

## EDITOR'S COMMENT

With the blessings of Lord Shree Swaminarayan, His Holiness Acharya Shree Tejendraprasadji Maharaj, and Bhuj Mahant Purani Swami Hariswarupdasji, and upon numerous requests from fellow satsangis, SKS Swaminarayan Temple, East London is delighted to distribute this very first Newsletter. It has been issued by the Yuvak Mandal on behalf of the Temple.

It is intended that Yuvak Mandal will prepare Newsletters on a regular basis, mainly to keep youngsters informed of various activities, events and general information that is of interest to them, relating to the Temple.

It is hoped that this will shorten the communication gap with the youngsters of today and encourage them into Temple activities without any pressure.

Hopefully, after reading this first newsletter a few of you will be excited to join and help the Newsletter editorial team.

If this is the case or you need further information, then please e-mail the editorial team at [newsletter@SwaminarayanMandir.org.uk](mailto:newsletter@SwaminarayanMandir.org.uk).

Also, if anyone has articles that may interest our youths then please also e-mail these to the above address with your full contact name, address and age. The editorial team will be delighted to respond and inform you of the outcome following consultation on your topic.

Special thanks to the sponsors of this first newsletter issue goes to Suraj & Jiten Hirani.

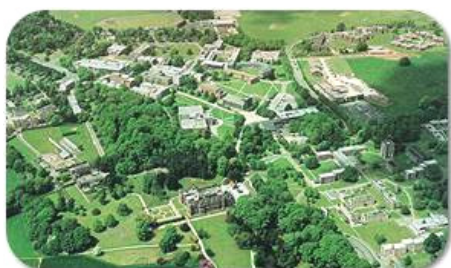
Also, thank you in advance to the editors of future issues of the SKS Swaminarayan Temple Yuvak Mandal newsletter.

**Dinesh Hirani**  
Marketing Manager  
SKSST Yuvak Mandal, East London

## Swaminarayan Shibir (Camp)

What is a SHIBIR? There is no single word to describe Shibir in English. Simplistically, a SHIBIR is a Sanskrit word meaning, a flawless spiritual, culturally, educational and entertaining camp., otherwise.

The Shibir will take place on 29<sup>th</sup>, 30<sup>th</sup>, 31<sup>st</sup> August and 1<sup>st</sup> September 2003 (Friday, Saturday, Sunday, and Monday). This will be the first Shibir in UK attended by Rajkot Gurukul blessed Saints. It will also be the first shibir organised by SKS Swaminarayan Temple, East London for religious education of the youths mainly.



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## LORD SHREE SWAMINARAYAN

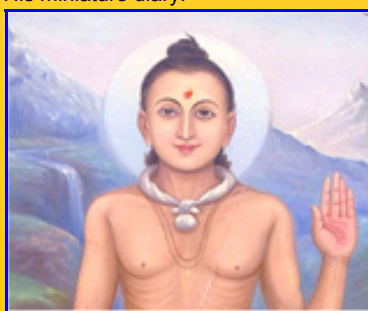


What a woeful state of affairs was all around during the late 18<sup>th</sup> century. The priests had lost their purity; the rulers ruled as the ferocious mad tigers; the robbers strangled unwary lonely travellers; armies plundered villages; notorious criminal tribes looted whatever they could and killed whomsoever opposed them; and the temples were defiled by meat, wine and open adultery. Such was the critical stage through which the world, in particular India was passing through.

At this critical time a saviour appeared on the scene. The saviour was none other than Lord Swaminarayan. He incarnated (born) at 10:10pm on 2<sup>nd</sup> April 1781 (the ninth day of the bright half of the month Chaitra in Vikram Samvat year 1837 according to the Hindu calendar, the day is also known as Ram Navmi, as it is also the birthday of Lord Shree Ram). He incarnated in Chapaiya, a small village 20km from north of Ayodhya.

He was known as Ghanashyam in His early days. When he reached the age of 101 days, a sage came to name Him. The sage announced that because He has born in the cancer zodiac sign, He will remove the pain and misery of countless people and be known as Hari. As He will attract minds of innumerable souls, He will be known as Krishna. Union of Hari and Krishna will give Him a third name Harikrishna.

Because of a deep sense of non-attachment and asceticism, Ghanashyam renounced His home and went towards north of India for penance on 29<sup>th</sup> June 1792 (V.S. 1849). At this time Ghanashyam was only eleven years old. He began His pilgrimage on bare foot taking only a loin cloth, an idol of Bal Mukund, rosary, kamandal for receiving food that may be offered by people, a piece of cloth to filter water and His miniature diary.



Ghanashyam's austerity, asceticism and detachment were like Lord Shiva, so the sages of Pulashram had given Him the name 'Neelkanth' during his pilgrimage.

He travelled from one place to another and along the way His personality and charm made kings offer Him money, kingdoms, etc. But Neelkanth remained un-attracted to these mundane things. Finally, He arrived in Loj near Mangrol, on the morning of 21<sup>st</sup> August 1799. He had visited more than 150 places, travelling over 1200km in seven years, one month and eleven days.

Seven years of pilgrimage, without regular diet and sleep had reduced Neelkanth to almost a skeleton, such that one could see and count all bones, ribs and veins. Nevertheless, His spiritual strength sparked through His emerald eyes full of love and compassion for all.

Neelkanth's pilgrimage was a planned one and not just wandering. During His pilgrimage He fulfilled the following objectives:-

- Bestowed grace and darshan to many who had been offering devotion and performing austerities to receive God's grace.
- Wiped out evils from the Earth.
- Visited the most holy places in India and protected the prevailing level of Dharma (Virtue).



During His pilgrimage He mastered a special form of yoga (i.e. Ashtang Yoga) in just nine months for which others would need to devote persistent endeavour for many years.

On the morning of Friday 19<sup>th</sup> June 1800, Neelkanth along with Muktanand Swami and other saints came to Piplana and the historic meeting of Neelkanth and Ramanand Swami took place.

Ramanand Swami had initiated 19 years old Neelkanth as a sadhu (i.e. saint) on 20<sup>th</sup> October 1800 and gave Him two unique names. One Sahajanand Swami as Neelkanth gives natural bliss to souls, and the other Narayan Muni as penance, nature and form of Neelkanth was as form of Lord Narayan.

Ramanand Swami had ceremoniously appointed Sahajanand Swami as his successor and the Head of the fellowship at Jetpur on 16<sup>th</sup> November 1801. At that time the age of Sahajanand Swami was only 20 years and 7 months.

From then onwards the holy fellowship has been known as the 'Swaminarayan' fellowship and also as 'Satsang'. Devotees of the holy fellowship have been known as 'Satsangis'.



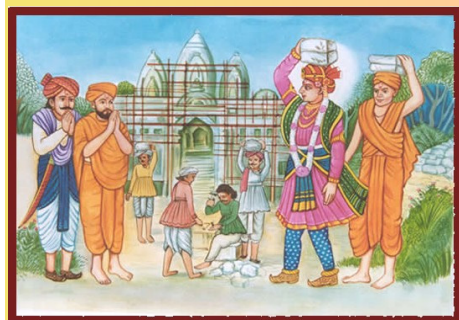
## "Jay Shree Swaminarayan"

You may have heard that the UK and Europe saw the telecast of the first episode of "Jay Shree Swaminarayan" serial on Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> April 2003 at 8:00am GMT on Zee Network.

This mythological serial is a journey on the life of Lord Swaminarayan, which includes places of worship and temples in India and abroad. His life and philosophy whilst present in this world, His birth, pilgrims, meeting with saints like Ramanand Swami and Muktanand Swami, His initiation, becoming head of the Swaminarayan Fellowship, His departure, etc. are all covered to give viewers complete understanding of His life, paths and deeds.

Nothing like this has ever been produced and was long awaited to give today's youths and their parents an insight into life of Lord Shree Swaminarayan. ZeeTV is set to telecasts one episode each Sunday morning at 8:00am GMT.

In total there are 104 episodes, which are estimated to last until April 2005 if shown once every week from its launch date.



Due to its great success both in India and the USA, and despite a fee of approximately £335 per episode charged by Zee Network, H. H. Tejendraprasadji Maharajshri and young Pujya Kaushalendraprasadji (Lalji) Maharajshri have given consent to the telecasting of "Jay Shree Swaminarayan" funded directly by Shree Swaminarayan Temple, Kalupur, Ahmedabad, India. The making of the serial had cost Kalupur Temple millions of rupees, because it has been shot at places where Lord had been making it of significance importance now and at that time.

To show our helping hand in this sacred serial, SKS Swaminarayan Temple, East London have agreed to sponsor five episodes, with other UK Temples also joining in.

Those who have been watching the serial since its launch and find difficult to understand sophisticated Hindi, will be delighted to hear that from the next 4-5 weeks we will see episodes with English subtitles.

## Rare New Devotee

The reader of this Newsletter may find it surprising and hard to believe if one said that there is a young English boy following the Swaminarayan Faith at a tender age of 15 years. Yes, this is a genuine story.

A 15 year old boy namely, John Harvey living in East Ham has been following Hinduism for the past 8 months and wanted to visit a local Hindu Temple. He contacted SKS Swaminarayan Temple, East London via the Temple website and its e-mail centre on 26<sup>th</sup> March 2003.

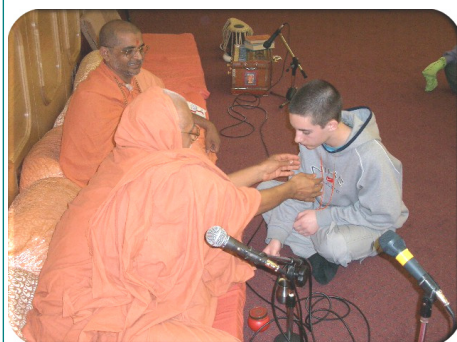
His mother is a Christian and his father an

Atheist, and both are very open minded about what John believes. He considers himself a Hindu as he believes all forms of God are endless past Hinduism. In fact, he believes that Hinduism is the first and then comes all other sects and religions. He heard a Shiva Bhajan one day and ever since he says he has felt God for the first time in his life, and that the Hindu path has given him warmth and stability.

He follows 5 commandments from the Swaminarayan Faith including,

- Do not take alcohol or intoxicants
- Do not steal
- Do not eat meat
- Do not indulge in an impure life
- Do not commit adultery.

He also likes Religious Studies and has written a report on his knowledge on Santana Dharma, Hinduism, and The Everlasting Religion, which can be seen by visiting the link <http://www.freewebs.com/freemind/>. This report was handed to Year 7 students at his school for RS as it was very good.



He visited the East London Temple on 21<sup>st</sup> April 2003 and ever since he has promised to visit the Temple every Monday at 5:30pm in time for the Aarti. On Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> May 2003 in front of many devotees Shashtri Swami Madhavpriyadasji of Rajkot Gurukul, India initiated him to the Swaminarayan Sect. He received tiluk on his forehead, a double rosary (i.e. Kanthi) around his neck, RealLife Magazine, and an English version of the Shikshapatri and Lord Swaminarayan An Incarnation to read and understand the basics.

Immediately after the initiation on the same Saturday, he sends an e-mail to the Temple saying how much today meant to him, it was very special and that he felt his life has re-started. His account of the day has been placed on his website at <http://www.johnharvey.has.it> under "I am now officially a Swaminarayan Hindu, Click here to read how" on his main web page.



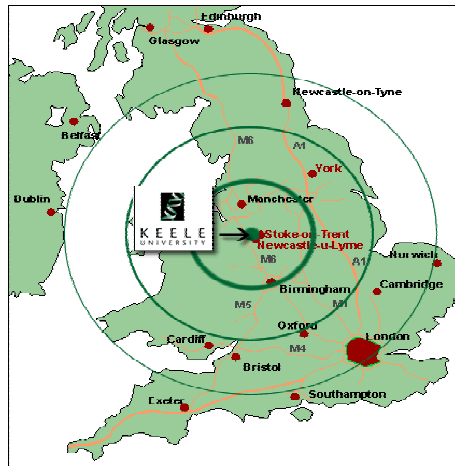
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The venue for the scheduled shibir will be the Keele University, situated in the vicinity of Stoke-on-Trent and Newcastle-u-Lyme.

Full details of the shibir will be released separately as a special invitation to all. However, for a brief insight the daily programme will be in the form of,

5:00 – 7:00am ~ Bath & Puja  
7:30 – 8:15am ~ Dhyana (form of yoga)  
8:15 – 9:00am ~ Breakfast  
9:30 – 10:30am ~ Discourse on Vachanamrutam  
10:30 – 11:15am ~ Bhajan/Kirtan & Dhun  
11:15 – 12:00pm ~ Lunch  
12:00 – 12:15pm ~ Special group recitation  
12:15 – 3:00pm ~ Rest time  
3:00 – 4:15pm ~ Wakening, mansipuja & kirtan  
4:30 – 5:45pm ~ Special programme by Purani Shree Hariswarupdasji Swami  
6:00 – 6:30pm ~ Self understanding Exam  
6:30 – 7:30pm ~ Thard and Dinner  
7:30 – 8:30pm ~ Aarti, dhun, kirtan & nitya niyam  
9:00 – 10:00pm ~ Video

Please note that the above times and topics are subject to change and are only for guideline at this stage.



## KEY EVENTS DIARY

Yuvak Mandal have arranged for special seminar events in English. Times will be 7:00pm – 8:00pm and thereafter evening dinner. Students from Sahajanand School and anyone under the age of 16 years are invited to each of these following events:-

**Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> June 2003: Shikshapatri – An Introduction**

**Saturday 28<sup>th</sup> June 2003: How to Perform Morning Puja**

**Saturday 12<sup>th</sup> July 2003: Non-violence – Shikshapatri Commands**

**Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> July 2003: Aarti – The Meaning**

**Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> August 2003: No Intoxicants - Onion, Garlic, etc.**

**Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> August 2003: Bal Ghanashyam Maharaja**

Parents are advised to collect their children from the Temple premises at 9:00pm on each of the above dates.

**Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> June 2003: Ekadashi Fast**  
**Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> June 2003: Yogini Ekadashi**

**Tuesday 1<sup>st</sup> July 2003: Rath Yatra Utsav**

**Thursday 10<sup>th</sup> July 2003: Devshayani Ekadashi (Chaturmaas begins)**

**Tuesday 15<sup>th</sup> July 2003: Hindola Utsave begins**

**18<sup>th</sup> – 24<sup>th</sup> August 2003: SKSS Temple, East London annual celebrations.**

**29<sup>th</sup> August – 1<sup>st</sup> September 2003: Swaminarayan Shibir (Camp).**

SKS Swaminarayan Temple, East London was established in year 1987 as a sacred place of worship. It's intentions are to promote the Swaminarayan Fellowship and to advance the understanding and knowledge of the religious education of the youths in the community. For more details of issues in this newsletter, please contact by e-mailing to [newsletter@SwaminarayanMandir.org.uk](mailto:newsletter@SwaminarayanMandir.org.uk). For more information on the Temple in East London visit [www.SwaminarayanMandir.org.uk](http://www.SwaminarayanMandir.org.uk).

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