



SANGH MAIL

Sanskār • Sewā • Sangathan

SEPTEMBER 2023:

Shikshak Vandan Diwas – “Teachers Appreciation Day”

Sangh Mail is a monthly publication showcasing the activities of Hindu Swayamsevak Sangh (UK) for circulation to its members and well-wishers.

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SHIKSHAK VANDAN DIWAS 2023:

APPRECIATING OUR TEACHERS!

In Sanskrit, 'Shikshak' means teacher and 'Vandana' means utmost praise. *Shikshak Vandan Divas* (SVD) is the celebration for all students to offer respect and gratitude to our teachers. We owe a lot to our teachers for playing such an important part in our development and learning, hence the offering of respect to teachers is an important value for all Hindus. This edition of Sangh Mail showcases some of the events arranged across the country to express our appreciation to all our teachers, for everything they do for us and playing a crucial role in our lives.

Shikshak Vandan Diwas 2023



NOTTINGHAM NAGAR

Excitement on the faces of children knew no bounds, when they felicitated their teachers.

All the teachers were appreciated with a personalised gift bag containing a box of chocolates, a thank you card, flowers, and a copy of Srimad Bhagavad Gita. All the teachers joined in the activities and watched a performance by the children. The delight of the teachers was also telling, as they were shown how deep the relationship of *Guru-Shishya* or Teacher-Student can be.



Shikshak Vandan Diwas 2023



In this auspicious event, we were graced by 25 teachers, 6 dignitaries including 2 mayors, and 1 deputy mayor.

All the younger children got involved in the performances and were extremely pleased to showcase their regular activities, showing the guests what they learn in shakha. Kids really got involved this time, as our older ones did anchoring and younger ones were involved in performances. The older children did an excellent job in conducting the event and the feedback from teachers and other guests was very overwhelming and pleasant. This was only possible because of parents and kids dedication and determination.

Shikshak Vandan Diwas 2023



BRISTOL PARIVAR SHAKHA

The Shikshak Vandan Diwas celebrations began with a welcome to our esteemed teachers who have dedicated their lives to shaping our minds and nurturing our talents. The students and staff members came together to acknowledge their selfless efforts and express deep gratitude.

One of the highlights of the Shikshak Vandan Diwas celebrations was a captivating play based on the various avatars of Bhagwan Vishnu. The play beautifully depicted the essence and significance of these divine incarnations in Hindu mythology. The audience was enthralled by the colourful costumes, impressive set designs, and the talented performances of the students, who brought these mythical characters to life.

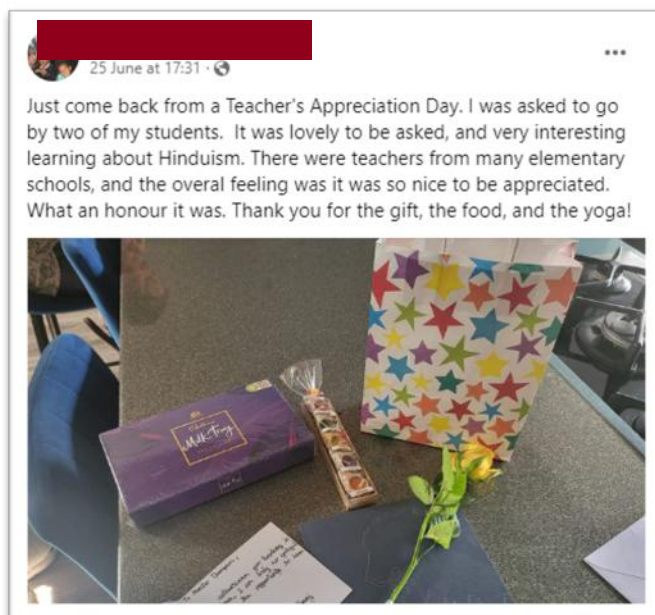
The Shikshak Vandan Diwas celebrations were a resounding success, leaving everyone inspired and enlightened. We extend our heartfelt appreciation to all the teachers, students, and the mandir who helped to make this event a success.

Shikshak Vandan Diwas 2023



KESARI PARIVAR SHAKHA, CHELTENHAM

We had 7 teachers attend from 3 secondary schools . Our guests saw a video about HSS and the significance of SVD. The children did a presentation about outreach activities such as Rakshabandhan, UKPW, Fundraising for Sewa UK, and local Sewa Day. The teachers had fun with us in several activities like making sentences related to SVD, laughter yoga, Niyuddha, and looking at the Hinduism exhibition. The teachers were appreciated with a tilak, flower, and a token gift. They were highly impressed with the gesture of appreciation which some of them had received first time in their long careers. One of the teachers even posted about it on their social media. They were also impressed by the outreach activities and our values of *Sanskar*, *Sewa*, and *Sangathan*.



Shikshak Vandan Diwas 2023



BHARATI SHAKHA, NEWBURY

Bharati Shakha Newbury recently marked the 5th consecutive celebration of Shikshak Vandan Diwas (Teachers Appreciation Day). A remarkable total of 148 attendees, including 22 teachers from 13 schools in the Newbury area, made this event truly special. The program commenced with the ceremonial lighting of a lamp dedicated to Maa Saraswati, followed by a soulful Saraswati Vandana (prayer). Teachers were elated to learn about our rich cultural Guru-Shishya Parampara (teacher-disciple tradition), emphasizing the importance of seeking their blessings through the tradition of touching their feet (Aashirwad).

The event reached its pinnacle when children expressed their heartfelt appreciation for their teachers through handwritten notes, which brought immense delight to the teachers.

The closing moments saw a brief on how Bharati Shakha Newbury can support schools through initiatives like coordinating assemblies and providing authentic educational content. Overall, the event left a positive impact, reinforcing our rich values and preserving our cultural heritage.

Shikshak Vandan Diwas 2023



Cambridge Ramanujan Shakha

It is famously said that ‘teachers have three loves – love for learning, love for learners, and the love of bringing the two together.’

To acknowledge and honour this love as per the ethos of the Hindu values system, we organised this auspicious event. The event was graced by esteemed teachers from various primary and secondary schools in and around Cambridge. The celebration was marked by performances by the children, who sang traditional Hindu mantras, and demonstrated the unique games which are played weekly in shakha. Everyone found them enjoyable and engaging.

The teachers were then felicitated individually by their students to express their heartfelt gratitude for helping shape their learning and development. The evening ended with sharing of thoughts, ideas, and mutual appreciation over delicious homemade food prepared by our families. It was heartening to receive some wonderful feedback on this initiative from the teachers and parents present on the occasion.

Shikshak Vandan Diwas 2023



AN APPRECIATION NOTE FROM A TEACHER

FOR: CAMBRIDGE RAMANUJAN NAGAR
R.E: SHIKSHAK VANDAN DIVAS



Dear Hindu Swayamsevak Sangh,

I wanted to take this opportunity to thank you all for such a lovely evening last week, and for the kind invitation I received.

I have worked with and in schools in Delhi and have colleagues who annually share events for teacher appreciation day. It has always seemed to me that it is something we should do here in the UK too, formally. We are lucky at our College in that our management regularly shows appreciation to their staff for their work and commitment, but I do know that this is not a reality in many schools. Your evening, and the fact that so many teachers had been nominated by their pupils, was such an honour and a privilege that will be treasured in the memories of those teachers involved.

So, thank you all for your hospitality, your kind words, your gifts, and the delicious food. You should feel very proud of the children who attended. Those I know from our school are a credit to your families and your community, and our school.

Warm wishes to you all,
Elisa



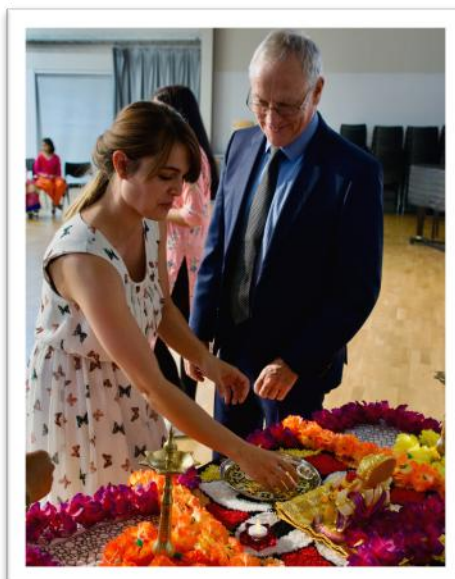
Shikshak Vandan Diwas 2023



READING NAGAR

It was an event full of heart warming displays of gratitude and admiration. To honour the dedication, hard work, and impact of teachers in shaping young minds. With the presence of 12 esteemed external teachers, including five from the school and others from various fields such as music and dance, the event was a memorable tribute to the invaluable role of teachers. With the customary Tilak applied to the foreheads and feet touched, the act symbolized their respect and admiration for the educators and guides.

As part of appreciation, the students prepared a series of cultural acts, encompassing a wide range of artistic expressions, including music, dance, and theatrical presentations. The teachers expressed their delight at being recognized and appreciated for their student's efforts and commended the students for their respectful gestures and thoughtfully arranged cultural acts.



**Diversity of fields,
fostering a spirit of
inclusivity and diversity.**

Shikshak Vandan Diwas 2023



WELLINGBOROUGH PARIVAR SHAKHA

Wellingborough Parivaar Shakha celebrated Shikshak Vandan Diwas. Three teachers from local schools attended. We felicitated teachers with flower bouquets and chocolates and showcased some of our shakha activities. The event concluded by visiting the Hindu Mandir and Swaminarayan Mandir. Dr. Bhala accompanied teachers in the mandir and explained the facets of Hinduism, which the teachers found very helpful and informative.



Shikshak Vandan Diwas 2023



PRATAP AND SHAKTI SHAKHA, BARNET

Seven teachers attended our shakha to celebrate Shikshak Vandan Divas. The teachers spontaneously and enthusiastically participated in all our activities. A talk highlighted the contribution teachers make in moulding our lives and narrated stories from Hindu religious texts where the Teacher (*Guru*)- Student (*shishya*) relationship was exemplary. Teacher appreciation poems were read out. One of the teachers said 'It is very rare that we get the appreciation that we got today'. Another teacher, mailed after the event:

"I had the privilege to be invited to HSS(UK) Shikshak Vandan Divas by my students and got to see the great sessions they are involved in. Everyone was so welcoming to me and got me to join in their sports games and football matches. The teaching honouring ceremony was brilliant and my student's speech and poem made me very proud. "

Shikshak Vandan Diwas 2023



LEAMINGTON NAGAR

Leamington Sanskar Shakha continues the HSS tradition of expressing thanks and gratitude to teachers through Shikshak Vandan Divas event, this being the 3rd year in Leamington. 22 teachers joined as guests of honour, from 8 different schools in and around Leamington.

The teachers were welcomed with the Hindu tradition of tilak (marking on the forehead) and showers of flower petals. After sharing the dharmic principle of 'Vasudhaiv Kutumbakam' last year, the Shakha chose to share another Hindu tradition of *Pranaam* (namaskar by touching feet) in addition to *Guru Shishya Parampara*. The student Swayamsevaks and Sevikas also did *Pranaam* to teachers to express their respect, gratitude, and affection. The beautiful handmade greeting cards and bookmarks were given to the teachers as a token of their expression.



Shikshak Vandan Diwas 2023



Aadishakti Parivar Shakha, Newton Mearns

14 teachers invited from 5 different schools in East Renfrewshire. The program was divided into three sections.

Firstly, the importance of teachers in our culture was explained, and each child put a tilak on their teacher's forehead. After that, each of the children introduced their teachers and shared their feelings and appreciation. Finally, each teacher was invited to the stage to say a few words about their students.



Shikshak Vandan Diwas 2023



Croydon Nagar

In a record turnout of 24 teachers from 11 schools, the event celebrated teachers and their contributions at the end of what was described as a tough week for teachers and headteachers. It was the week where strikes by teachers were announced.

In the words of the headteacher of one of the schools, this was an uplifting event and an emotional one for her given the trials and tribulations of the week. She was grateful to be part of an event and organisation that imparts such values, and that children are imbibed with these from a young age.

Other teachers had similar experiences and words to describe what they felt. To see their students organise, speak, and offer them respect in our traditional Hindu ways was joyful, and they would cherish this forever. Traditional welcoming of teachers by applying a *Tilak* and *Saraswati Vandana* were performed along with shloka recitation. Flowers, sweets, and a book on Hinduism were presented to each teacher.

Shikshak Vandan Diwas 2023



Rugby Nagar

Rugby Nagar invited and felicitated their teachers with great honour and appreciation. A program was specially organised to thank our teachers for all their help, attention and guidance throughout the year, on behalf of all our children.

An overview of the work and activities of Rugby shakha was presented and discussed with the teachers, followed by a presentation by the children who shared their gratitude for their teachers and presented them with gifts, as a symbol of appreciation.





Shibirs





Rugby Nagar Shibir

RUGBY NAGAR



Rugby Nagar Shibir took place at a picturesque site in Leicestershire. The total number of attendees was 55, where youngest participant was 21 months old and the eldest participant was 61 years of age.

The shibir was full of a variety of activities. The first day was full of games, indoor rock climbing, and abseiling activities saw very strong participation by almost all. We were fortunate to have two visitors - Dr. Ramji Vaidya met a few families and Chandrakant ji Sharma sat around a bonfire when all were having hot chocolate drinks at night, to share his experiences with all the families and children.

Our second day started with yoga and niyyudha. All left the shibir overflowing with inspiration and motivation.





Birmingham Nagar Shibir

BIRMINGHAM NAGAR



Birmingham Nagar held 2 Shibirs over the course of 2 weekends. Both were organised and led by Swayamsevaks and Sevikas from Shiva Shakha. Both weekends were jam-packed with non-stop sessions, covering a range of games and thought provoking learning sessions. Everyone had a lot of fun at the Shibir and left with many memories to cherish forever.



UK Telugu Hindu Organisation (UTHO) Shibir

UTHO

Over 100 Telugu families including children traveled from various towns & cities in the UK to Bracknell, near Reading to participate in this year's Parivar Shibir. Every year the Shibir is held with a particular theme in mind and various activities, be it the physical ones which we call "Aatalu" (games), and the mentally stimulating discussions which we call "Bauddhik" revolve around the same theme. This year the chosen theme for Shibir was 'Shakti' symbolising the untapped energy or strengths that we all possess as individuals, families, and as a community which can be directed towards the greater good not only for ourselves but for the whole of the world (*Vasudaiva Kutumbakam*).

The program was initiated by Shri Raveendra Surange Ji, Kendriya Karyawaha, (General Secretary), HSS UK who talked about the various regional Hindu Communities active in the UK, and Shri Chandrakant Sharma ji HSS Pracharak for the UK who talked about the Dharma the Sanatanis should follow to uplift our lives. The activities included Career Connect, a panel discussion providing career advice to nearly 70 students starting from the age of 12 and upwards which was well received by the students and parents alike. In the group activity time, the teams had to quickly model a child participant into any Goddesses with the items provided and also brief about the importance of that particular goddess in our Hindu *Samskruti*.





UK Telugu Hindu Organisation (UTHO) Shibir

Sri Swaraveenapani Garu, Telugu Music Director and a Guinness Book of World Records holder graced the closing ceremony with his wonderful rendition of 3 forms of Amma (Mothers- One's own mother, Mother tongue, and our Motherland, Bharat Maata) which aptly fitted into the theme.

Sri Ram Vaidya Garu, International Joint Co-ordinator for HSS UK in his special message inspired the attendees to start implementing something new that they learned or experienced through the Shibir activities, to bring a change into our daily lives.

Apart from sumptuous Telugu Bhojanam, games, and discussions, the event provided an opportunity for participants to learn about various initiatives of UTHO and ways to get involved in making a difference to the community's social life and live a satisfying and fulfilling life, contributing to the society on the core principles of Hinduism and Sanatana Dharma. All these interesting theme-based activities running over the course of the day make one come closer to their values and their roots creating a confident sense of identity. The "UTHO Shakthi Parivar Shibir" has truly left an indelible mark on the attendees fostering unity, celebration, and a deeper understanding of the Telugu Hindu culture in the UK.

UK Telugu Hindu Organisation (UTHO) is a non-profit, socio-cultural organization that brings together Telugu-speaking community of Hindu heritage in the United Kingdom. UTHO's vision is to build a vibrant Telugu community that embodies Hindu values of *Sanskar, Sewa, and Sangathan.*





More News!

संगठन में शक्ति है!

Sangathan main shakti hai!



Leicester Nagar at North Hindu Sports Mela

The Northern Hindu Sports Mela which took place in Bolton, an event that attracted over 1000 people from various communities, mandirs, and groups from the surrounding cities like Bolton, Preston, Manchester, Liverpool, Leeds, and Blackburn.

It was a great opportunity to meet so many of our sisters and brothers and play ring with the other teams. Leicester A won the ring competition. A great day out for our team and the atmosphere was full of energy!



LEICESTER & NOTTINGHAM VISIT PARLIAMENT

Sindhu Shakha Leicester and Hanuman Balgokulam Shakha Leicester were privileged to go for a parliament tour, together with Nottingham Shakha and accompanied by our East Midlands Sah-Karyawahika Hetalji Acharya and other 3 adult volunteers.

We had a guided tour of all the Houses of Parliament and a workshop afterward with our fantastic role play by our lovely kids and debates and lots of questions and ideas. There was also a Quiz which we all nailed perfectly. We are very grateful to the Parliament Education team for making the visit to Parliament an enriching, educational experience!

We then had a lovely time at the Bhaktivedanta Manor ISKCON mandir, with lovely scenic views and Feeding the cows at the Goshala (Cow Shed) and lovely prasadam prepared by them for us. The kids were so enthusiastic about the gift shop as well and used their pocket money wisely for lovely souvenirs.



Photo by Ehud Neuhaus on Unsplash

Essential Reads

*“The gift of **knowledge** is a far higher gift than that of food and clothes; it is even higher than giving life to a man, because the real life of man consists of knowledge”*



- Swami Vivekananda



REALISE THE SOFTWARE OF LIFE

The physical world is accessible to either of our senses and hence easy to perceive, if not comprehend its reality and totality. The challenge lies with the non-physical. And it is quite easy to conclude that it does not exist and is quite defensible too. The best example of this is to miss or ignore the existence of energy forms within and around our body and its extreme power and influence. The normal senses are not enough to realise it but sometimes we can experience it. The closest analogy to this is a computer or laptop. It has visible physical hardware but also has the firmware and operating system necessary to make it usable. With it, one can reach any corner of the cosmos, and without the operating system, it is just a piece of plastic and metal.

Similarly, our body also has a physical form, and energy forms in and around us. We all know what happens when this energy and its source leaves the body. But we mostly fail to recognise its capacity and use it appropriately when it is available. This energy form prevails in the entire cosmos like the invisible ether and interacts with us, exactly like Wi-Fi. Our body activated by its inherent energy acts as a strong antenna and it gets connected to the energy ecosystem around us, irrespective of our realisation or otherwise.

Any new computer when purchased - comes with the hardware, the firmware, and the operating system. It also has the capacity and potential to install much more software and create value for self and others. The same is true with our birth. We acquire the physical body with some built-in operating system and a huge potential for more learning (*Sanskār*) to be installed. Once installed these *Sanskār* (software) can be used with the purpose of sustaining the world and making it a better place - the very definition of Dharma. The beauty of the God-designed system (of the human body) over a computer is that it enhances and grows - from a baby to an adolescent to an adult. It effectively means that the operating system can upgrade or enhance the hardware. The hardware enhancement happens so that bigger and better software for social good be installed and run effectively. As our body grows it becomes more capable of thoughts and actions.

The installation of the new software (learning) starts first with the help of parents and then teachers. They mostly decide which software (*Sanskars*) is to be installed and nurture us along the path. After a certain time, these software are supposed to be strong, intelligent, and sufficient to turn on the auto-pilot mode of more and better software installation. Adoption of more *Sanskars* and continuous evolution or upgrade of self for a higher and better purpose is a lifetime endeavor. Nurturing physical growth will happen but installing this software (of *Sanskār*) in the child to make him or her sufficiently intelligent to wisely decide for the future OR entire life is paramount.



Essential Read

Like the Chinese philosophy of yin and yang - yin must or will exist with yang. The software world will exist with viruses. We do not stop the usage or installation of new useful software or switch off the Wi-Fi connection fearing viruses but connect judiciously and most importantly install the anti-virus (AV). For humans, during childhood, our parents installed AV software. It does create some restrictions like blocking unreliable websites and stopping some free software downloads. And as a parent, if not as a child we know it is for our own good. However, with time - the operating system must become intelligent and capable enough to differentiate the viruses. It should develop the ability to install newer anti-virus software with constant upgrades to avert the risks of breakdown and malfunction. With the sturdy foundation of *Sanskars* - one must become sufficiently judicious and wise to differentiate the yin and yang and stay away from viruses, clean up the virus if infected by chance.

Complaining about the viruses in the environment is no good or does any good. The higher power, call it nature or God and whatever you like - the one who designed the masterpiece hardware that can upgrade itself through the firmware and created the operating system (OS) for the excellent working of this laptop - did not just create and ignore. It also provides OS upgrades. However, the laptop and Wi-Fi antenna should be switched on and must be connected to that software provider. We also need to connect our thoughts through this body to a higher power to receive those upgrades. If we ignore connecting, we miss all the spiritual upgrades that can help improve our capabilities to install more and better software (*Sanskars*) for enhancing our own and societal good (Dharma). The hardware and the operating system together work seamlessly to write newer programs, save them, and use all the creativity for a specific good purpose. Similarly, the physical body and the energy aura (in and around our body), respectively work together to create - thoughts and actions (karma), save beautiful memories, and use all that value created for ourselves, our family, and society.

Due to some virus infections sometimes, a few files get corrupted. So, we delete them from the laptop, stop them from corrupting more files, and learn what not to do again (to repeat the file infection).

Similarly, bad experiences are to be learned from and deleted. They cannot be allowed to corrupt our newer thoughts and actions.

Any laptop when brand new is so nice, shiny, and state of the art. With time it ages and loses its sheen. It undergoes some hardware degradation and it seems incapable. However, what makes it incapable is not the hardware alone. Equally important is the software - which fortunately we can guard against viruses that can damage the operating system and sometimes the hardware too.



Essential Read

Remember the strength of this firmware and the operating system - it can upgrade the hardware too, and heal from damage by viruses. A computer and its OS are designed to work in a network but can also work in isolation but with limited capability. The nature and human ecosystem are also designed to work in tandem, symbiotically.

Staying or living in isolation is possible, but then it will limit our purpose and potential. Computers are not meant to help each other even though working in a network. However, the God-created operating system has the intelligence and consciousness to be helpful to each other. That is probably where the human operating system completely differentiates itself from and is superior to the human-made computer operating system. It is time we realise the aura of energy in and around us even if it is invisible, understand its importance in shaping our thoughts and actions, and channelise it appropriately for our own and societal good. We need to understand that we are all sent with the same potential and it is for us to decide what to do and what not to do to realise that potential. Equally important is to connect with the creator to get the upgrades continuously and strengthen ourselves towards the specific purpose we believe we are born for; of realising, enhancing the consciousness in us, and using it for the sustenance of humankind.

- Jagdish Amame,
(Sanskar Shakha, Leamington Spa Nagar)



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WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!



When submitting your articles, here are a few points to consider:

- Provide a summary- keep articles short, highlighting the best parts
- A picture tells a thousand words - select your best photos (maximum of 8) to go with your article in the same email
 - Don't forget to include your Shakha name and location

Send all articles to sanghmail@hssuk.org

