

# Sangh Sandesh

## संघ मंदेश

July - September 2014 - Yugaabd 5114

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Yada yada hi dharmasya glanirbhavati bharata  
Abhyutthanam dharmasya tadatmanam srijanyaham !  
Paritranaya sadhunam vinashay cha dushkritam  
Dharma sansthapanarthaya sambhavami yuge yuge !!  
( 'Gita' 4.7)

Whenever Dharma declines and evil rules, I manifest myself to protect the virtuous and destroy the wicked, and thus re-establish the rule of Dharma in all ages

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# Editorial

There seems to a strange divide around the world at the moment. On one hand we have hundreds of British youth going to train and become Islamic State militants, while on the other, the King of Japan receives the Bhagavad Gita from Shri Narendra Modi. The difference is in the "ideology". The militants are killing innocent human beings in the name of religion and on the other hand, we have two high profile statesmen talking about peace and harmony through religion, culture and humanity.

With this in mind, what does Britain need? Bob Blackman MP [Harrow East], echoed the need of the hour. During his short but inspiring speech at the concluding function at the nine day residential leadership training course, he said "... What you see is that it [HSS UK] trains people to be physically fit and who would think that is a bad thing. It trains young people with mental education as well and teaches meditation. It enshrines core values of Hinduism which is to create a peaceful world. Being peaceful is the core value of Hinduism and to maintain peace one needs to be vigilant."

SSV the leadership course creates future leaders in the workspace, Hindu Samaj and more importantly the Global Society. The theme of universal peace and oneness is echoed throughout to inspire future leaders who would benefit the communities and embrace the world as one family – Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam!

## 200 year old number puzzle solved by sanskrit



How Maths 'Nobel' winner Manjul Bhargava solved a 200-year-old number theory puzzle via Sanskrit texts and Rubik's Cube.

Manjul Bhargava, a maths professor who just won the Fields

Medal, once simplified a 200-year-old number theory law with help of an Indian mathematician's work from 6th century CE and the popular Rubik's Cube. Manjul Bhargava, a 40-year-old Canadian-American, has won the 2014 medal along with three others, including an Iranian woman professor at Stanford University, who is the first-ever woman to achieve the honour. Bhargava has been chosen "for developing powerful new methods in the geometry of numbers, which he applied to count rings of small rank and to bound the average rank of elliptic curves", said the International Mathematical Union (IMU). According to an interview the Princeton University professor gave to Quanta Magazine, Bhargava said German maths wizard Carl Friedrich Gauss showed that if two numbers - each sum of two perfect squares - are multiplied, the result will also be the sum of two perfect squares. Bhargava, whose grandfather was a Sanskrit professor in Rajasthan, said he had once seen in Sanskrit manuscripts a generalisation of this same law, credited to Brahmagupta - an Indian mathematician in 628 CE.

The generalisation was this: If two numbers are each the sum of a perfect square and a given whole number times a perfect square are multiplied together, the product will again be sum of a perfect square and that whole number times another perfect square, said the report. So when Bhargava came across Gauss' famous 18th century composition law on binary quadratic forms, which had him 20 pages to prove, Bhargava looked for a simpler way to describe the same process.

The process was if one multiplies two binary quadratic forms, the law tells which quadratic form will appear.

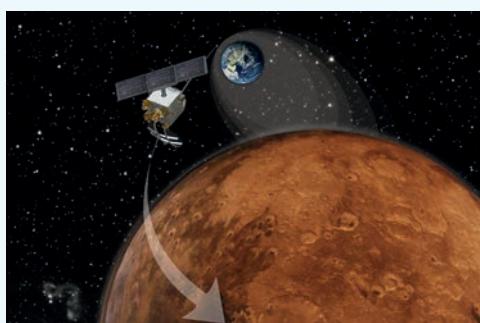
The eureka moment, as Bhargava told the magazine, came via Rubik's Cubes and Mini-Cube (with four squares on each side).

According to the magazine report, Bhargava saw that if he placed numbers on each four corners of the mini-cube and cut the cube in half, the eight corner numbers could be combined to produce a binary quadratic form. In fact, the cube could generate three binary quadratic forms since there were three ways to cut a cube in half - making front-back, left-right or top-bottom divisions, said the report.

These three forms added up to zero with respect to Gauss' law. So the cube-slicing method gave a new reformulation of Gauss' law. Bhargava also found out that if he arranged numbers on a Rubik's Domino, he could produce a composition law for cubic forms, ones whose exponents are three. Eventually, he have found 12 more such compositions that became part of his PhD thesis and later, a Benedict Gross, a Harvard mathematician, said the thesis was "first major contribution to Gauss' theory of composition of binary forms for 200 years".

When he was awarded the Infosys Prize two years ago, this feat was also cited: "Among Prof. Bhargava's contributions is the answer to a problem that had eluded the legendary Carl Friedrich Gauss (1777-1855).

"One of Gauss' discoveries was a law of composition on binary quadratic forms, i.e. expressions of the type  $ax^2 + bxy + cy^2$ , with a, b and c being whole numbers that are fixed, and x and y being the variables. It was an open question as to whether this was isolated or part of a bigger theory.



## **Mars Orbiter has to travel only 88million km for tryst with red planet**

Bharat's Mars orbiter spacecraft has to travel only 88 million km as part of its total journey of 680 million km for its rendezvous with the red planet scheduled for September 24.

On its 300-day voyage in deep space, Mars Orbiter Mission has to travel only 88 million km more in its heliocentric trajectory to reach Mars, Bangalore headquartered Indian Space Research Organisation said.

MOM, the country's first inter-planetary mission under a Rs 450 crore project,

was launched from Sriharikota in Andhra Pradesh on board Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle on November 5th last year with an aim to reach the red planet's atmosphere by September 24

## **Dr Kalam's tribute to Dr Hedgewar**

Senior scientist and Former President of India Dr APJ Abdul Kalam visited RSS headquarters near Reshimbagh Nagpur and offered tributes to RSS Founder Dr Keshav Baliram Hedgewar at 'Smruti Mandir' Nagpur. He was there to interact with 1000+ students from different colleges of Nagpur. Dr Kalam giving a mantra of success to the youth asked them to develop a 'unique personality' in them. The 'Missile Man' as he is known, Dr Kalam was delivering a talk on "Transforming India through Science and Technology". The program was organized by Vijnana Bharati, Vidarbha unit, at Dr Hedgewar Smriti Mandir premises, Reshambag on 29th July. Union HRD Minister Smriti Irani who was the chief guest, RSS functionary Dr Manmohan Vaidya, MD Baidyanath , Suresh Sharma, Pramukh Sanchalika of Rashtra Sevika Samiti Shantakka, and many others were present on the occasion.



## **Australian school kids recite Sanskrit shlokas daily**

Om Paramatmane Namaha - a typical day begins with this dedication to the Supreme Being. It is followed by a few minutes of silence and mindfulness meditation, before starting a structured learning programme. The day concludes similarly. Sanskrit grammar and shloka chanting feature prominently on the educational agenda, as do ethics, values education and lessons in philosophy. Strong emphasis is laid on cultivating respect for one another, taking ownership for actions as well as service to society. At lunchtime, following the principles of Ahimsa, all staff and students sit down to a wholesome vegetarian meal.

This is no gurukul in remote rural Bharat but a thriving learning environment in Belrose on Sydney's Northern Beaches. Ancient classics, modern languages, Shakespeare and studies of world religion and culture coexist with other key learning areas.

Embracing a multi-lingual, multi-faith model, John Colet School (JCS) has a wide footprint across the greater Sydney area, offering an alternative learning pathway to the forward thinking community for many decades now.

Principal Gilbert Mane explained the school's aim to nourish both "minds and hearts just as the best physical food nourishes the body".

"The diverse cultural experience of classical and modern languages opens them up to the rich variety of humanity and human experience," Mane noted. "Sanskrit, in particular, is very beautiful and profound and this is good for the wellbeing of the child. It gives children the opportunity to experience and enjoy the purest sounds in language as well as gain a good foundation in linguistics, grammar and logic"



## **Mahatma Gandhi statue opposite UK parliament**

A statue of Mahatma Gandhi is to be erected opposite the Houses of Parliament. The memorial will stand in Parliament Square alongside those of Abraham Lincoln and Nelson Mandela.

Speaking on a trip to the Gandhi memorial in Delhi, Foreign Secretary William Hague said the statue would be a "fitting tribute" to a "great man".

The sculptor Philip Jackson, whose works include statues of the Queen Mother and RAF Bomber Command, has been approached to take on the project - which will be paid for by charitable donations and sponsors.

### **'Source of strength'**

It is intended that the statue will be completed early next year and become a focal point for future commemorations, including the 70-year anniversary of Gandhi's death in 2018. Mr Hague said Gandhi remained a "towering inspiration and source of strength"



## World Hindu Congress

World Hindu Congress

([www.worldhinducongress.org](http://www.worldhinducongress.org))

is scheduled to be held on November 21-23, at Hotel the Ashok, Chanakyapuri New Delhi. The theme envisioned is the Hindu principle of Sangachchhadhwam Samvadadhwam which means "Step together, express together".

The main idea behind the World Hindu Congress is to provide a global platform for Hindu Society to deliberate and formulate solutions to the myriad challenges being faced by Hindus throughout the world and to devise workable and tangible solutions that can be implemented. Seven conferences such as Hindu Economic Conference, Hindu Educational Conference, Hindu Political Conference, Hindu Youth Conference, Hindu Women Conference, Hindu Organizational Conference and Hindu Media Conference will be held during the Congress.

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## Raksha Bandhan Celebrated

Rugby Nagar celebrated Raksha Bandhan in the presence of the Lord Mayor Ramesh Srivastava. This was reported in the Rugby Advertiser. Croydon Nagar celebrated Raksha Bandhan in the presence of Councillor Vidhi Mohan. Total sankhya was 45. Birmingham Nagar karykartas and Sevikas visited Solihull chambers and tied a Rakhi to the Lord Mayor. At the celebrations special guest Solihull Mayor Cllr Mrs Kate Wild & her Consort Mr Jim Wild spoke about integrating communities and the relevance of such ancient Hindu traditions in today's modern world.

## Radhe Krishna BG Celebrates Teacher's Day



32 children and parents facilitated 9 teachers present from schools in Birmingham. Young Tejal Champaneri and Tina Mulji compared the programme.

The programme started off by rising of the Dhwaj followed by an introduction of the teachers. The sevaks and sevikas recited mantras, shlokas, dances and played instruments. After that all the sevaks/sevikas did tilaks to their teachers and presented them with a gift. The teachers were very pleased with how the children learn about their culture through games and stories and asked to invite them again in future. Shri Jayesh Mianger, from Shree Hindu Community Centre, gave the vote of thanks.

## Race for Life

A group of sevikas and gruhinis from Woolwich nagar participated in the Race for Life run in Blackheath. Altogether there were 14 participants that all did the 10k run. Amounts raised on this event were £2,070.00 with 64 Donors in total.

## **Samiti Shiksha Varg**

Samiti Shiksha Varg 2014 was held in Roundwood Park School in Harpenden from Sunday 27th July to Sunday 3rd August. Gruhini varg was held in the same venue from Friday 25th-Sunday 27th July. The total sankhya for the SSV was 96, including 53 shikshaarthinis and 17 shikshikas. There were 13 full-time and 2 part-time prabhandikas and 11 adhikarees to guide us throughout the eight days. The shikshaarthinis came from 25 nagars thoughout the UK. In all, they represented 7 different states across India, and spoke 10 different languages, showing the diverse reach that Samiti in the UK now has. The theme for this year's SSV was "Vishwa Shaanti Pravarthake", which means may there be universal peace.

The varg commenced with the Udhghaatan ceremony on Sunday 27 July. Niveditaben from Chinmaya Mission attended to conduct a Ganesh Puja to officially inaugurate the varg. Our chief guest for the Udhghaatan was Jessicaben Schible, a sevika and currently the Coordinator of the Youth wing of Chinmaya mission UK. She gave a very inspiring message on "How the youth can practice dharma in their daily life".

The official timetable for the varg began from Monday morning. Each morning the shikshaarthinis rose at 6 am and began their day with Ish Chintan. After doing some yogaasan, the shikshaarthinis immersed themselves in a timetable full of physical activities including ni-yuddh, dand, aachar paddhati, ghosh and yogchaap. There were ample activities during the eight days to stimulate their intellect and awaken them spiritually, such as bauddhik, geet and charchaa on topics such as "How to behave in a multicultural society". With each day the shikshaarthinis learnt new skills and would openly air their views, opinions and concerns; they learnt how to be adaptable, made new friends and settled into the new environment quickly, even though they may have felt a little home sick for the first couple of days!

Ratri karyakrams were the highlight of the varg as we had a range of fun activities planned such as silent orienteering, where the shikshaarthinis were tied up in a circle with one person that could talk; their aim was to search the grounds for clues and collect as many as they could. The teams were judged on their teamwork, whether they were silent or not and how many clues they managed to find. This was a brilliant activity, even though it was very challenging to overcome the communication barrier everyone worked together efficiently and effectively

to collect the clues. The khel and ratri karyakramas provided the shikshaarthinis with the opportunity to showcase their competitive streaks through sports, team games, elocution and geet pratiyogitas.

The varg concluded with a public samarop, where MP Bob Blackman attended as Chief Guest. The samarop was held jointly with Sangh and the shikshaarthinis demonstrated yogaasan and yogchaap and a gana geet.

This year, we were very fortunate to have with us Doctor Pratibhaben Datta, a retired Doctor from Redbridge, as our Sarva-Adhikaree. She silently observed and participated in our activities, guiding us as necessary and providing fond encouragement throughout the week.

Overall the varg was a great success, and all the skills and values that the shikshaarthinis have learnt, can be taken back to each shakha and be applied so that each Sevika and Shakha can prosper.

## Our Experiences

### Madhvi Vadhera – Hounslow

This was my Prabandhika varsh, I was excited ! After completing my 3 years at ssv, I didn't realise the amount of effort & hard work it takes to run a successful ssv. The first day we dived straight in with the task of making 400 pizzas... This was a challenge that we were not expecting, but as a team we managed



to complete that nights dinner. The rest of the week consisted of chopping salad, cleaning toilets & showers aswell as ensuring that everything was ready for the next session. Overall i have thoroughly enjoyed my prabandika varsh as my eyes were opened to another side of ssv.

### **Chaitra Dines – Slough**

SSV has been a great experience for me. It was filled with numerous activities that made sure I wasn't lazy for any minute of the day; even relaxation was a learning curve. I learnt a great deal at SSV from bauddhik to learning to play the aanak. I greatly enjoyed the kaaryashala and the ratri karyakram everyday as it built team skills through fun and innovative ways. Being wrapped up in cling film was an unique learning experience and no one will forget the newspaper fashion show. The shareerik learning that we did will never be forgotten as niyuddha and dandh taught us self-defence while yog chap taught us rhythm through discipline. The maha khel on the penultimate day was amazing and I hope to bring the different lurks we did at SSV back to my shakha. I gained a lot of knowledge about Hindu history, its spread and its influence all over the world through the bauddhik vishesh varg. Overall SSV was an awe inspiring journey filled with great challenges which we all overcame through Lord Ganesh's blessings. Vishwa Dharma Ki Jai!

### **Tanvi Aggarwal – Bromley**

I was really excited about going into Pravesh Varsh at SSV this year, as I knew what to expect from my experience last year, and was looking forward to meeting my friends again, and learning lots of new things that we don't learn anywhere else. The timetable seemed quite daunting, with waking up at 6:00 to an hour of yogasan, two sessions of shakha and plenty of activities in between. There was never really a free moment, right up until 'lights out' at 10:30. However, its not really surprising that when we were sharing a room with 11 of our friends, although the lights may have gone out, we didn't sleep until much, much later. The Vishay I was most looking forward to was Dand, which is an Indian form of self-defence requiring a long bamboo stick. I really enjoy learning and doing Dand because it's very different to anything that I've learnt before and looks really good when performed as a group.

This year the theme for SSV was 'Vishwa Shanti', or World Peace. I really

enjoyed the Baudhiks (lectures) and Charchas (discussions) this year as they were usually very relevant to the overall theme, but also relatable to us and talked about things that we can do to make a difference. Another Charcha topic I liked was the influences of media on our lives, as it was really interesting to think about how much it actually affects our thoughts, and what we can do about it.

Overall, my entire experience of SSV was really good, and although at the beginning it seemed like the week would never end, our time there went by so quickly that it was the last day before we knew it. Even though everything seems intimidating at first, with the demanding days, and the fact that we're not allowed to use our phones or the internet for a week, it's not as hard as it seems, and everything is worth it in the end. I made so many friends, learnt so many things, and will definitely be coming back next year.



## **Experience of Mananiya Sarvadhidhikari ji**

### **We are Hindus – say it loudly and proudly**

It was so exciting when I was asked by one of our UK Sangh Pracharak to come and participate as a Sarvadhidhikari (head) in the 2014 SSV (Sangh Shiksha Varg) which was due to take place near Luton. I had heard so much about Shakhas that are held in the UK and all around the world but due to my commitments and busy schedule in the Armed Forces I never had any opportunity to participate previously. This time however I was able to; coincidentally my son Rishi had just finished his exams and I wanted him to also take part in SSV to learn some Hindu educational and cultural values. With high curiosity we both went to the camp.

**Namaste!** I had no problems meeting new people but I was a bit concerned about Rishi as it was a completely new environment for him. I wanted him to

enjoy, make friends and learn more about Hinduism. We arrived at the SSV venue late evening on Friday and met few known friends and many shikshaks (trainers). On Saturday after breakfast the shiksharthis( trainees) began to arrive. There was no doubt that many shiksharthis knew each other, may be from previous years or from their own active shakhas. It was nice to hear the Hindu greetings from all shiksharthis saying "Namaste" to everyone regardless of their ages. After registration the shiksharthis were divided into groups (gana) ; Rishi went along with his group to his room and believe me, I hardly spoke to him during the camp after that, as he mixed so well with his peers. It was a big relief for me as I could now concentrate on my own learning and observations of this camp.

### **Ganesh Pooja**

The Sangh Shiksha Varg began with a vibrant Ganesh Pooja done by one of the Shikshaks who explained the importance of it. I was given the privilege to sit with Varg Karyawaha (secretary). It was a humbling experience witnessing our young UK born Shikshak performing the pooja. After a brief introduction and warm welcome by Varg karyawaha, it was lunch time.

All the new shiksharthis were made to feel very welcome by each Shikshak that they never felt as if it was their first time attending the SSV. It was remarkable witnessing the enthusiasm shown by Shikshaks from a wide range of professional backgrounds who had dedicated their invaluable 9 days to teach these shiksharthis.

The first experience for us and all the Shiksharthis was the cold shower before 6am (as the shower wasn't functioning), perhaps testing all of us in our strength (it went on for few days). Even so no one complained as everyone was rushing to get ready for Chai, Ish Chintan and shakha.

### **Full of Enthusiasm**

With the help and support by previous shiksharthis the new-comers found it easy to adapt to the new atmosphere. From Ish Chintan in the morning to Ratri Karyakram every single member was so excited and looking forward to the next activity with full enthusiasm. At the end of each day we could clearly see the efforts made by all shiksharthis; they were quickly tanned in the sun with no complaints! As we all became more familiarized with the daily timetable, discipline and the purpose of the Varga, the shiksharthis became increasingly enthusiastic to take the most and give their best. The morning and evening shakhas were very spirited, with a wide range of fun and enjoyable activities for the shiksharthis to participate in.

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Baudhik sessions were listened to with full ears with the shiksharthis keen to learn more about inspirational figures and their Hindu Dharma. They would ask very interesting questions to their shikshaks. Workshops, geet singing and Ghosh (band) sessions taught a lot to all the participants.

On Friday, along with other senior members I was asked to be a judge for the geet competition in the Ratri karyakram. All of the ganas had been practicing their chosen geet for the whole week. It surely paid off as everyone participated enthusiastically in the competition. Shiksharthis were also able to sing and learn the meaning of the geet.

### **Electrifying Performance**

The Bookshop of Hindu Sahitya Kendra seemed to very popular amongst the Shikshartis with many buying books to suit their needs, whether it would be to learn more Hindi or to expand their knowledge on Hinduism.

The Exams went very smoothly with the shiksharthis paying full attention to their workbooks and trying to memorize their geets and prarthanas, to try and get the highest score possible. The performances at the cultural night (last day) were simply electrifying, with a wide range of talents being shown from dhol players to funny impersonations of the Shikshaks and shiksharthis.

### **Sweet Memories**

On the last day it was time for 'deekshant' (graduation). A touching bauddhik was given by Shri Chandra Kantji who works tirelessly through out the whole year for Sangh work. Everyone started realizing that the time to depart had come, with all of the Shiksharthis reflecting on the sweet memories that they have made with their new friends and bidding farewell to them. It was so upsetting seeing some children crying. They were going to miss the SSV and for whole year it will not be possible to have such activity again. The last group photo session was quite memorable. The performance by swayamsevaks and sevikas in the Samarop function was superb and greatly appreciated by the parents and guests.

My concluding remarks are in the shloka of great poet Bhartri Hari as follows:

**Yada Kinchit Gyoham Gaja Iva Madandaha SamaBhavam**

**Tadaa sarvagyosmi itibhavadava liptam mama manah**

**Yada Kinchit Kinchit Budha Jana Sakaashaat Avagatam**

**Tadaa moorkhosmiti Jwara Iva Mado May Vyapa Gataha.**

When I acquired a little knowledge, I became very proud/ egoistic, like an elephant. When little by little I started to be in the company of learned people, then my ego disappeared like after taking the medicine the fever disappears from the body.

### **Proud of our Shikshaks**

On many occasions witnessing how our UK shikshaks are guiding their young fellow brothers brought tears to my eyes. I felt so proud that over the years SSV has created so many dedicated Shikshaks who can lead, guide and carry forward the great message taught by the Hindu Dharma to humanity, on how to lead a spiritual life, how to be a proud Hindu, how to be a good law abiding citizen of the country, and how we can lead our life to noble salvation.

Finally I feel so happy and grateful that I was given a chance to attend this SSV and pray that I continue to be a part of this wonderful organisation as drop in ocean in whatever way. My humble Pranams and salutes to Guruji, and all our dedicated volunteers of SSV.

While writing all the above, the words of our Varg Geet are still vibrating in my ears:

**Galat mat kadam uthao soch kara chalo vichaar kara chalo  
Raah ki museebatom ko paara kara chalo paar kar chalo.  
Ham pe jimmedaariyaan hain...**

Acharya Krishan Kant Attri MBE, The Hindu Chaplain, Her Majesty's Armed Forces

### **"My Experiences of SSV 2014" – Dhruv Ganatra**

I just finished Prathmik Varsh (First Year) of SSV. It was a very enjoyable experience and I learned a lot from those 9 days.

I enjoyed quite a lot of things. Firstly, waking up at 5:30 in the morning sounds harsh but after getting used to it and having a fixed daily routine, it seems so much better. The morning Shakha was superb as it got you mentally and physically prepared for the rest of the day. Also, doing things as a whole Varg was quite enjoyable such as the Ish Chintan, different Geets (Songs), the Bhojan Mantra and even Bhojan itself! As well as all of this, there were many other enjoyable activities. In Bauddhik, I learned so many new things (some of which surprised me a lot). The Ratri Karyakramps (Night Activities) were also fun and full of knowledge. I particularly enjoyed the Geet Pratiyogita (Singing Competition) and Manoranjhan (Talent Competition).

I have excelled my understanding, knowledge and confidence of my culture and religion. I am definitely coming back next year to have more fun, meet more people and most importantly learn new and exciting things. Overall, it was a fantastic experience and I would encourage as many people as possible to attend SSV.

### **"Shikshak varsh, where to begin" – Mahesh Chhiba**

For those of you who don't know, this was a new year that was introduced after prabandhak to ensure that our shikshartis were well trained in becoming a shikshak.

The timetable was similar but a lot more intense, with alarms being set for sunrise and working into the small hours of the night planning bauddhiks and mahakhel. This made me realise that this wasn't gonna be easy.

In the morning we began with the slightly earlier wake up time of 5 a.m. and with the shikshak warm ups, we were charged and ready to help the shikshaks with the varg. The day then begins for the rest of the varg with ish chintan which required a lot of preparation, the amount of planning and organisation for a 15 min activity made me realise that being a bauddhik shikshak isn't as easy as it seems. With the morning shakha following, this begin our personal training. Each of the 6 shikshak varsh shikshartis had to choose a Vishay in which we would specialise in. My Vishay was dand which after doing for three years I thought would be a walk in the park. After the first couple of sessions I realised that it's not just about knowing the practice but being able to teach it to a group of teenagers in a mere 10 minutes. Our khel session lead by our shikshak wasn't as easy as it seemed as we had to be able to take a khel but by knowing why we are playing it, what the hindi name is and what sanskaars we develop. This made me realise that a lot of the khel that I take in my local shakha needed changing. These little things made me realise that being a shikshak isn't easy and hope that in the future we all have that aspiration to lead by example.

### **Naimisharanya Shibir**

60 karyakartas and yuva swayamsevaks came together in a successful and productive Shibir. Many first timers found it enjoyable, productive and inspiring. For them the initial apprehensions faded after the initial ice breaker session. Bauddhik on 'Life of Pp.Doctorji' by our pracarak Shri Chandrakant Sharma, a manthan session hosted by Shri Manoj Ladwa and charchas on Current Issues proved to be highlights of the varg.



## Gruhini Varg

This year the National Gruhini Varg was held in Harpenden (Hertfordshire) and was attended by staggering 66 Gruhini's and 12 children in the crèche. This was a combination of residential and day time attendees with approximately half of the attendees being new to Shaka. The theme of the Varg was 'Charitra Nirman' - character building which was the core subject for the baudhiks and karyashalas. The aim of the varg was for the gruhini's to nurture these qualities within not only themselves but also their family's and the wider community. For this Varg, Gruhinis who have been regularly attending previous varg's were given the task of taking a session which not only made it easier for the planning team but also gave them the opportunity to be innovative and build on their leadership skills.

We were fortunate to have two very inspiring speakers Anujaji Parashar ji who is Euro Candidate London Region 2014, Founding Director APP Consulting UK, Chair British United Indian Liberal Democrats(BUILD) and Vinaya Sharma ji who is actively involved in VHP work in Ilford. They both spoke about



Charitra Nirman from a Sanatan Dharam point of view and sharing their own life experiences. This was very inspiring for all of us reinforcing the essence of our dharma being the only one that worships Goddess's. During the Varg we also highlighted a social evil of grooming and entrapment where our Hindu youngsters are being victimised and tortured. This was to bring an awareness of the problem and how we as a community need to address this. Another karyashala which was very thought provoking was based around 'What Makes us Hindu?' which instilled a sense of pride in our roots. The Varg was packed with sessions for everyone from inspiring baudhiks to energetic khel and races on daily activities such as chopping onions and tying a Saree. One of the activities which everyone thoroughly enjoyed was the treasure hunt which was very well planned with mind tingling clues.

The overall feedback was very positive with some good suggestions given by the Gruhini's to improve the future vargs. I am confident that the Gruhini's left with a sense of renewed pride and enthusiasm to do their own 'Charitra Nirman'.

By Ritu Vadhera, Karyavahika

## **Gruhini Varg Anubhav**

I have been going to the Gruhini Varg for the last 4 -5 years now. But this year was remarkable. Firstly it was just 40 min drive from my house and for the first time ever I did not have children with me. We were three Gruhinis from our Shakha attending and we reached the place at the same time! Just a coincidence though. We settled comfortably in our allotted rooms and then played some ice breakers to know each other after which we began to bond as a family.

Next day we gathered again in the Samiti sthaan, after initial rituals, there appeared an Indian lady in English dress and, she was the one to do our Baudhik. I was a bit skeptical about it initially but my opinion soon changed as she went through narrating her life experiences and her achievements. In the process she made some conclusions about differences in the thoughts amongst the eastern and western ladies, her understanding of caste and jati etc. It left me pondering about various aspects of life in a different perspective. This was the best Baudhik ever, I have attended so far.

I also enjoyed sessions of Yoga. I came to know about simple aasanas which I could do daily at home. Also I realized how I could be a proactive mum while I was attending charcha on grooming.

Dr. Swati Apte

# BalaGokulam



**300+ Children and Parents attend the Annual Residential Camp**



On Friday 23rd to Sunday 25th May at Kings Langley – Rudolf Steiner School, 300+ parents and children descended to take residence for a fun filled, action packed learning experience. At this year's camp we had participants from 30 towns and cities across the country. The camp was conducted in English, Hindi and Sanskrit, with also families from another 6 Indian language speaking backgrounds.

The aim of the camp was to encourage participation in a wide range of sports and team activities, learn and share our rich culture, learn more about how Balagokulam works and an opportunity to experience 'a weekend away from home' in a Hindu values based environment.

The activities ranged from games, talks, discussions, learning activities, role plays, yoga and lots of delicious food. In parallel a teachers training programme was held for all Balagolukam's teams to further develop theirs skills and share challenges and assist with solutions.

A team of 50 volunteers works tirelessly to cook meals daily onsite and teachers who executed the whole camp efficiently. This is the fourth year running with record attendance and interest of many more Balagokulams ready to start soon.

'We stayed together, ate together and learnt together' – Rugby

'It was amazing to see so many children and parents all in one place who were made comfortable and organised with perfection. Hats off to the volunteers!' - Lincoln

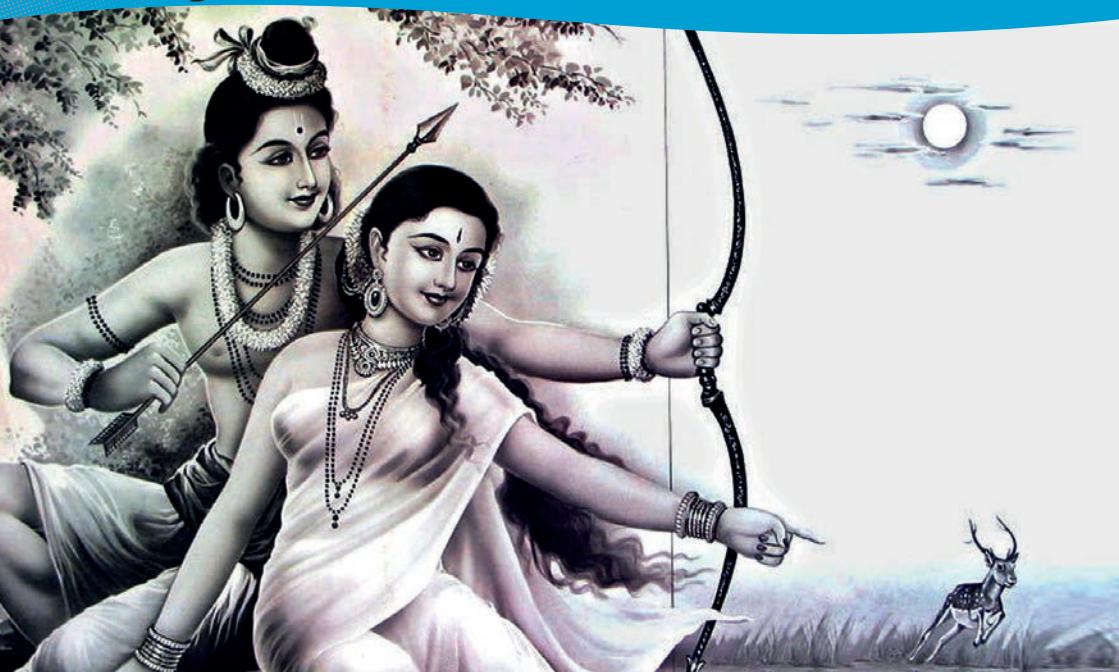
'I had lots of fun and made 10 new friends' – Bromley

'I enjoyed the food and showing off my talent in singing on stage in front of all' - Swindon

# GreatPeople -

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## The significance of Lord Rama



Rama - A name invoked so often within our lives from the greeting 'Ram! Ram!' to the Hindu version of 'Oh my god' - 'Hai Ram!'. Rama, in whose honour we have three utsavs through our year; Diwali, Ram Navami and Vijya Dashmi. Rama is a name we've grown up with.

When we learn of Rama, he is portrayed as the epitome of ideals and values that every Hindu, young and old, ought to aspire to embody in their own lives. He is literally called the perfect man or Maryada Purushottama. But, how is the character of Rama significant to us today?

First, we must understand the character of Rama, and to do so, we must look at his actions. In this article, I want to explore four specific events in his story.

### 1. Rama's exile to the forest

When Rama's stepmother becomes ridden with avarice and lusts for power for her own son, she calls upon her husband, King Dasaratha, to honour two promises he

had gifted her a long time before. She asks for Rama to be exiled to the forest and her own son to become crown prince instead. The king is reluctant to succumb, but Rama agrees without resistance and leaves the kingdom behind with his wife, Sita and his brother Lakshman.

## **What do Rama's actions here tell us of his character?**

There are two perspectives on offer here:

Either, Rama is a passive and weak man who causes others close to him to suffer, namely his father, Sita, and Lakshman.

Or the other perspective available to us is that Rama is an ideal leader, or in the words of Socrates, 'the philosopher king', who is indifferent to power; Rama maintains his values and character that he had in Ayodhya in the forest too. He protects the vulnerable; the sadhus in the forest, the downtrodden of society as in the case of Ahalya, and he serves his wife selflessly and protects her too. His character remains the same and doesn't change whilst his circumstances and environment do.

Which perspective is more likely to be the case? At first glance we may say that Rama is indeed a weak man, but we must ask ourselves, could we walk away from our home and family, from wealth and security, for nothing but uncertainty? Such a step requires courage and integrity, for Rama gave up all he had to honour his father's promise. Today, we are rarely put into a position where we must make such tremendous emotional and physical sacrifices, but we do live in a world that is constantly changing. Can we remain constant in our principles like Rama, when our prestigious degrees suddenly cease to have value; when our financial bliss turns into financial difficulty? Can we still maintain humility, and serve our families as well as society, with unwavering commitment and an equal sense of tan mann dhan?

## **2. The commitment of Sita to Ram**

It would be incomplete to talk of Rama and his character, without considering his Ardhanganी or other half. Rama was able to be who he was, because Sita was who she was; a wife that stood by her husband with unwavering commitment and loyalty. When Rama's exile is announced, Sita refuses to stay behind, though Rama tries to dissuade her, with her best interests in his heart. Unable to reason with Sita, Rama orders her to stay behind. Sita is neither meek nor passive here, but steps up and asserts herself; her love for Rama and commitment as his wife would not allow

her to stay behind. Throughout the exile, Rama and Sita care for and serve one another, whilst facing each hardship together in unity, and not as two individuals. Even when Sita is abducted by Ravana, and is presented with numerous temptations and even threats, she maintains her commitment as Rama's wife. Both Rama and Sita embody the ideals of husband and wife, and each found their own happiness in the happiness and well-being of one another. Both understood that they weren't just responsible for their own actions, but also what they compelled and influenced their ardhangani to do.

Today, how many of us can truly say we live and breathe these ideals? Do we view our partners, our families and the wider samaj as an extension of ourselves... or are we merely Thatcher's collection of self interested individuals?

### **3. The battle against Ravana**

The iconic event celebrated all over the world at the end of Navratri; Vijaya dashmi depicts a battle deeper than just between two characters, but one between the two sides of human nature inherent in each of us. Rama and Ravana were both learned, eminent and formidable characters, what distinguished them however, was the extent to which they were influenced by their ego. Ravana is described as having ten heads, each one representing a vice: passion, pride, anger, greed, infatuation, lust, hatred, jealousy, selfishness and crookedness. Rama's ten decapitations of Ravana's heads, symbolises the disconnection of each of these vices from our own self as a mark of true human flourishing.

Each and every one of us has the potential to be Rama or Ravana. Each and every one of us can choose the path of flourishing or self destruction. Who will we be? And which path will we choose?

### **4. Ravana's final moments**

After the battle was fought and Ravana came to his deathbed, Rama instructed Lakshman to approach the dying Ravana and seek his final words, as he too was a great learned man, from whom lessons could be learnt. Lakshman then proceeded to collect three messages from Ravana before he took his last breath. Rama here not only demonstrates equanimity, after having just won an arduous battle, but also embodies the principle of total equality and respect for every living being. He holds no hatred in his heart for Ravana, and isn't compelled to act on impulsive emotions.

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He understands truly who Ravana is, and is humble enough to accept in his mind, and openly admit to others, that even he can learn from his enemy in combat.

Sometimes we may be wronged by another, or find ourselves under severe stress, can we find it within ourselves to cultivate the stability of mind that Rama demonstrated in such intense situations? Can we maintain composure through the highs and lows of life, and view each moment objectively, rather than emotionally? Can we be earnest students and learn from each and every being that we come across, putting aside our judgements and discriminations?

As Swayamsevaks and Sevikas, we are encouraged by Sangh, at every stage to expand our consciousness to go beyond our own self, and even the other, to recognise our duty to the entire samaj. This Vijaya Dashmi, let each of us reflect on the significance of Rama and embrace more of the ideals embodied in his character.

Aislinn Mae, Leicester

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Hindu Sahitya Kendra (HSK) aims to provide books, charts, on Hindu religion, history, philosophy, culture, health, cookery, places of interest, and language learning for most age groups

## **GOOD IN OTHERS**

Recognizing the good in others is one of the greatest and rarest of human virtues.

The guiding principle for a worker should be to water the seeds of virtues in others and carefully weed out their defects, without parading them before all and by presenting before them the silent example of his own superior conduct.

# Sangh Sandesh

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