a girly ring, but a gift from someone special. He looked at the ring even more and then asked me: "Is it a magical ring?" I had tears in my eyes and said: "Yes, it is a magical ring." He immediately invited other friends to come and see a magical ring. It is wonderful how children have no constraints and have the ability to see truth.

Let me now give you a few practical points that Swami once said that can help you be your true self. To be able to live your life according to your highest truth and to reach liberation you should build a house in which to live that life. The house should have:

1. **The base of Self-confidence** – it is not the confidence in just the physical and mental aspect of your being, but the confidence in God, who is your only true self. The body and the mind are just the tool for the Self to act in the manifested world and experience it.

2. **The walls of Self-satisfaction** – you should be happy with your self. You are perfect, just as you should be. Everything is perfect, just as it should be. That is why God is never upset. He knows that everything is just as it should be. Never

judge yourself because you then show that you do not trust or love God. You are as you are, and He loves you fully. He loves Himself fully. If you see your certain behavior or characteristics that you don't think are good for your spiritual development, just accept them and discard them like a used paper. Don't judge it, just accept, discard as useless and move on in a new image of who you are.

3. **The roof of Self-sacrifice** – this means doing something for the greater good, even if you don't feel like doing it. It does not mean crawling on your knees up the mountain redeeming your sins. Self-sacrifice is a natural being of soul because the soul knows that everything it does, it does for itself because there is no other. Everything and everyone is One. Everything you do, you do for Yourself.

In such a house you can live a life of Self-realization. You can be who you are and not be afraid.

I have here in my hand a 5 EURO bill. Would someone from the audience like to receive this bill? I am giving it away as a gift; you can buy something with it.

OK. I will now crush it in my hand so it doesn't look as nice. Would you still like to get it?

OK. I will now throw it on the ground and stamp on it. Would you still like to get it?

Does it still have the same value as before? Can you go to a store and buy something with it?

The same is with you. Life may hit you, and hurt you and throw you into dust, but you would still be as you really are... PRICELESS. That is why Swami says: "Never forget, not even for a day, how very special you are!"

Thank you again for giving me this opportunity to talk to you. May Swami bless us all and may we always live in His presence.

Sai Ram.

Ivan Bavcevic  
Zone 6 Youth Coordinator

## Croatia

Dear aspects of Sai,  
it is a real pleasure when time comes to submit a few words to our Newsletter and you have plenty of material to share with sisters and brothers. To be honest, there are times when you have nothing to say, write or send and you have to pray to Swami to help you, but that's what life is all about, isn't it?.....to be with Swami in whatever we do and to have faith that everything is for our welfare, no matter what are the circumstances!

To inform you, on 19th of January 2008, Sai Youth from all parts of Croatia gathered in Zagreb for the first National Meeting of this year; 12 boys (11 from Croatia, 1 from Bosnia) and 14 girls (12 from Croatia, 2 from Slovenia). Swami blessed us with so many beautiful ideas and let nothing for us to do, but realize them all.

It seemed that those who were participating in the meeting are ready and are barely waiting for the green light to start with work, besides the feeling of presence of those who were not able to come but eagerly wait to join in for new projects and ideas... So here are some glimpses of ideas, news and projects.



### Youth and EHV

There's an idea for integration of work of Youth with work of other wings of Sai Organization in Croatia, particularly with EHV wing. LASA (Love All, Serve All) project is one of the examples of project of service in EHV through singing inspirational songs. It was proposed to inform Youth of future activities in newsletter.

On the weekend of 26th of January Sai youth participated in Bal Vikas retreat and were full of

praises and sweet words in reviews for our National newsletter.

Just to get the picture how it was, hereby, have a look at our pictures.



### Retreats for Sai Youth in Split

The youth retreats on mount Moser, near Split, will take place separately for the girls during the last weekend of March and at during the first weekend of April for the boys. We would try to stress again the importance of implementation of Sadhana in our everyday life in an informal way, through various workshops and games. Almost 20 girls and 15 boys already confirmed their participation. More on these events in next newsletter

### Greece: Girls Retreat

Beside our National Retreats, recently we have received an invitation for another retreat for girls, from 7th till 14th of July, 2008 in Greece.

There's a rumor that girls are already making plans to spend the rest of their summer holidays in Prashanti Nilayam, proceeding straight away from Greece to Puttaparthi.

### Presentation of exhibition – WYC 2007

We had a review of presentation of exhibition from Sri Sathya Sai World Youth Conference 2007, which was a representation of work of Sai Youth from all around the world and their experiences in Sadhana program.

We are considering idea of having presentation of the exhibition in Croatia.

## "Sai Vision" in Croatia

For quite some time we were dreaming of starting Sai Eurovision, manifestation similar to Eurosong contest but without competition and winners...

Invitation has been already sent to National Coordinators of countries of ex-Yugoslavia, as there are no language obstacles.

All songs written by devotees have to be sent on certain address by 20th of August, when there will be selection, if necessary. In the meantime, the date of happening will be set.

If manifestation happens to be inspirational and gains success, next year some other country will take organisation of 2nd Sai Vision.

## Sai Theater

It seems that of all ideas this one is most promising. We would like to make shows, dramas and musicals playing Swami's teaching in an inspirational way for all who come to see regardless of their beliefs.

Antonio Bratos

National Youth Coordinator, Croatia

## Slovenia

In January and February we met as usually every Tuesday. We prepared study circles on different topics such as self - inquiry and positive thinking. In addition to that, every second or third Saturday we visited Ana (older lady about whom you could read a lot in previous issues) and supplied her with wood briquettes and

Tina Hribar Trifunović

National Youth Coordinator, Slovenia

## Spain

A youth meeting took place in Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, on the 12<sup>th</sup> of January, with the participation of 19 youth and 14 adults, mainly

## Croatian Sai Youth Newsletter

Sai Newsletter has a new editor – Gordana Sarcevic.

Gordana stated that Youth can send to her whatever they want – their inspirations, thoughts, feelings, experiences, in order to enrich our newsletter. She stressed out how important is for all of us to share our experiences with others to inspire each other.

As you can see there are many beautiful ideas and with Swami's blessings and approvals we would certainly accomplish and realize all of them.

If you are interested in what we do or you just think you have advices or suggestions how we can improve all these activities, feel free to contact us or even better to visit us... we would be honoured, grateful and happy to make your stay in Croatia a remarkable one!

Sai love to all.

pressed coal. Altogether we brought her 300 kg of briquettes and will continue to do until the end of the winter period.

In February our attention was also focused on preparations for the celebration of Mahashivaratri which will take place on March 6. Light and Love from Slovenia!

office bearers. Many topics were discussed. Among these, the Regional Coordinator of the Canary Islands, *Felisa Pineda*, carried out a

presentation on service activities for the youth and opportunities in which they could participate. Another PowerPoint presentation on the Sai Camp held last summer, that took place in La Longuera (Albacete), showed the beautiful experience in which children, parents and teachers learned from each other and shared the essence of practical values blossoming from their hearts through the different activities carried out during the camp. The Regional Coordinator motivated the youth present to help in the preparation for the Sai Camp intended to take place in summer this year. A final PowerPoint presentation, created by the youth in Tenerife, was shown. This pictured various service activities which the youth conducted throughout the year.

An interesting feature of this meeting was the videoconference held between Sachin, National Youth Coordinator of Spain, and the group gathered for the meeting. In this interaction, both sides could hear each other's voices and even see each other at the same time. It was similar to a Skype meeting, however this time we used Yahoo Messenger. Some of the topics which came up were LASA, Q and A about LASA, Sai Challenges, and the need for translators.

Finally, the Regional Coordinator of the Canary Islands presented *Vinod Mahtani* as the Regional Youth Coordinator of the Canary Islands as well as *Amrit Melwani* and *Prashant Daswani* as the new youth coordinators of Las Palmas. All three were well accepted, in an ambience of harmony, by all of the youth and office bearers gathered.

A small meeting took place in Madrid, on the 26<sup>th</sup> of January, where youth gathered and practiced some of the LASA songs. Even though only 3 youth could meet, their satisfaction after having practiced and learnt the songs was very uplifting and worthwhile. They felt joy and a connection with their hearts while practicing the five songs they could cover, and have decided to share these songs in the devotional singing sessions, introducing them to all the members,

both youth and adults, in the Sai Centre of Madrid.



Youth of Tenerife are undertaking regular service activities visiting and taking care of elderly people who live in third age houses or asylums. The youth participated in three service activities choosing Sunday as the ideal day when they could meet and visit the elderly. A nice thing is that almost half of the youth who were present belonged to different belief systems, and were so inspired and motivated that they are resolved to take part in future service activities organized by Sai Organization.



Approximately 7 youth gathered for the activity which took place on two occasions in Los Asilos, Santa Cruz de Tenerife and once in Hermanos de la Cruz Blanca, Tenerife.

While they are together, they speak with each other, play games, take them out for walks, sing songs together, feed the ones who need help for eating, and paint the nails of the women. The youth forget about their problems when they share these beautiful experiences such as listening to aged people who feel so happy to be in company with youngsters, and something



happens in the hearts of our youth which reminds them that love is supreme. Some of the aged people who are taken care of are disabled, and many of them feel abandoned and alone. For them, these visits are the food

Sachin G. Keswani  
National Youth Coordinator, Spain

## Switzerland

The New Year started off very well for the Swiss youth, following the blood donation idea of one of our brothers, a seva has been organised in different regions of our country. Due to the opening hours of the transfusion centres, there was not the possibility to go all together. One blood donation service took place on the 17<sup>th</sup> of January in Zurich and the other one on the 24<sup>th</sup> January in Lugano.

It was a nice way of getting involved in a seva activity, getting to know each other better, increasing the unity of the group. Swami seems to appreciate this kind of seva, in fact the next blood donation day will be organised in Basel on the 13<sup>th</sup> of March.



On the weekend of the 16-17 February the Swiss youth split into two, the Swiss-German group went to the National Youth Meeting on the 16<sup>th</sup>

Saja Svilar  
Regional Youth Coordinator, Switzerland

their soul seeks for, and for our youth, their happiness is the greatest gift which in turn makes them even happier.

Om Sai Ram.

of February in Zurich and the Swiss-Italian group spent the whole weekend in Pescara for the zonal meeting.

During the National Youth Meeting the concept of Ideal *Sai Youth* has been discussed and analysed again for a better understanding of the past, present and future of the Swiss Youth Wing. The following questions have been discussed during the study circle: What is Sai Youth? What does Swami say about Youth? What is the difference between Sai Youth and the general concept of Youth? Each one had the chance to express how he/she feels about being a Sai Youth.

The Pescara weekend was very intense and very beautiful at the same time. The Swiss youth had the chance to meet the Italian youth again, feeling their great energy and love, which created the same unity and synergy felt in Prasanthi. The evening rehearsal of the *Love All Serve All* songs until late night and singing in front of the Italian audience was real fun and a pleasure as well.

In the coming newsletter you are going to discover some interesting insides about the National Youth Meeting in March and the Youth Retreat in the Swiss Alps, in Lenk, taking place in April.

In Sai love.

## Agenda

The agenda is thought to inform the Sai Youth about the future Sai activities of our zone and to give the opportunity to whoever is interested to participate in any of the following events a/o to visit the Sai family in any other country of our zone. Please contact your National Youth Coordinator for further information.

15<sup>th</sup> March 2008: *National Youth Meeting*, Zurich – Switzerland (National Event)

28-30 March 2008: *Girls Retreat*, Mount Mosor – Croatia (National Event)

04-06 April 2008: *Boys Retreat*, Mount Mosor – Croatia (National Event)

25-27 April 2008: *National Youth Retreat*, Lenk – Switzerland (National Event)

30 April-4 May 2008: *Balkan Retreat*, Vrujci – Serbia (Region 62 Event)

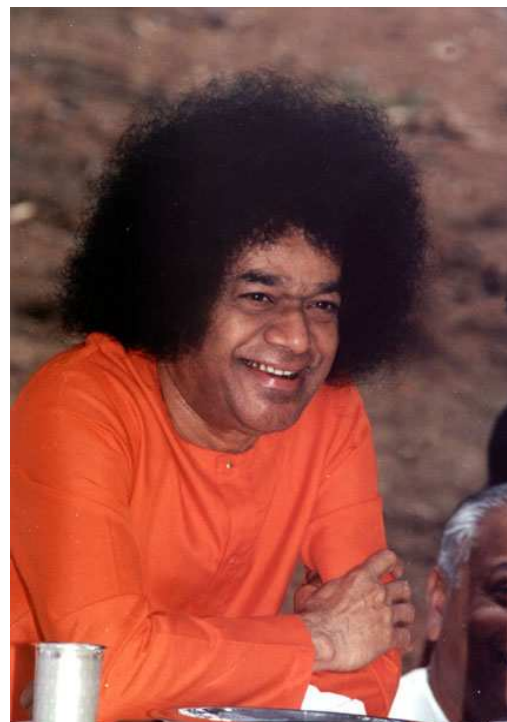
07-14 July 2008: *Ladies Retreat*, Athens – Greece (Zonal Event)

## Prasanthi Nilayam, 5<sup>th</sup> of January

All religions teach one basic discipline, the removal of egoism and giving up of petty desires.

Every religion teaches man to fill his being with the glory of God and evict the pettiness of conceit. It trains him in methods of detachment and discrimination, so that he may aim high and attain liberation.

Believe that all hearts are motivated by the One and only God; all Faiths glorify the One and only God; all names in all languages and all Forms that man can conceive of, denote the One and the only God who is best worshipped through pure Love. Cultivate that Ekabhava (the attitude of oneness) towards men of all creeds in all lands.



**BABA**

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***We offer our newsletter at the Lotus***

***Feet of Our Beloved Bhagavan.***

***May He guide and direct our work.***

***May He lead us on the way to unity.***

***May He keep enlightening our hearts with***

***His Divine Love all the time and draw a***

***beautiful smile on our faces to enlighten all***

***the people we meet.***

***Jai Sai Ram.***