

Newsletter



NEWS FROM THE SKSST YUVAK MANDAL

EDITOR'S COMMENT

Since the last issue of SKS Swaminarayan Temple East London Yuvak Mandal's (YM) August 2003 issue of the Newsletter, there have been several programmes and activities that everyone should know about.

Two of the main events that have occurred are the first pathoutsav since Lord Shree

Ghanashyam Maharaj's arrival to East London Temple and the Swaminarayan Satsang Shibir 2003.

To learn more about these events and other general issues, please carry-on reading and no doubt you will be inspired to take part in Temple activities if you do not do so yet.

Anyone who wants to join the editorial team is

welcome and can contact our team at newsletter@SwaminarayanMandir.org.uk.

Special thanks goes to Kayesha, Ashmina & Priyan Lalji Vekaria (Baladia) for the support and sponsorship of this newsletter issue.

Dinesh Hirani

For SKS Swaminarayan Temple (EL) Yuvak Mandal

SWAMINARAYAN SHIBIR - SUCCESS STORY

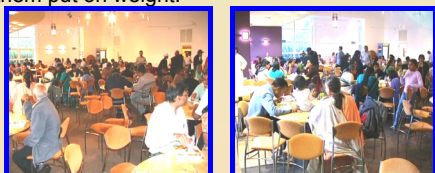
If you were unable to join SKS Swaminarayan Temple, East London Yuvak Mandal's first ever Shibir held from 29th August to 1st September 2003, then you have missed a lot in your life.

After months of planning, the program began with lighting of a diya and aarti some 200 miles away from London at the lush filled, eye pleasing green surrounding campus of the Keele University, Keele Conference Park, Staffordshire. The event has undoubtedly been a grand success first time round, and if this seems unbelievable then carry-on reading.



The event had been organised in close collaboration with Saints from Shree Swaminarayan Gurukul Rajkot who have experience of this form of events. The accommodation held at the Holly Cross lodging comprised over 235 rooms, each with its own bed, shower, WC, dressing table and tea/coffee facilities and was over four floors, solely occupied by the Shibir delegates. There was a short walking distance to Westminster Theatre where most shibir activities took place. We also hired the Chancellors foyer as a reception/library stall area. In addition, we used the Old Sports Hall for Rass-Garba, the Sports Centre fields for youth games, and meeting rooms for youth educational activities, games and morning pooja.

Meals were served at least three times a day in the Comus Restaurant. Indian vegetarian food was prepared and served by special cooks of SKS Swaminarayan Temple East London. The food was so good that many commented that the variety of food from chips, pizzas, cakes to shaak, puri and khichadi, had made them put on weight.



The event was attended from as far a field as the United States, India, Ireland, Leicester, and Bolton. There were 9 saints, over 200 paid delegates, 15 special cooks and over 80 day delegates who joined the event at their leisure.

Sadguru Mahant Swami Shree Devkrishnadasji Swami, Sadguru Shastri Swami Shree Madhavpriyadasji Swami, Purani Shree Hariswarupadasji Swami and Purani Shree Madhavjivandasji Swami along with other

saints conducted sessions highlighting the importance of culture and maintaining awareness and true virtues of the Swaminarayan Sampraday. This was done in an attractive way for the benefit of the new generation brought up in England. It was an opportunity for everyone to get away from their stressful daily lives to a holiday like atmosphere, where their spiritual lives could become close to ultimate salvation.



For **adults**, there were Vachanamrut sessions, bhajan/kirtan, mansipuja, meditation, yoga, question & answer sessions, videos and many more activities.

Youngsters could join the adults in addition to special sports activities, such as cricket, football and kho. There were also special educational activities that related wholly to Swaminarayan Sampraday.

Hindola utsav and raas-garba were held on Saturday evening, with Sadguru Mahant Shree Devkrishnadasji Swami offering swings to the Lord on hindola.



Chief guest Dr. Ramjee Vaidya (chief co-ordinator of Hindu Rashtriya Swayam Sevak Sangh, Europe and Africa) appreciated the NRIs who had progressed well in their businesses and stressed that luxury would give material happiness only, and for mental happiness organising and attending such Shibirs was important and the only way out.

Sadguru Shastri Shree Madhavjivandasji Swami won the hearts of boys and youths by talking to them about religion, devotion, culture, Pooja Vidhi and Satsang Vidhi in a playful and lively manner.



All saints expressed their happiness and appreciated the eagerness and keen learning power of children and youths when they made a live presentation about what they had learnt during the Shibir to a packed auditorium. Those who participated in the Shibir gained the benefits of a special question and answer session held by Sadguru Shastri Shree Madhavpriyadasji Swami. The topics discussed were Indianness, human duties and principles of Swaminarayan Sampraday.

What a wonderful experience for those who attended the Shibir. How blessed are those devotees of all ages...?

Continued on Side 2....

Pathoutsav 2003

In August, SKS Swaminarayan Temple East London celebrated their first pathoutsav celebrations after the grand and successful opening last year. The Temple has now been open for over 16 years since its official set up on 27th December 1987.

Many activities took place in addition to the routine discourses held by saints from Shree Swaminarayan Temple Bhuj, India. The evenings were packed with programmes for all ages. There was rass-garba on Tuesday, dandia rass on Janamashtami, drama/sanscrutic programme on Friday and bhajan/kirtan on Saturday.

In fact, for the first time ever, the Temple's own bhajan/kirtan group created by the Yuvak Mandal performed in front of the audience and received good feedback. For this reason, YM is looking to establish such groups on a permanent basis with the aid of all devotees.

Students of the Temple Sahajanand School who passed at first, second and third level were also given certificates and trophies to mark their achievements this year.

All devotees young and old, male and female celebrated Janamashtami on Wednesday 20th August with deep devotion. To wish Lord Shree Krishna Happy Birthday, a cake was offered and devotees took prashad the next day. Ankut was also offered to all the deities in the Temple and was prepared in different varieties and colours.



Pictures above and right describe the planning and eagerness of youths.

Digital Shikshapatri Centre Visit

On 6th September three committee members from SKS Swaminarayan Temple East London, went on a very important and exciting visit to Oxford, to witness and test the forming of the digital Shikshapatri. You may be aware that the Shikshapatri given to Sir Malcolm by Lord Shree Swaminarayan in 1830 has been in Oxford Bodleian library for many years and it has the highest number of visitors for any scriptures held there. Last year, University of Oxford received a grant of £105,000 from the National Lottery to digitise the Shikshapatri and let devotees all over the world take darshan of this scripture on the Internet.



H.H. Acharya Maharaj Shree presenting a gift to Shaunaka Rishi Das on behalf of SKS Swaminarayan Temple East London

Many satsangis came from various temples across the UK. The day started at the Oxford Centre for Vaishnava and Hindu Studies (OCVHS), where we met H.H. Acharya Shree Tejendraprasadji Maharaj for darshan and also met Shaunaka Rishi Das the director of



Members of SKS Swaminarayan Temple East London testing the Shikshapatri website

OCVHS. From there we visited the Queen Elizabeth House, University of Oxford's website testing centre, where we met Dr. Gillian Evison, the Digital Shikshapatri Project Director and David Griffiths, the project manager. They gave a short presentation on the progress of the Shikshapatri project and how it all started. After this presentation Satsangis were allocated time slots where they could test the beta version of the website. In this testing, questions were asked about the layout of the website as well as the usability of the website. Some satsangis questioned the validity of the content and wanted more information on the source of the information. It was a very special day and all the satsangis who attended gave valuable feedback to the developers. It is anticipated that the project will be complete by the end of November 2003, the official launch date will be vasant panchmi 2004. The website can be viewed at the following address:

www.shikshapatri.org.uk

By Dhanjibhai Bhudia

Trustee/Accountant of SKS Swaminarayan Temple EL

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The success of East London Temple's first ever Shibir organised by Yuvak Mandal can only be fully understood by those who attended. In fact, the feedback forms indicated that 98% of delegates found this shibir beneficial to them and 97% would attend the shibir again. At least 67% highlighted that they would prefer coming back in August but for bit longer duration next year. Sadguru Shastri Shree Madhavpriyadasji Swami himself congratulated the organisers in person. He stated that East London Temple and their volunteers had made this shibir an excellent event by becoming ahead of the first US organised shibir.

To learn more, our Library Department will only be please to offer 4 day Shibir highlights on DVD set for viewing at a reasonable charge.



KEY EVENTS DIARY (2003)

After the success of the five presentations so far, Yuvak Mandal has arranged further similar sessions (again mainly in English). Times will be 7:00pm – 8:30pm and buffet thereafter. **Students from Sahajanand School, everyone under the age of 18 and anyone else interested** is invited to the following events:-

Saturday 18th October: Ekadashi – The Meaning and Basics by Dhanji Bhudia

Saturday 15th November: Shikshapatri Slokas 1 to 6 by Aarti Patel

Saturday 6th December: Lord Swaminarayan Parchas by Dharmesh Patel & Rajesh Hirani

Saturday 10th January 2004: Lord Shree Swaminarayan – The Supreme God by YM Group

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

Wednesday 22nd October: Ruma Ekadashi Fast

Thursday 23rd October: Dahanteras

Friday 24th October: Narak Chaturdashi

Saturday 25th October: Darsh Amaas, Diwali, Lakshmi Pujan, Ankutoutsav & Sharda Pujan

Sunday 26th October: Nutan Varsh (New Years Day) & Govardhan Pujan

Monday 27th October: Bhai Bija Chandra darshan

Wednesday 29th October: Labha Pancham

Sunday 2nd November: Shree Hari Jayanti

Tuesday 4th November: Prabodhini Ekadashi Fast

Thursday 20th November: Utpati Ekadasi Fast

Sunday 23rd November: Amaavasya

Thursday 4th December: Mokshada Ekadashi Fast

Monday 8th December: Datratray Jayanti-Poonam

Wednesday 17th December: Dhanurmas Start

Saturday 20th December: Safala Ekadashi Fast

Tuesday 23rd December: Amaavasya

Thursday 25th December: YM Christmas Fun Days

Wednesday 31st December: Shree Hari Jayanti

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. For more information on the Temple in East London visit www.SwaminarayanMandir.org.uk.

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