

Sangh Sandesh

संघ संदेश

September – November 2013 – Yugaabd 5114

SĀDHANĀ
Strive for Excellence

**p14 Extracts of a few of the
participants' thoughts**

**p20 Sanket - Vishwa Prarthana
and Swami Vivekananda**



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Editorial

Shubh Deepawali and Nutan Varsh Abhinandan!

In this issue we read about some of the amazing efforts of our Swayamsevaks, Sevikas and members of the community who continue to give up their time and came together to selflessly work for others. It is motivating to experience through their words the degree of enthusiasm they have and their desire to give time and raise money and awareness.

The Swami Vivekananda exhibition continues to travel around the country and in this issue Coventry nagar talks about its programme and the number of people and organisations who came together to make it a successful event.

We hear from the people who have given up their time to work for Sangh and Samiti as vistaarikas and through the Sadhana programme. To read about the thought processes or experiences of those who have made a conscious choice to focus on Sangh and Samiti can often lead us to think about what we can do differently in our lives to make a positive impact on society or even our own lives.

As it comes to the end of Swami Vivekananda's 150th birth anniversary year, we reflect on his teachings and the meaning of the Vishwa Prarthana. Over the course of the year we have seen that Swamiji's teachings continue to be relevant. If we can make a conscious choice to remember his words and life mission regularly this can only serve to enrich our lives and the lives of those with whom we interact.

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Sewa Day 2013

Thousands of volunteers from the UK and abroad gave up their time to improve the lives of people within their community for Sewa Day 2013.

Key facts of Sewa Day 2013:

- Over 75,000 volunteers took part.
- Volunteers from 25 countries (including Australia, Bosnia, Hong Kong, Kenya, Russia, UAE, UK and USA).
- 250 projects were undertaken worldwide.
- Global corporate partners included BP, Canal & River Trust, Deutsche Bank, Ernst & Young, Goldman Sachs, Lloyds, PwC & The National Trust.
- There was support from across the political divide, including Labour MP for Brent North Barry Gardiner and Conservative MP for Croydon Central Gavin Barwell.
- Asian celebrities including Navin Kundra and Avina Shah also joined in the efforts.



More importantly, hundreds of voluntary and community organisations, schools as well as companies were involved with projects helping to add real value to the local economy and build thriving communities. During last year's Sewa Day, volunteers collectively undertook tens of millions of project hours, which generated in excess of £11 million of value for Britain. This year's effort is expected to exceed 2012.

Thomas Dahlberg, from the Danish Association for the Disabled People said: "I want to thank you from all my heart for your great effort. Helping us with a complete cleanup of our cellar storage was quite a hard job carried out in a most efficient and satisfying way. We are indeed grateful and pleased with the outstanding SEWA concept."

Arup Ganguly, chairman of Sewa Day commented: "From getting things started in Australia through to finishing off in the US, October 6 shined bright as a beacon for all things good in our society as thousands helped others, whether through improving the environment or supporting the vulnerable and less fortunate.

"I am very proud of the effort each volunteer put into working on their project. Sewa Day bridges the gap between communities and I saw first-hand how different groups of our society can work hard together to put a smile on somebody's face".

Sewa Day projects in the UK included:

- Wishful Smiles: Wembley – Alongside Asian singer Navin Kundra, City Sikhs Network, and Harrow Sikh Network, volunteers helped at a nursing home and prepared food for the homeless and refuge centres.
- Julian Trust Night Shelter: Bristol– Students helped out at the centre which provides the homeless with hot food and emergency accommodation.

- Clothes Collection for developing world: North Shields – Volunteers sorted out school clothing for shipment to India and Nigeria.
- Keech Hospice: Luton– Volunteers helped to decorate, clean and improve the garden at the hospice for terminally ill children and adults.

Sewa Day projects internationally:

- Baha'i Centre Clean Up: Australia– Cleaning and garden care activities as well as cleaning centre halls and equipment.
- Fitness flash mob: The Winchester School, Jebel Ali branch, Dubai– Students performed a number of aerobic steps to promote fitness amongst students, parents and staff.
- Interview Skills Workshop for Underprivileged: Hong Kong–A workshop for children from underprivileged backgrounds to help with interview skills.
- Beach clean- up: Indonesia– Collected plastic waste off the beach

For more information, please visit www.sewaday.org



Warrington

For our Sewa Day we helped out at a community orchard in Old Trafford. It was the day after our Warrington garba, the sun was shining and the weather was glorious. The 20 of us came armed with spades, trowels and gardening gloves. We cleared weeds on the orchard, planted narcissus and primroses and built half of a raised bed, which will be planted with more trained trees and soft fruit in the winter. We



also constructed bug boxes which are like little hotels for the bees and bugs during winter. We had a wonderful day outside together, were refreshed and vitalised by being in the trees and sun and managed to get a lot done in the orchard. Marvellous!

Hemma Mistry, Warrington



Northampton

For the 4th year running, Northampton Shakha had fun in taking part in Sewa Day 2013 by helping the Wildlife Trust at the Northampton Lings Wood Nature Reserve. There were 27 participants in

total who helped with a number of activities to clean up the environment. These included picking up litter and cutting back native species such as rhododendron and sycamore trees. It was a successful day enjoyed by all and was followed by a picnic.

Zeel Shah, Northampton





Cycle for Sewa

On 15th September, nearly 100 participants took the track at Redbridge Cycling Centre to raise money for SEWA UK. As Cycle 4 Sewa was successful during 2012 where over £6,000 was raised, Swayamsevaks and Sevikas from Newham Shakti Shakha & Bharatee Shakha decided to organise it again with the corresponding sponsors, National Security Systems and Elite Visions.

Despite the fact that on the day, the weather was windy and raining, the motivation and commitment shown by the participants was inspirational. Armed with their bikes and helmets, they all completed the 1 kilometre track as many times as possible within the 2 hour cycling slot – some of them completed up to 30km.

Only stopping for food and drinks, they all carried on cycling, trying to set their own personal bests to have something to talk about with their friends and families. Participants were from local shakhas as well as around the country, all to help raise money for charity.

With the support of the parents, and the dedication of the participants and volunteers, this event was a big success. With certificates and medals held up high, everyone went home feeling proud of their achievements, so next year in 2014, get ready for another successful take 3 of this event.

Shivani Patel

Sangh & Samiti Shiksha Varg 2013 - Lutterworth







SV150 Coventry Report

After two months of hard work by the SV150 Coventry Team, they successfully conducted the "Vivekananda Exhibition on Ancient Indian Civilisation" at Shree Krishna Temple, Coventry on 10th and 11th August 2013. That different

communities came together to conduct this event is an appreciable move.

Special care was taken to decorate the Exhibition Hall and 40 volunteers were involved in this work. Approximately 500 members of the public visited the exhibition and many took part in various workshops like Astanga Yoga, BalaGokulam, Indian Games, Yoga without Medicine, Yoga for mental health & Indian Martial Arts – Niyudh.

DAY1:

The exhibition was inaugurated by Shree Krishna Temple's President Mr J D Panchal and Committee members on Saturday. The Astanga Yoga workshop was started at 10.30 am by the Sanghchalak (President) of HSS, West Midlands, Dr. Tiribhovan Jotangia. The Eight Limbs of Yoga were explained in a beautiful way.

Niyudh was also performed by Swayamsevaks.

PUBLIC CEREMONY:

The "Grand Public Ceremony" began by the lighting of the lamp and was followed by a Pushpanjali. Distinguished guests from various community organisations and councillors of Coventry attended. The guests included Dr. Rajendran (Tamil Welfare Association), Smt. Ranjani (Eela Kanthan Temple), Shree. Senthil Kumar (Shree Coventry Sidhi Vinayagar Devasthanam), Councillor Ram Lakha, Councillor Blundell and representatives of the Hindu Samaj. We were also honoured to have Shree. Jay Lakhani as our Chief Guest speaker.

Smt.Yogita Chokshi who worked in the SV150 Coventry team delivered the welcome speech. Dr. Tiribhovan Jotangia delivered an introductory speech about Swami Vivekananda's 150th Year. Indian Classical Dance Bharathanatyam was

performed by Tamil Welfare Association, Cultural & Arts School. The message of Swami Vivekananda & Hinduism was addressed by the Guest Speaker Shree. Jay Lakhani and his outstanding speech attracted many of the participants. The program ended with light refreshments.

DAY: Exhibition was opened at 10 am.

"Yoga for Mental Health" & "Yoga Without Medicine" workshops were conducted the next day by Yogacharya & Researcher Saravana Kumar B.E, M.Y, Varma Therapist. The Various Dimensions of our mental pattern was discussed followed by a self-healing massage. Swami Vivekananda's life film was displayed in between the workshops.

A BalaGokulam & Indian Games workshop was conducted by Shree. Dharmesh Jagatia where children were taught about the life of Swami Vivekananda and played mind-tuning games! Both parents and children enjoyed the session.

Ashok Kumar, Coventry



Parivaar Day

Northampton hosted a Parivaar Day with Wellingborough and other surrounding towns in September 2013 at the Racecourse Northampton. We had a great turnout of 50 people. Activities included exercises, shareerik, yoga, khel,

a boudhik on how to inspire yourself as well as others, big team games such as basketball, ring and long ball and a picnic. It was a fun day out for the whole family.

Samiti Shiksha Varg 2013

This year Samiti Shiksha Varg (SSV) and Gruhini Varg were held at Lutterworth College in East Midlands Vibhaag. Gruhini Varg took place from 26th -28th July with 48 Gruhins and 6 Baal. SSV was held for a week from 28th July with 81 full time participants (13 part-time) from 23 nagars. We were privileged to be joined by Chandadidi, a pracharika from Bharat.

The theme was based on a quote of Swami Vivekananda, "Fill the brain with high thoughts, highest ideals, place them day and night before you, and out of that will come great work".

The timetable was relaxed but there were a lot of activities that allowed for bonding and creativity during free time. An atmosphere of family was created which helped with the early starts and missing home.

SSV commenced with Ganesh Pooja and finished with a successful joint samarop where parents and friends got a flavour of what was learnt during SSV.

Here is an extract from the samarop speech of two shikhartinis which gives a glimpse of their experience at SSV.

"Coming to SSV for the first time, I was quite excited but also quite nervous, as I wasn't sure as to what expect."

"Being in 3rd year, I knew what was expected of me...I was still prepared to challenge myself even more."

"As the week progressed we learnt that waking up early and sleeping on the floors was a simple tool to help us become more disciplined, which we hope will become a daily habit."

"As Swami Vivekananda said 'if you want to liberate yourself, go out and look for hard work.'"

"Because hard work makes you stronger and you won't shy away from pain and effort. Being here and getting told that we are the hope for the future society motivated me to learn even more and share my knowledge both within and after the Varg."



"As part of the 150th anniversary celebrations of Swami Vivekananda's birth, the Hindu Women's Convention team are holding a free 1 hour interactive webinar. The webinar will take place on Thursday 5th December at 8pm and will explore Swami Vivekananda's thoughts on women and whether his ideas resonate and are still relevant today.

The webinar will be accessible from all over the world.
All you need to view and take part is a computer and internet connection.

For more information please visit www.hinduwomen.org.uk



Diwali reception at Downing Street

An extract from David Cameron's speech
during the Diwali reception at Downing Street:

"Just as we Christians like to make a wish on New Year's Day, I think it's right to make a wish at the time of Diwali as well. And if you allow me, I'll have the same 2 wishes I had in Neasden on Monday.

I do wish profoundly that we continue to do everything we can to build the relationship between Britain and India. It is a strong relationship, it's a vibrant relationship. It has so many parts to it. There's all the shared history, there's the shared language. There's the great excitement about our economies. India invests more into the United Kingdom than the rest of Europe put together. Britain is one of the top 3 investors into India. Some of the projects, some of the businesses underway are thrilling. The cooperation between our universities, our shared love of sport. There's so much that we share together.

The second wish is this wish that we continue to celebrate and enhance what British Indians, British Hindus bring to our country. Just look across the enormous contribution that British Hindus make to our country. We see it in sport. We see it in the arts, in culture. We see it certainly in business in a huge way. We see it in our NHS, in our schools. There are so many aspects of it.

...The point I will want to leave you with is, as I say, the shared things that all our religions bring. When I look at the Ramayana and my understanding of the Hindu religion, there's so much that you have to say about the importance of family, about the importance of community, about the importance of voluntary service – these are all the values that our country needs more of.

So, as you celebrate your values, let's make them our values, and let's have more of them in Britain. Thank you very much indeed."

<https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/diwali-2013-david-camerons-speech-at-reception>

SĀDHANĀ

Strive for Excellence

Extracts of a few of the participants' thoughts are copied below – please visit www.sadhana.hindureads.com to see more

Vairaagya - Detachment

Often it is said that a man will only do what makes him happy, and therefore there is no such thing as selfless work. I fully agree with the statement that a person will only do that which makes him happy, however I believe it is down to us to choose what makes us happy and what makes us unhappy. We can choose what we are passionate about, and what we don't care for. We can choose how motivated we want to feel and how committed we want to be.

This is where "Vairaagya" and "Nishtha" come in. We need to choose what we will detach ourselves from and what we are devoted to. This choice will determine our happiness in life, it will potentially change our attitude to work, and it will affect our commitment to work.

Hinesh Shah

Sadhana – Strive for excellence

A dictionary definition of striving for excellence would be along the lines of: 'Going through great effort to achieve or obtain the quality of being outstanding or extremely good.'

How do we obtain this quality of excellence or as the dictionary describes it the quality of being outstanding or extremely good? When asked what excellence is a lot of people responded 'it is being the best you can possibly be,' but what does it mean to be the best you can possibly be?

I think the first step is defining excellence more specifically so that it is applicable to your daily life. This provides a focus and allows measurable outcomes in your journey to strive for excellence.

Payal Chedda



www.sadhana.hindureads.com

Sadhana is a four month programme that began in July for participants to develop a wider and deeper understanding of Sangh Karya through exposure to various facets of Sangh and Shakha. Participants have also been creating, developing and will deliver projects that are aimed to enhance Sangh work.

Marshmallows, kids, self restraint

I recently read an interesting study in the 1960's by Walter Michelle who is a well-known psychologist.

In this study Walter Michelle took a group of 5-year-old children and placed them in a room which was video recorded. He then told the kids that they can each eat one marshmallow, and he placed the marshmallow in front of them. However he then told them that if they waited for him to return he would then give them 2 marshmallows as long as they did not eat the marshmallow in front of them. Walter Michelle returned after 10 minutes (which for a 5-year-old is a long time) and recorded the results. What he found was that the majority of kids had eaten the marshmallow. However they were quite a few who practiced self-restraint and did not eat the marshmallow. Ten years later, Walter Michelle went and met the kids again. He found on average that those kids who didn't give into the temptation of eating the marshmallow, were significantly more confident, more academically advanced and more sociable than those who had eaten the marshmallow straight away.

What I concluded from this study is the power of self-control in the significance of success... It reminded me the importance of having the ability to delay immediate gratification for success in life.

Kavit Shah



Sita Ma Ek Roop Yeh Bhi / One more form of Sita Ma

A regular debate I find I have with myself is on whether we need to find new role models relevant for the youth of today.

Recently I was asked to take a charchaa (discussion) session on what qualities we can take from Sita Ma and I began to think whether Sita Ma is a role model that a woman of the 21st century can relate to.

I too felt as though we needed to explore new role models for the upcoming generation, as they cannot relate to people from history. Before I started to prepare for this charchaa, I felt that maybe some of her qualities were relevant today but not all – this soon changed after I completed my research.

I found that Sita Ma was outspoken – she persuaded Shri Ram to take her to the forest but only after she told him that it was her duty. She was not oppressed but she spoke her mind and often advised Shri Ram. She told him about ahimsa or non-violence which inspired him to make a promise to her that he would never kill anyone without extreme provocation.

No one is beneath anyone. Can you come out of your shell and make a positive contribution and bring a change in someone's life or within your family?

Her intelligence is shown when Ravan kidnapped her and she threw her jewellery to leave a clue for Shri Ram.

In a situation where tension is there, stress levels are high, we are panicky. Can we try and still think calmly using our intelligence?

She was extremely brave. When Hanuman reached Lanka and met Sita Ma, he told her that she could climb onto his back and travel with him back to Shri Rama. Sita Ma refused, saying she would never want to run away like a cowardly thief and that instead, she would wait for Shri Rama.

Can we face the situations in our life with the same bravery or should we continue to hide and run away from our problems and challenges?

In our lives sometimes we become petty but Sita Ma rose above everything. We often think of ourselves as a victim or think we are hard done by. However, Sita Ma never thought of herself in this way – otherwise, she may have gone back to face Shri Rama to demand her equal rights. Instead she accepted the separation went to the forest and faced the challenges of bringing up the children. She rose above the situation and she was at peace with herself.

Can we rise above situations or are we happy to continue remembering what a certain person did or said to us?

We can see Sita Ma's assertive and defiant side when she chooses to reject Shri Rama and instead, return to Bhoomidevi (Mother), at the end of her life mission.

Instead of demonising Ram, we can learn to humanise his weaknesses, learn to move beyond the negative stereotyping and see Sita as a woman who dealt with all challenging situations with dignity and grace.

Sita Ma is an integral part of womanhood and we must always remember that it is not only due to the above she is remembered but it is due to how she sacrificed for Dharma. In spite of suffering a lot she never left the path of Dharma.

We can either accept or reject great people of the past but we cannot ignore them.

Relevant role models for today's generation did not appear out of thin air, they are inspired by people of the past too.

Be inspired by the great people, imbibe their qualities and then you can become the role model for the new generation.

"All our mythology may vanish, even our Vedas may depart, and our Sanskrit language may vanish forever, even if only speaking the most vulgar patois, there will be the story of Sita present. Mark my words: Sita has gone into the very vitals of our race. She is there in the blood of every Hindu man and woman; we are all children of Sita" Swami Vivekananda

Kirti Vekriya, HSS – Vistaarika

Changed perspectives / The whisperers / Greater emotions

"Do not believe in a thing because you have read it in a book. Do not believe in a thing because another man has said it. Do not believe in words because they are hallowed by tradition. Find out the Truth for yourself. That is realization." – Swami Vivekananda.

After having gained some amazing experiences in my recent pravaas to South Africa and Bharat, the above statement makes perfect sense! Since I was a child, I've been hearing about the most fundamental thought of the Hindus – 'the existence of Paramatma in everything around us'. Great saints have lived their lives with this idea. This idea of the same Aatma pervading the whole universe took concrete shape in the life of Shri Ramkrishna Paramahansa. His self-identity did not remain confined to the human world; it spread to mute Nature as well. He could feel the pain of the grass, the cows and all those suffering around him. So real was his self-identity with these that often people around him saw physical wounds on his body.

While in South Africa, I heard the story of Lawrence Anthony, the "Elephant Whisperer". He was an international conservationist, environmentalist, explorer, and bestselling author who saved the lives of many violent and rogue elephants who were to be shot dead, by rescuing and rehabilitating them. Lawrence possessed a unique ability to communicate with the elephants, and so he left his home to go live in theirs.



The day Lawrence passed away, something extraordinary happened. Herds of elephants, from different directions, slowly made their way through the Zululand bush. After walking for 12 hours they reached Lawrence's

homestead. His family witnessed a solemn procession of elephants that defies human explanation. For two continuous days, the elephants mourned the loss of their beloved friend, as one of their own. On the third day they left for their home.

A man's heart stops, and hundreds of elephants' hearts are grieving. Many questions arose in my mind. How did the elephants know that Lawrence had died? They were miles and miles apart. Who told them? How did they know where he lived? Truly, some things in this universe are much greater and deeper than human intelligence.

Similar was the experience of Sarisha Didi's dogs; Khushi, Chand and Sonu. I was mesmerized by their selfless love and affection. Khushi, once explained to a "Dog Whisperer" that he does not like the 'green' cage. He also expressed his likes and dislikes to his parents (owners). This was something beyond my wildest imagination! On the other hand, Sonu would first make his way to the temple room everyday in the morning, to prostrate in front of Paramatma before continuing with his daily activities. When Herasha, came home after months, Chand would cry for hours just to express his feeling that he missed her.

These experiences have been both Physical and Spiritual. Physical in the sense that I now comfortably pat pets and do not run away from them; Spiritual because these wonderful animals took me deep into their world. In the beginning it was only self-imposed human limitations that impeded my understanding. But now, these animals have whispered and taught me how to listen.

Amazingly this transcends even to plant life.

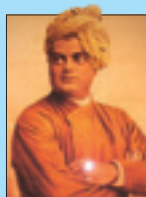
This makes me wonder, how many of us have heard the call of these amazing animals around us? How many of us have experienced oneness with the nature? Hearing is one thing, but experiencing is definitely another. The wilderness is alive; its whispers are there for all to hear and to respond to. It is time for us to reclaim oneness and bring some alchemy to our world.

These experiences have definitely changed my perspective of life. Without these, I would have never experienced life in everything around me. They have taught me that all life forms are important to each other in our common quest for happiness and survival and that there is more to life than just yourself, your own family, or your own kind.

Anita Patel is a Sevika from Nairobi, Kenya. She is currently a Pracharika for Hindu Sevika Samiti after being inspired by the message of Swami Vivekananda

Sanket

Vishwa Prarthana and Swami Vivekananda



In every shakha we recite the Prarthana. Prarthana is the collective invocation to the Almighty Paramatma. It is the reminder of our mission and mechanism. It is the assurance of triumph and more and is concentration on the qualities we seek on our path.

Swami Vivekananda, the torch bearer of Hindu Dharma, narrated ancient wisdom in a new language. He motivated thousands to walk on the path of Dharma. There is no wonder that his message is very closely related with our Prarthana.

In the following we will see the close connection between the vision of Swami Vivekananda and the Sangh Prarthana.

Ajjayyam Atma Saamarthyam

Swami ji said, "First believe in yourself. All strength is within you. Develop that strength."

On 4th April 1895 he wrote the following in a letter to Alsingha Perumal on. "Whenever you feel weak, you need to realise that you are damaging to your mission. Tremendous power and shraddha is the cause of success."

Swami ji mentioned that when we have shraddha on Parameshwar then the

strength of the mind can be reflected. He would often say that we need strong people with steel muscles.

Once he said, "On each page of Upanishad, the message of strength is given... Never think there is anything impossible for the soul. It is greatest hearsay to think so...If there is one word you find coming like a bomb from the Upanishads, bursting like a bomb-shell upon masses of ignorance, it is the word, fearlessness"

Susheelam Lokpoojitam

Swamiji would often say, "If you really want to judge the character of a man, look not at his great performances. Every fool may become a hero at one time or another. Watch a man do his most common actions; those are indeed the things which will tell you the real character of a great man. Great occasions rouse even the lowest of human beings to some kind of greatness, but he alone is the really great man whose character is great always, the same wherever he be."

Dhyeya Nishtha Sthirastu Nah

"The history of the world is the history of

a few men who had faith in themselves. That faith calls the divinity within. You can do anything. You fail only when you do not strive sufficiently to manifest infinite power. As soon as a man or a nation loses faith, death comes... Let people say whatever they like, stick to your own convictions, and rest assured, the world will be at your feet."

Sangh Shaktir Vijetriyam

Swami ji always believed in unity in the diversity of society. He called for Hindus to be united. He would say, "All of us have to be taught that we Hindus, to whatever denomination we may belong, have certain common ideas behind us, and that the time has come, when, for the well-being of ourselves, we must give up all our little quarrels and differences."

Swami ji believed the need of organisation. Organisation is the united force towards the divine mission. He said, "From my travels in various countries I have come to the conclusion that without organisation nothing great and permanent can be done... An organisation that will teach the Hindus mutual help and appreciation is absolutely necessary."

Tyag Sewa Vratasyasayam Kayo Mai Patata Prabho

"Whatever you do, devote your whole mind, heart and soul to it. I once met a great sannyasi, who cleansed his brass cooking utensils, making them shine like gold, with as much care and attention as he bestowed on his worship and meditation."

Swami ji was worried about the poor condition of many people of Bharat. He felt that they all should have access to basic needs like food, shelter and clothes. He sadly commented to the Mysore Maharaja that the root of all misery in Bharat was the poor condition of the masses. He mentioned to all the kings and rich people that he met that, "Our responsibility is to give education to masses. Even if you open a free school in the village, the problem won't be solved, as every son will help his father in the farm rather than go to school. If they won't come to education, education should go to them."

In this way we can see the deep connection between the thoughts and vision of Swami Vivekananda and the method and mission of Sangh. Through what is expressed in the Sangh Prarthana, every shakha, we can realise the vision of Swami Vivekananda and the vision and mission of Sangh. For the full article, please visit: www.hssuk.org/articles/vishwa-prarthana-and-swami-vivekananda

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Colombo to Almora – Swami Vivekananda

BalaGokulam



Annual Kendriya Balagokulam Shibir, Birmingham

During the weekend of 30th August to 1st September 2013, Birmingham hosted the Annual Kendriya Balagokulam Shibir. The theme this year was Swami Vivekananda's 150th birth centenary, and the shibir concluded with the showcasing of different parts of Swamiji's life. This year many records were broken. Firstly we had our largest sankhya of 210. Secondly we had the widest representation from across the UK, with 17 towns present at the shibir. Thirdly, 75% of all attendees were new to the shibir concept. The shibir was well received and enjoyed by all who attended. Many other sessions with adhikari's and training sessions were held throughout the shibir.

An anthropologist proposed a game to the kids in an African tribe. He put a basket full of fruits near a tree and told the kids that who ever got there first wins the sweet fruits.

When he told them to run, they all took each others hands and ran together, then all sat together enjoying their treats.

When he asked them, why they had run like that as one could have had all the fruits for himself, they said:"UBUNTU, how can one of us be happy if all the other ones are sad?"

'UBUNTU' in the Xhosa culture means:
"I am, because we are."



For us Diwali is not just a festival,
but a celebration of life.

Diwali signifies triumph of good over evil,
Diwali takes us from ignorance to knowledge,
Diwali makes the darkest night full of light,

In Diwali Lord Rama returned home from exile
In Diwali Lord Krishna killed the demon Narkasura,
and made world free of atrocities.

It is the celebration that purifies our soul,
It is a day when we start afresh,
It is a day when we worship Goddess Laxmi,
for wealth, prosperity, and happiness.

The twinkling diya made up of ghee evades darkness,
The light of firecrackers depicts happiness,
The sweets made in this festival fill our lives with sweetness.

Diwali is the festival of life,
Which takes away all our inner darkness.

Aiswarya Biswal, Warrington Shakha

Diwali...

SanghSandesh

संघ संदेश



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