



BAPS Swaminarayan Sanstha, UK

Annual Review 2009

In the joy of others, lies our own.
His Holiness Pramukh Swami Maharaj

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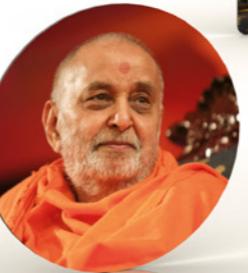
Introducing BAPS Swaminarayan Sanstha

Serving others is not child's play, but it need not be any less enjoyable. In fact, at BAPS Swaminarayan Sanstha (BAPS), joy is at the heart of all our activities – bringing joy to others, and finding joy in doing so. This guiding principle is inspired by the simple yet profoundly spiritual message of His Holiness Pramukh Swami Maharaj, the leader of BAPS: "In the joy of others, lies our own."

BAPS is a worldwide charity organisation striving to fulfil the spiritual and social needs of our society. It is rooted in the Hindu beliefs and values revealed by Bhagwan Swaminarayan over two centuries ago. Affiliated internationally with the UN's Economic and Social Council, BAPS is respected in the UK as one of its largest and most active Hindu groups. This Annual Review, covering the year up to October 2009, offers a glimpse of how we have found joy in bringing joy to others.

(Opp) Children enjoying themselves in the crèche at the Family Convention; 28-31.08.09

(L-R) His Holiness Pramukh Swami Maharaj, inspirer of BAPS Swaminarayan Sanstha | BAPS Swaminarayan Akshardham, New Delhi | BAPS Shri Swaminarayan Mandir, Neasden, London, headquarters of BAPS in the UK | Sacred image of Bhagwan Swaminarayan in the shrine at Neasden





BAPS is helping children of today mature into responsible British citizens of tomorrow.

Sir David Brewer, Lord-Lieutenant of Greater London and Representative of Her Majesty The Queen

Nurturing Children

Children and young people are a priority at BAPS. And so it was humbling for BAPS's Children's Forum to be conferred the prestigious Queen's Award for Voluntary Service – the highest such honour in the country – for its exceptional work in integrating value-based educational, moral and spiritual activities for children of all ages.

(Opp) National Children's Camp; 18.04.09

(L-R) Lord-Lieutenant Sir David Brewer and dignitaries presenting the Queen's Award to volunteers; 03.10.09 | Weekly music classes; 08-09 | Substance Abuse Workshops in conjunction with the London Bus Theatre Company; 13.12.08 & 14.12.08 | Media Awareness Seminars; 29.11.08 & 24.01.09 | Summer Training Camp; 24.07-02.08.09 | Winter Training Camp; 28-30.12.08

These activities include workshops, conventions, seminars, summer and winter camps, talent-enhancing classes... and much more. The aim is to help young boys and girls enjoy and make the most of their childhood while preparing them for the challenges that lie ahead in our increasingly testing times.





Loved every minute of it! If I take only a handful of things I have learned today, I will be a proud parent.
A young mother, after a one-day family seminar in Leicester

Strengthening Families

Families share a sacred bond. Helping strengthen that bond is something BAPS values immensely. That is why we endeavour to help families develop faith, love, respect, forgiveness, communication skills, and wholesome collective activities – the core threads that tie successful families together. This is done through regular

parents' evenings, parent-child workshops – including for new and expectant mothers – and fun-filled family-centred activities and outings. BAPS also conducted four day-long family seminars at key centres around the country, helping 1,694 individuals grow closer and stronger within their families.

(Opp) Strengthening family bonds at regional family seminars; 03.09

(L-R) Group activities at a regional family seminar; 22.03.09 | National Family Kite Day; 18.01.09 | Crèche facilities for parents with young children | Parents' Days; 06.09 | Mother and Baby Welfare Workshop; 18.01.09





Promoting Healthy Living

The health and well-being of the community is important to BAPS, and so initiatives promoting healthy living feature regularly throughout the year. Experts were invited to raise awareness of relevant issues, while we worked with various medical experts and charities to conduct a health fair for the elderly and regular public

screenings for heart disease, BP, diabetes and strokes. BAPS's chosen charity for 2009 was The Anthony Nolan Trust, the charity that tackles leukaemia. We were able to raise £22,000 for the Trust from the National Sponsored Family Walk & Fun Run, and also help recruit potentially life-saving bone marrow donors.

(Opp) A BAPS member enrolling on the national bone marrow register; 30.08.09
 (Clockwise from left) National Sponsored Family Walk & Fun Run 2009 raised funds for the Anthony Nolan Trust and local charities and hospitals around the country; 26.04.09 | 'Keeping the Elderly Healthy' health fair for optimum independent living for the aged; 20.09.09 | TB awareness lecture by Dr Robert Davidson; 14.02.09 | Qaim Zaidi launching the British Heart Foundation's 'Social Cooking' Project for healthier cooking practices; 20.06.09 | Cancer awareness lecture by Dr Sanjay Popat; 18.07.09 | BAPS assisted Breast Cancer Care prepare and promote an educational film; 04.09 | Monthly medical screening for heart disease, BP, diabetes and strokes





Fostering Education

GCSE results at The Swaminarayan School were once again exceptional. A full 100% of all students achieved 5 A* to C grades, of which 54% were in the top A* and A band (compared to 21.6% nationally). The School's Preparatory School was also recognised as a 'Thinking School' by Exeter University's Cognitive Education

Centre, making it one of only 15 primary schools from 15,000 in the UK. BAPS also offered care, support and encouragement through experienced mentors along with educational services such as specially-tailored classes, workshops, conventions and seminars for parents as well as students at various academic stages.

(Opp) Booster classes for students at Key Stages 2 & 3; 04-05.09
 (Left pair) The Swaminarayan Preparatory School, recognised as a 'Thinking School'; 29.04.09 | (Right pair) Parent-student workshop and seminar on the transition from primary school to secondary school; 02.09 & 07.09 | Parent-student evening and seminars; 28.03.09 & 06.09 | (Centre pair) Conventions offer vital training and guidance to GCSE, A-Level and university students; 20-22.02.09 & 25-27.09.09



Sport is not just about keeping youths off the streets and out of trouble.
It's about developing teams of individuals physically, intellectually and emotionally.
Rishi Parekh, Youth Sports Coordinator for BAPS in Birmingham

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Encouraging Sport

Sport is a fun way for everyone – especially the young – to engage with others and remain fit. So from family sports days and picnics to raising funds for charity, and from informal sessions in the purpose-built gymnasium at the Mandir in London to organised football, cricket and netball tournaments at certified venues around the

country, BAPS encourages sports in various forms for everyone of all ages.

These events also help to pass on some of life's most valuable lessons. Participants learn the value of discipline, teamwork and individual responsibility, as well as to accept both defeat and victory with grace and humility.

(Opp) Twenty20 Cricket Tournament; 08.08.09

(L-R) Family Sports Day, Barnet Copthall Stadium; 12.07.09 | U23s 8-a-side Cricket Tournament; 03.10.09 | U14s 5-a-side Football Tournament; 11.07.09 | U23s 5-a-side Football Tournament; 18.07.09 | Chelsea FC Asian Recruitment Programme; 14.06.09 | U13s Netball Tournament; 11.07.09 | Charity Golf Day; 03.09.09



The ideas, commitments, and willingness to work together... is extraordinary
and marks a major step forward for both the environment and Hinduism in this country.

Martin Palmer, Secretary General of Alliance of Religions and Conservation, on the launch of Project Bhumi



Protecting the Environment

BAPS pledged its support as a leading partner of Project Bhumi, a nine-year plan for environmental protection and education being led by the Alliance of Religions and Conservation and the Oxford Centre for Hindu Studies, and backed by the UN Development Programme. BAPS also observed Earth Hour, World Environment Day

and Green Britain Day with public awareness campaigns, sharing simple yet significant steps families can take at home to help protect our fragile planet. Together, this formed a part of BAPS's continuing commitment to explore new ways of responding to the challenge of climate change.

(Opp) Lights off at the Mandir in Neasden in support of the World Wildlife Fund's Earth Hour; 28.03.09
(Centre) Launch of Project Bhumi at the Oxford Centre for Hindu Studies; 16.07.09

(Left & far left) Go Veg... Go Green... awareness campaign on the positive impact of a meat-free diet on the environment; launched 28.10.08
(Right & far right) Public awareness poster campaign for World Environment Day and Green Britain Day; 05.06.09 & 10.07.09



We all have a duty to look at the faces of the poor around the world and to act with justice, to think with compassion, and to look with hope to a sustainable vision of the future.

Religious Leaders Communiqué, G20 London Summit



Serving the Community

Both locally and globally, BAPS sees its role as not just a member of the community but as an active and responsible contributor to it. And so from observing international days of significance to reaching out to those often forgotten or neglected on the fringe of society, BAPS has sought to make a positive, lasting impact on

as many lives as possible. BAPS again held seminars to help those affected by the economic downturn, making the services we offer timely and relevant. At a global level, BAPS was co-signatory to the Religious Leaders Communiqué in urging the G20 leaders to reaffirm their commitment to the Millennium Development Goals.

(Opp) 'Peace Begins at Home' in celebration of International Peace Day; 20.09.09

(L-R) 'How to Cope with the Credit Crunch' Seminar; 03.01.09 | Welfare for the Elderly Seminar; 14.06.09 | Supporting London's Air Ambulance Service; 09.05.09 | Celebrating International Women's Day; 28.02.09 (Leicester) & 06.03.09 (City Hall, London) | Religious Leaders Communiqué for G20 London Summit; 02.04.09



Religious Leaders Communiqué – G20

We writing as religious leaders who share a belief in God and the dignity of human life. We wish to acknowledge with concern the humanity the severity of the current economic crisis and the share the gravity of the global and local challenges facing us. As religious and political leaders, we pray for the leaders of the G20 to prepare to meet in London this week. They, and all others, are invited to play a role in recovering the balance between the requirements of market mechanisms that help to promote increased prosperity, and the moral requirement to safeguard human dignity, regardless of economic or social categories.

Many people are suffering as a result of the economic crisis. The World Bank estimates that 53 million more people could fall into absolute poverty as a result. The likelihood is that there will face significant challenges in the years ahead, and those who are already most vulnerable are at greatest risk. Along with the leaders of the G20 we all have a duty to look at the faces of the poor around the world and to act with justice, to think with compassion, and to look with hope to a sustainable vision of the future.

We wish therefore to draw attention to some of the promises made by the international community in recent times - with our wholehearted support - that risk being postponed by the pressing concerns to market failures. We need to be prepared to ensure that all communities include, and must pay special attention to the needs of poor, marginalised and vulnerable people. To forget their needs would be to compound yesterday's past failures with needless future injustices.

Some aspects of this crisis will require technical economic solutions. However these solutions alone will not be enough to address all the questions that we face. At the roots of this crisis lie important moral issues.

We are concerned for people and the work they do. We believe there is a need to consider the aspirations of people, and in our understanding of what the dignified person is. We believe that people who have lost their jobs, or homes, or are in debt, are not less valuable than those who have not. Their rights must be protected, and their needs met. Even in the difficult world we live in, we must find the time to hold fast to the communities that we have made.

The international community has made important contributions to the developing world. The Commonwealth Development Group, for example, has been instrumental in helping to build the foundations. Even in the difficult world we live in, we must find the time to hold fast to the communities that we have made.

We are concerned for the environment. This is a crisis that we can see on the resources of the natural world. We must find the time to hold fast to the environment. They should not be diminished, nor should we allow them to be destroyed. This is a crisis that we can see on the resources of the natural world. We must find the time to hold fast to the environment. They should not be diminished, nor should we allow them to be destroyed.

It was a great pleasure to work with dedicated Swaminarayan devotees. The discussions were very stimulating, and their openness was inspiring.
Dr Rembert Lutjeharms (Oxon), Oxford Centre for Hindu Studies Course Tutor



Celebrating Hinduism

At BAPS centres around the country, we joyously celebrate all the popular festivals of the Hindu calendar. These include Mahashivaratri, Holi, Ramanavmi, Swaminarayan Jayanti, Krishna Janmashtami, and of course Diwali and the Hindu New Year (Annakut). In addition, weekly Satsang assemblies at 35 BAPS mandirs

and centres nationwide provide spiritual strength and enrichment to thousands of people at various stages on their spiritual journey. Conventions as well as classes at GCSE and certificate level offer a broader, deeper understanding of the Hindu faith in an intellectually stimulating, spiritually conducive environment.

(Opp) BAPS Hindu devotees begin their day with prayers and meditation

(Clockwise from top right) National Youth Training Convention on Hindu Scriptures; 26-31.08.09 | GCSE Hinduism Classes; 01-06.09 | Mahashivaratri; 23.02.09 | Krishna Janmashtami; 14.08.09 | Opening of New BAPS Shri Swaminarayan Mandir, Wellingborough, Northants; 23.08.09 | Swaminarayan Jayanti; 03.04.09 | Oxford Centre for Hindu Studies Course; 10.08-10.09 | Ramanavmi; 03.04.09
(Centre) Hindu New Year's Annakut; 29.10.08





As the class teacher of our 28 seven- and eight-year-olds, we were delighted and inspired by the personal attention you gave to our every need. The children certainly gained from our visit by the very spiritual feeling you gave us in your care and attention. We very much appreciated the extra time you allowed us in your fantastic exhibition as we did not feel rushed at all and used the worksheets your [web]site provided to achieve a great first understanding of your faith for the children.

Mrs Sandy Renshaw, Class teacher at St Elizabeth's Catholic Primary School; 02.10.09

Building Bridges

From schoolchildren to old age pensioners and tourists to community leaders, everyone is welcome to explore, enjoy and experience the wonders of BAPS Shri Swaminarayan Mandir in Neasden, London. It continues to serve as a source of peace, joy and spiritual inspiration for thousands of visitors each year – fulfilling the vision of

its creator, His Holiness Pramukh Swami Maharaj. Regular Open Day events further allow visitors and BAPS to engage with and learn from each other, helping to build bridges across generations, cultures and faiths, to ensure our society is enriched and empowered by understanding and trust, mutual respect and peaceful cooperation.

(Opp) The Children's House Upper School, Islington; 18.05.09

(L-R) Rt. Hon. David Cameron MP, Leader of the Opposition; 29.10.08 | The Royal Couple celebrating Holi at The Swaminarayan School; 04.03.09 | Rt. Hon. Nick Clegg MP, Leader of the Liberal Democrats; 25.04.09 | Open Evenings; 17.04.09 & 14.05.09 | Open House London festival of architecture; 19-20.09.09



Global Highlights

46 Health Fairs, Awareness Lectures & Blood Donation Drives supporting President Obama's public service initiative
NORTH AMERICA | 04-06.09



Charity Walkathons in 43 cities in support of local beneficiaries
NORTH AMERICA | 09.09



Leadership Training Convention
Guincho, PORTUGAL | 18-21.09.09



Ganesh Festival
Antwerp, BELGIUM | 28-30.08.09



Swaminarayan Jayanti
BAHRAIN | 03.04.09



Flood Relief Aid
Gujarat, INDIA | 07.09

82 Health & Personal Development Camps for over 20,000 children
INDIA | 04-05.09



Summer Training Camps
Sydney, Perth & Adelaide, AUSTRALIA | 07-08.09



Over 5,000 children & young adults attend 20 regional Summer Camps
NORTH AMERICA | 06-07.09



Career Help Forums in wake of global economic downturn
Silicon Valley CA, Washington DC & Edison NJ, AMERICA | 04.04.09

Supporting Heart & Stroke Foundation of Ontario
Toronto, CANADA | 23.04.09



Winter Warm Project for 260 children at Lerato Educational Centre
Eikenhof, SOUTH AFRICA | 23.05.09



Children's Summer Training Camp
Nairobi, KENYA | 05-26.04.09



Over 68,000 women celebrate International Women's Day
INDIA | 08.03.09



Monthly aid to 200 homeless children at Mother Teresa Home
Dar-es-Salaam, TANZANIA | 21.06.09



Blood Donation Drive
Melbourne, AUSTRALIA | 11 & 13.04.09

Opening of new Youth Centre
Auckland, NEW ZEALAND | 30.08.09



BAPS Swaminarayan Sanstha, UK, is pleased to have supported and worked with the following charitable organisations in 2009:



In Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations
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