



Ipswich Hindu Samaj

Reg charity no. 1118790

Hindu Samaj's News Letter

No. 1

April 2008



Welcome!

Welcome to all for this first newsletter of year 2008.

We convey our best wishes and greetings to all new members of the Samaj and to all those who have renewed their membership since January 2008.

There has been a need for such a newsletter for long time, but could not be brought earlier. Now onwards, we hope to produce this letter regularly (probably once per quarter). We pray the almighty that this newsletter does the job of bringing the community together by sharing the community news and bringing the gems of Hindu philosophy.

We would welcome any comments on the newsletter. We would also welcome any feature or article for next newsletter.

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I came to the conclusion long ago ... that all religions were true and also that all had some error in them, and whilst I hold by my own, I should hold others as dear as Hinduism. So we can only pray, if we are Hindus, not that a Christian should become a Hindu ... But our innermost prayer should be a Hindu should be a better Hindu, a Muslim a better Muslim, a Christian a better Christian.

- Mahatma Gandhi .

Regular Bhajan Evenings / Hawan

Singing of bhajans with Bhakti, i.e. loving devotion makes us feel closer to our true self, to God.

The next Bhajan evening will be held on Friday 16th of May at Unitarian Hall, Friars Street, Ipswich, IP1 1TD at 7:30 pm.

The Bhajan evening for the month of June will be held on Friday 20th June at the same venue.

Sponsor for the Aarti for both these evenings is Mr. Sunil and Mrs. Nayna Patel.

All are welcome, and if you wish, you may bring Prasad for offering.

Indian Summer Mela

Sunday, 13th July 2008, 12:00 – 6:00 p.m.

Ipswich & Suffolk Indian Association (ISIA) in partnership with Ip-Arts will organize the 6th Indian Summer Mela at Christchurch Park.

Come and watch Indian music and dance; Enjoy Indian cuisine; Experience holistic therapy!

Admission Free. For more details, go to ISIA website www.onesuffolk.co.uk/isia

Charity Walk

Sunday, 8th June 2008,

Starts 8:30 am from Gainsborough Sports Centre

About 18 members of the Ipswich Hindu Samaj will be participating on the Orwell River sponsored walk to raise funds for the Samaj.

Parts of the funds raised will be used for the purchase of PA system and the rest will go into reserve funds.

Festivals Celebrated

Makar Sankranti (Lohri), Monday 14th January

"The reason why Makar Sankranti is celebrated more than any other is that it marks the day the Sun starts moving north and the auspicious half of the year is characterized by increasing daylight. Of all the heavenly bodies, the Sun is the most glorious and the most important to life - and the Festival Marak Sankranti is one of the most important and happy feasts in its honor. It is the time when winter begins to loosen its grip and the days behing to grow warmer and warmer."

The festival of Makar Sankranti was celebrated on Friday, 18th January at the Unitarian Meeting House, as part of the Bhajan evening. Shrimati Sadhvi Bhanumati Devi ji, who was in Colchester giving discourse on Bhagwad Gita, came to speak on Makar Sankranti. She spoke for 45 minutes on the importance of religious festival, also known as Uttarayan.

People in western India fly kites and in the north celebrate with bonfires, marking the Lohri festival.

Maha Shivaratri, Friday 7th March

***Puranic story:** During the churning of the ocean by the gods and the asuras, a pot of poison emerged from the ocean. This terrified the gods and demons as the poison was capable of destroying the entire world, and they ran to Shiva for help. To protect the world from its evil effects, Shiva drank the deadly poison but held it in his throat instead of swallowing it. This made his throat turn blue, and he was given the name Neelakantha, the blue-throated one. Shivaratri is the celebration of this event by which Shiva saved the world.*



***Spiritual Significance:** The ocean is compared to the human mind and the process of churning to meditation. In the hours of meditation, the sadhaka or spiritual aspirant churns his own mind. There is a constant war between the devas and the asuras, that is, between the good and the bad tendencies (samskaras) accumulated in the sub-conscious mind. During the process of churning of the mind, both good and bad tendencies surface to the conscious mind. Spiritual aspirants pay and seek the blessings of Shiva (who is none other than their own divine Self) to digest all these poisons without getting affected by them. Then alone will they be able to manifest their divine nature and obtain the pot of nectar - Amruta Kumbha - that is immortality.*

The festival of Shivaratri was celebrated at the Unitarian Meeting House, with Bhajans and Aarti in the praise of Lord Shiva. Sushil Soni read from Tulsi Das' Rama Charita Maanas, the description of the wedding of Lord Shiva with Parvati.

Holi, Friday 21st March

Holi marks the day when the devotee of lord Vishnu, Bhakta Prahalad, seated on the lap of demoness Holika, was saved from the effect of the fire by God and the demoness got burnt instead. Holi is a festival of fun and enjoyment, indicating the end of spring and start of summer.



The festival was celebrated on Sunday, 30th March at St Clements Hospital Social Club. Festival of colours, when dry coloured powder is applied on everyone. There was a great fun during Holi celebration. Aarti for Lord Shiva was performed and there was sale of food and raffle to raise funds for the Samaj. The festival was attended by Ipswich M.P. Chris Mole.

Rama Navami, Monday 14th April

"Rama, the ancient idol of the heroic ages, the embodiment of truth, of morality, the ideal son, the ideal husband, and above all, the ideal king, this Rama has been presented before us by the great sage Valmiki. No language can be purer, none chaster, none more beautiful, and at the same time simpler, than the language in which the great poet has depicted the life of Rama."

- Swami Vivekananda .

Rama Navami (Birthday of Lord Rama) was celebrated on 14th April at the Friends Meeting House, 39 Fonnereau Road, Ipswich. We sang Bhajans, Aarti and children read stories about Lord Rama. Murli Manohar ji spoke about the importance of Rama Navami.

Annual General Meeting

The first Annual General Meeting of the Samaj was held on 23rd January at Suffolk New College. Annual report was presented and certain amendments to the constitution were approved to make the smooth functioning of the Samaj. Annual accounts were approved, and certain recommendations on the management of the Samaj and of the Samaj website have been implemented.

The Annual Report, the amended constitution and the accounts can be viewed at the Samaj website: <http://www.ipswichhindusamaj.org.uk/>

Executive committee:

Dr. Sushil Soni	Chairman / President
Mr. Umesh Patel	Vice Chairman
Mrs. Lila Patel	Secretary
Mr. Debajit Naha	Assistant Secretary
Mr. Chandravardan Patel	Treasurer
Mr. Harshad Patel	Assistant Treasurer
Mr. Anil Khosla	Committee Member
Mr. Bhaskar Patel	Committee Member
Mrs. Nayna Patel	Committee Member
Ms Sital Patel	Committee Member
Mr. Anil Patel	Committee Member
Mrs. Vinaya Kulkarni	Committee Member

Ipswich Hindu Samaj - Organizational News

- Mr. Anil Khosla, the secretary, who worked hard on the working and management of Samaj decided to resign from the secretary-ship, but agreed to be in the Executive Committee. Many thanks, Anil for your hard work, since the inception of the Samaj in July 2006.
- Mr. Shakti Khosla was elected to be one of the trustees. Other trustees continued to be Mrs. Renu Mandal (Chairperson), Mrs. Hamlesh Soni, Mrs Hema Chhabra and Mr. Subhash Patel
- Mr. Jayanti Patel agreed to continue as the auditor for the Samaj.
- In March, Mrs Dharmishtha Patel resigned to migrate to America and Mr. Bhaskar Patel was included in her place.
- Since January, the Executive Committee has met four times to carry out the work of Samaj.

Site / Premises for a Hindu Cultural Centre

- The Executive Committee has had numerous meetings with officers and councillors of both Ipswich Borough Council and Suffolk County Council, but without success so far.
- Discussions are continuing for the use of Ravenswood Community Centre and St Lawrence Centre for cultural and social events. A few other premises have been earmarked for possible use, but still without luck.

Appointment of Emica Consultancy for preparation of IHS Business plan

- The committee engaged Emica Consultancy to prepare Business Plan and to submit applications for grant for a Hindu Cultural Centre to funding bodies on payment of the fees of £3500. A meeting was held with Emica Chief Executive, Mr. Alyas Khan on 19th March, who was provided information for the preparation of the Business Plan.
- For this purpose, a grant of £3000 was received from Suffolk Single Gateway. We hope, the business plan to be complete within a few months and applications would be submitted in due course.

Set up of two sub committees

- Events Sub-committee, led by Mrs Lila Patel, and assisted by Mrs. Renu Mandal, Mrs. Vinaya Kulkarni and Ms Sital Patel. They were given responsibility of organizing social and cultural events with approval from the Executive Committee.
- Finance Sub-committee, led by Mr. Umesh patel and assisted by Mrs. Lila Patel, Mr. Chandravardan Patel and Debu Naha. This committee to look into i) Fundraising, ii) Honorary Memberships iii) Finances and site development for Hindu Cultural Centre and Mandir.

Holi Celebrations - Some photographs



Dr. Sushil Soni and Ipswich MP Mr. Chris Mole enjoying Holi



Small break for a photograph!



Young and old, enjoying alike!



A festival of friendship and brotherhood!

Thanks and Congratulations

- ❖ We are pleased to record and congratulate Dr. Sushil Soni, our President and Chairman for receiving the Community Champion Award for his service to the Indian and Hindu community during last 30 years.
- ❖ We express our heartfelt thanks to Kerry Burn, who designed and set-up the Samaj website, as part of One Suffolk website organization to help Suffolk communities set-up and manage their websites. Many thanks, Kerry for your help and support.
- ❖ We would also like to thank Ipswich & Suffolk Council for Racial Equality (ISCRE), Suffolk Mental Health Partnership Trust, Mr. Anil Khosla and Mr. Anil Patel for taking the life membership of the Samaj for £500.00 each.
- ❖ Many thanks to Suffolk Constabulary for their generous donation of £500.00 and Mrs Dharmishtha Patel for her donation of £1000.
- ❖ The Samaj is grateful to the Rev. Cliff Reed and Trustees of Unitarian Meeting House for allowing us to organize Bhajan evenings on every 3rd Friday of the month from 7:30 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. Special thanks to Mrs. Paulette Reed for helping Samaj in organizing.
- ❖ Thanks to ISCRE for allowing meeting room for executive meetings.

Visit us at: <http://www.ipswichhindusamaj.org.uk/>

Email: info@ipswichhindusamaj.org.uk

Real Worship

It is in love that religion exists and not in ceremony, in the pure and sincere love in the heart. Unless a man is pure in body and mind, his coming into a temple and worshipping Shiva is useless. The prayers of those that are pure in mind and body will be answered by Shiva, and those that are impure and yet try to teach religion to others will fail in the end. External worship is only a symbol of internal worship; but internal worship and purity are the real things. Without them, external worship would be of no avail. Therefore you must all try to remember this.

People have become so degraded in this Kali Yuga that they think they can do anything, and then they can go to a holy place, and their sins will be forgiven. If a man goes with an impure mind into a temple, he adds to the sins that he had already, and goes home a worse man than when he left it. Tirtha (place of pilgrimage) is a place, which is full of holy things and holy men. But if holy people live in a certain place, and if there is no temple there, even that is a Tirtha. If unholy people live in a place where there may be a hundred temples, the Tirtha has vanished from that place. And it is most difficult to live in a Tirtha; for if sin is committed in any ordinary place it can easily be removed, but sin committed in a Tirtha cannot be removed. This is the gist of all worship--to be pure and to do good to others.

He who sees Shiva in the poor, in the weak, and in the diseased, really worships Shiva; and if he sees Shiva only in the image, his worship is but preliminary. He who has served and helped one poor man seeing Shiva in him, without thinking of his caste, or creed, or race, or anything, with him Shiva is more pleased than with the man who sees Him only in temples.

A rich man had a garden and two gardeners. One of these gardeners was very lazy and did not work; but when the owner came to the garden, the lazy man would get up and fold his arms and say, "How beautiful is the face of my master", and dance before him. The other gardener would not talk much, but would work hard, and produce all sorts of fruits and vegetables which he would carry on his head to his master who lived a long way off. Of these two gardeners, which would be the more beloved of his master? Shiva is that master, and this world is His garden, and there are two sorts of gardeners here; the one who is lazy, hypocritical, and does nothing, only talking about Shiva's beautiful eyes and nose and other features; and the other, who is taking care of Shiva's children, all those that are poor and weak, all animals, and all His creation. Which of these would be the more beloved of Shiva? Certainly he that serves His children. He who wants to serve the father must serve the children first. He who wants to serve Shiva must serve His children--must serve all creatures in this world first. It is said in the Shastra that those who serve the servants of God are His greatest servants. So you will bear this in mind.

Let me tell you again that you must be pure and help any one who comes to you, as much as lies in your power. And this is good Karma. By the power of this, the heart becomes pure (Chitta-shuddhi), and then Shiva who is residing in every one will become manifest. He is always in the heart of every one. If there is dirt and dust on a mirror, we cannot see our image. So ignorance and wickedness are the dirt and dust that are on the mirror of our hearts. Selfishness is the chief sin, thinking of ourselves first. He who thinks, "I will eat first, I will have more money than others, and I will possess everything", he who thinks, "I will get to heaven before others, I will get Mukti before others" is the selfish man. The unselfish man says, "I will be last, I do not care to go to heaven, I will even go to hell if by doing so I can help my brothers." This unselfishness is the test of religion. He who has more of this unselfishness is more spiritual and nearer to Shiva. Whether he is learned or ignorant, he is nearer to Shiva than anybody else, whether he knows it or not. And if a man is selfish, even though he has visited all the temples, seen all the places of pilgrimage, and painted himself like a leopard, he is still further off from Shiva.

- Swami Vivekananda, Founder of Ramakrishna Mission .