THE FORMAL RELIGIOUS
NURTURE IN TWO HINDU
TEMPLES IN LEICESTER

Ph.D. thesis

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A recognized English spelling for terms from the Indian languages has been adopted throughout this thesis, using roman characters without the use of diacritical marks. All terms from the Indian languages are underlined in the main text and appear in the glossary. Assistance in the pronunciation of many of the terms used in this thesis is provided by DAVE, H. T. (1974), WILLIAMS (1984) and KNOTT (1986) 'Hinduism in Leeds', where terms are cited in roman characters with diacritical marks, as a guide to pronunciation.

An inconsistency which must be noted is the spelling of the word "Vadtal". "Vadtal" is the correct recognized English spelling for the town in Gujarat. However, in the English translation of the Vachanamritam, the word is spelt "Vartal". Therefore, within the main text the spelling "Vartal" is used with reference to the Vachanamritam and the spelling "Vadtal" is adopted at all other times.

Throughout this thesis the Gujarati word denoting "prayer" in the English language is spelt "prathana", following the practice of the translators involved in this work. It is noted that other scholars have used an alternative spelling for the word, this being "prarthana".

ABBREVIATIONS

Vac. - Vachanamritam.
Var. - Vartal section.
Gad. - Gadhada section.
A.V. - Atharva Veda.
R.V. - Rig Veda.
"Bliss" - Swaminarayan Bliss Personified.
Sanatan Mandir - The Shree Sanatan Mandir. This abbreviation was chosen since this is how the temple is referred to by devotees in Leicester.
A.P. Sanstha - The Bochasanwasi Shree Akshar Purushottam Sanstha. This abbreviation is a common one amongst devotees in the Sanstha. It is particularly appropriate since it signifies the main distinctive philosophical belief of the sect, that of the place of akshar and purushottam.
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INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this thesis is to present a case study of the formal religious nurture taking place at two temples in Leicester, as observed in the two year period from the beginning of 1986 to the end of 1987. The situation in neither temple is static; changes are continually being made, and therefore the material presented within this thesis must be viewed as a study of a constantly adapting situation.

The term "nurture", is used to denote the process

"by which children born into a particular faith community acquire its characteristic practices and beliefs or some adaption (sic) of them", (1)

so distinguishing religious nurture from religious education, the latter terms being here taken as referring to the impartial treatment of religions in general. This thesis deals with the formal religious nurture within two temples. By formal religious nurture is meant the deliberate transmission of Hindu teaching within the temple setting, which may take many forms, rather than nurture in its wider sense, which may include the exposure of the young person to elements of Hinduism in the home and other areas of everyday life.

(1) As defined by JACKSON and NESBITT, 26.
The study of the formal religious nurture within the two temples, rather than a study of nurture in its wider sense was decided upon as it gives the opportunity to study the nature of the two chosen institutions; the tradition of formal religious nurture within each institution; the conceptions of the temple authorities of what is important to the education of their young people as Hindus, and the steps taken in order to provide for these perceived requirements.

The Hindu population in Britain has been estimated at over three hundred thousand, of which approximately 70% are Gujarati by ethnicity, 15% are Punjabi and the remaining 15% are Hindus from other states in India. (2) Out of this number, some 63% either arrived in Britain from East Africa, or were born to parents from East Africa. The remaining 37% arrived in Britain from the Indian subcontinent. (3)

Not only is there diversity among the Hindu population owing to ethnic origin, but also because of other elements such as caste membership, sectarian allegiance, and in addition, whether individual families were part of what has come to be known as the first wave of migration in the 1950s, direct from India, or the second wave in the late 1960s to the early 1970s, of migrants from East African states. (4)

(2) KNOTT, 1981

(3) KNOTT and TOON.

(4) JACKSON, 1985, 68.
KING, 1984, 2, 3.
As Jackson and Nesbitt point out,

"research evidence shows that this rich and diverse branch of the Hindu tradition is alive and active. If it is to remain so then the tradition, in its various forms, has to be transmitted to children and young people, most of whom have been or will be born in the United Kingdom, and all of whom are or will be exposed to non-Hindu influences." (5)

There is evidence that many Hindu communities are aware of the situation as outlined above, and are actively attempting to provide formal religious nurture for children and young people. In a study on which Jackson (6) reports, seventeen Hindu organizations, making up 40% of the respondents, run evening or weekend classes providing teaching either in mother tongue, or in various aspects of Hinduism.

In Leicester there are at least six Hindu organizations which run classes providing teaching for young people, in various forms. (7) The purpose of this thesis is to undertake a case study of two of the above organizations in an attempt to examine three particular questions. The first is to discover why and how such formal methods of transmitting

(5) JACKSON and NESBITT, 26.

(6) JACKSON, 1985, 72.

(7) The six I know of are the Indian Education Society and the Shree Hindu Mandir, both of which provide Gujarati language classes; the Shree Sanatan Mandir, the Sai Centre, the Brahma Samaj Centre and the Bochasanwasi Shree Akshar Purushottam Sanstha all provide teaching on various aspects of Hinduism.
Hindu values and ideas have emerged. The second is to examine the part that the community leaders play in responding to the need to transmit the Hindu religion and culture to the young people. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, the question of whether the needs of the young are being adequately met, will be discussed.

Before introducing the two relevant temples, it is necessary to provide some information about the Hindu population in Leicester. The number of Hindus in Leicester is thirty-nine thousand and seven hundred, making up 13.9% of the total population, out of an Asian population of sixty-three thousand and two hundred, or 22.1% of the total population. There are thirty-six thousand and one hundred Gujarati speaking Hindus in the city, which makes up 90.8% of all the Hindus, the majority of whom have some East African connection, either themselves or their parents having been born in one of the African states. A quarter of the Hindu population of Leicester were born in Britain. (8)

The majority of the British Asian population in Leicester live in two specific areas, namely Highfields and Belgrave, with the majority of Gujarati Hindus living in the Belgrave area. (9) With regard to caste (10) membership, although there are no

(8) Survey of Leicester 1983.
(9) See the three maps in Appendix A, reproduced from the Survey of Leicester 1983.
(10) See glossary: all technical terms used in what follows are explained therein.
available statistics, in Leicester there is a majority of Lohanas, a trading caste from Saurashtra. (11) Michaelson (12) estimates that out of the total number of Lohanas in Britain, approximately one quarter of them live in Leicester. The next largest caste group is estimated as being Patidar, which although it was originally an agricultural caste, has now adapted to being a trading caste. Both Lohanas and Patidars are Vaishya by varna, therefore being relatively "high" caste (13) compared to other caste groups which are significantly represented in Leicester, such as Prajapati, Mochi, Soni and Valand, all of which are Sudra by varna. There are however, also significant numbers of Brahmons living in the city, although Lohanas and Patidars are in the majority by far, as is obvious from information of caste groups represented in the two temples. (14)

The two temples studied in this thesis were chosen specifically, because one is a "mainstream" or "traditional" Hindu temple, and one is sectarian. They are the Shree Sanatan Mandir, situated in Belgrave, and the Bochasanwasi Shree Akshar Purushottam Sanstha, situated in the city centre. The former is the mainstream temple, made obvious through the use of the term "Sanatan" in its title, signifying its position within "sanatan dharma". (15) The latter temple is sectarian in

(11) KING, 1984, 4. (12) MICHAELSON, 1979, 357. (13) MICHAELSON, 1983, 34, 35. (14) See pp. 6-7 below. (15) See chapter one for the full discussion of "sanatan dharma".
allegiance, its members following the teachings of Lord Swaminarayan, worshipping him as Purushottam, the Supreme Lord, and worshipping Gunatitanand Swami and his spiritual successors as Akshar, the Abode of God on earth. (16) Hence the significance of the title of the Sanstha, with Bochasan being the headquarters of the sect in India, and Akshar Purushottam symbolizing the major philosophical belief of the Sanstha.

The Shree Sanatan Mandir is the largest temple in Leicester, having an annual membership of approximately four hundred, and catering for the needs of the Gujarati communities in the city. It is run by Gujarati Hindus and most of the devotional worship takes place in this language. There are however, several Punjabi members, since there is no separate temple in Leicester specifically catering for the needs of the Punjabi Hindu community. The temple premises are large, and the shrine room contains four major shrines, and several smaller side shrines. The membership according to caste, is predominantly Lohana, although many different caste groups frequent the temple, since as the title suggests, the temple is open to all Hindus, regardless of ethnicity or sectarian allegiance. (17) Lohanas make up 25.8% of the

(16) See chapter one for the full discussion of the philosophical beliefs of the Sanstha.

(17) See the comment in chapter one, under note 58.
membership of the temple, with the Patidars making up 23.2%. The next largest caste group is Prajapati, making up only 13% of the membership. (18)

The Bochasanwasi Shree Akshar Purushottam Sanstha is a smaller temple with an annual membership of approximately two hundred, all of whom are Gujarati, as would be expected, since the sect headquarters, or the "home" of the Sanstha, is in Gujarat. With regard to caste, the membership of the temple is predominantly Patidar, with this caste making up 49% of the membership, and the next largest caste group being Prajapati, making up only 11.3%. Lohana is the third largest group, making up 8.4% of the membership. (19) Like the Shree Sanatan Mandir, there are many other castes represented. The temple has two shrine rooms with one main shrine in each, both dedicated to Lord Swaminarayan, Gunatitanand Swami and the spiritual line of leaders.

These two particular temples were specifically chosen for the study because of the difference in the religious tradition of both, in addition to the knowledge that both run supplementary classes for the young. After preliminary research it became obvious that while the leaders of both institutions perceive a great need formally to transmit elements of the

(18) Calculated from the 1987 membership list of the Shree Sanatan Mandir.

(19) Calculated from the 1987 membership list of the Bochasanwasi Shree Akshar Purushottam Sanstha.
Hindu tradition to the young, the steps taken by each temple are quite different. This however, is not surprising, if the fact of the two different traditions to which each temple belongs, is borne in mind. This is what is done throughout the thesis. The case studies allow each temple to be seen within its respective tradition, which in turn comes to be seen as an important element in the different way in which the organizations attempt to fulfil the needs of their youngsters.

Although through the case studies the formal religious nurture of children and young people alike, has been recorded, there is more emphasis on what are termed the "young people", those over fourteen, than on the "children", those fourteen or less. It was originally planned to concentrate entirely upon the young people rather than upon the children, however this proved impossible in both temples. The Shree Sanatan Mandir runs only one weekly class, which caters for all age groups. In the Bochasanwasi Shree Akshar Purushottam Sanstha there are four separate groups which have classes, based on age levels: those under fifteen and those fifteen or older. However, even in this temple, it proved impossible to study what formal religious nurture the older age group received, without studying what was taught as ground-work to the younger age group. Otherwise the picture was incomplete, since in the sectarian temple the nurture that the older age group receives, builds upon what is taught in the children's classes.
The decision to concentrate upon the young people rather than upon the children, was made because those in their late teens and early twenties are one of the first generations to have to cope with growing up as Hindus in British society. It was hoped to note the response of such young people to the formal religious nurture they receive within the temple setting.

Although it has been stated that "in researching the transmission of Hindu tradition caste is one factor which cannot be neglected", (20) in this thesis, caste is not a factor which is emphasized, for two main reasons. Firstly, the nature of this study relegates the institution of caste to a relatively unimportant position. The context of the research, (being a case study of two particular organizations, and their responses to the needs of their young in terms of formal religious nurture) is sufficiently different from the context of the study within which the statement was made, to make it inapplicable in this case. The Hindu Nurture in Coventry Project involves a detailed study of a selected diverse group of children, looking at nurture in its broadest sense "with special attention to children's absorption of Hindu ritual, concepts, attitudes and stories in the home". (21) In such a case, both ethnicity and caste are two factors which are essential to take into consideration.

(20) NEspbitt, 1987, 5.
(21) ibid., 2.
Secondly, the subject addressed in this thesis is the formal religious nurture of young people within the temple setting, there being no detailed study of a diverse group of youngsters. Those at both temples share the same ethnicity, and the same caste groups are represented in each temple, although with a difference in ratio. However, this is not significant to the type of formal religious nurture provided in the institutions. The significant factor in this study is sectarian allegiance and its consequence in terms of formal religious nurture, rather than caste membership, the importance of which is seen as negligible in the context of this study.

The fieldwork for this thesis was conducted between the beginning of 1986 and the end of 1987, and notes were kept on all the observations made, interviews and classes attended during this period. Throughout the period, the two temples in question were the focus for most of the fieldwork. The research is qualitative in nature rather than quantitative, and material collected during fieldwork is not submitted to statistical analysis, this method being considered as inapplicable to the process of presentation and understanding of observed religious practices and behaviour. The fieldwork involved overt participant observation, formal and informal interviews and a prepared questionnaire.

Preliminary information about the activities provided for young people in each temple was gathered through personal interviews with the secretary of each temple. These were
followed by a series of formal interviews with various members of both institutions, including committee members, both secretaries, the teachers of the supplementary classes and two groups of young people at each temple. This preliminary information was enhanced by personal observation of the activities discussed.

The period of intensive fieldwork started in August 1986, when the role of participant observer was taken, and all the classes in each institution were attended every weekend, as well as any other activities concerned with temple life which would either be witnessed or participated in by young people. This stage continued for five months, and the next stage was embarked upon in January 1987, lasting for a further four months. This next stage involved tape recording the proceedings of classes participated in and observed at the preceding stage of the fieldwork. The one weekly class at the Shree Sanatan Mandir was tape recorded, but only two out of the four weekly classes at the Bochasanwasi Shree Akshar Purushottam Sanstha were tape recorded, these two being attended by those over fifteen. In the latter temple the sexes are strictly separated; the children and young people are divided by age, at fifteen; hence there are four sets of classes, catering for the four different groups, separated by sex and age. The proceedings of the classes catering for the "children" were observed during the first stage of intensive fieldwork, and thereafter periodically throughout the rest of the time.
Because of the strict separation of the sexes within the Bochasanwasi Shree Akshar Purushottam Sanstha, special permission had to be obtained to observe and tape record the proceedings of the young men's class. Such observation had to take place as inconspicuously as possible from the back of the room. However, with the young women's class the role of full participant observer was undertaken.

It was hoped to obtain tape recordings of ten consecutive classes, and have each translated into English, to give a clear overview of the structure and content of the classes in each temple. Problems were encountered both in the actual tape recording process, in addition to the translation of the tapes, which will be discussed below. (22) Furthermore, it proved impossible to tape consecutive classes, since during the period, classes were occasionally cancelled to encourage the young people to attend some other function in the temple, such as the celebration of a festival. Owing to all these factors, eight tape recordings of each class were made and translated over a four month period, the contents of which form a large part of the discussion on the classes, in chapters four and five. The transcriptions of the recordings of three classes from each of the three groups observed, appear in the appendix. (23) It is considered that the transcriptions fulfil the original purpose, and do indeed give a clear overview of the structure and content of the classes.

(22) See pp. 19-20 below. (23) See Appendix B, C and G.
classes under discussion, and this can be seen even from those which appear in the appendix.

During this second stage, and until the end of 1987, as many activities as possible provided for or attended by the young people at each temple were observed or participated in. Such activities included sitting examinations, attending shibirs, festivals, adhiveshans and annual general meetings, attending talks and watching videos presented within the temples, and joining in organized outings to other temples. During this time every opportunity was taken to get to know the young people. No formal interviews were held with individual youngsters in either temple; information was gathered and attitudes were noted through general and specific conversations.

In July 1987 questionnaires were given out to a selected number of young people at both temples. They were not specifically intended for use within the thesis in a direct way; the answers given are not subjected to statistical analysis. The results were intended for personal use, to check information acquired throughout the preceding period of fieldwork, to check impressions gained about general attitudes of the young people, and to enable general statements to be made in the thesis with confidence and assurance. In the final chapter, while drawing together a conclusion from the presented material, specific statements and findings are backed up by the citing of several examples of answers.
given in the questionnaire. This is the only place where
the results of the questionnaire are given in a direct way.
The questionnaire was prepared and given out at this relatively
late stage in the fieldwork to allow time for relevant issues
to become apparent and cohesive, so enabling the questions
to cover pertinent topics, to be so phrased as to elicit
specific responses or broad views, as required.

In each temple, twenty-four questionnaires were distributed
randomly to young people, twelve each to members of both
sexes. It was hoped that at least twenty would be returned
from each temple. In fact sixteen were returned from the
Shree Sanatan Mandir, ten from the female respondents and
six from the males. In the Bochasanwasi Shree Akshar
Purushottam Sanstha, eighteen were returned, nine from both
groups. The questionnaires were distributed randomly to
those present at classes during a particular week. Anonymity
of responses was stressed and respected, the respondents
receiving stamped, addressed envelopes with the questionnaire.

During the last months of the fieldwork a second series of
interviews was undertaken with various members of the temple
authorities, including management and sub-committee members,
and teachers or facilitators of the classes, and access was
given to the membership lists of each temple. Throughout
this period, regular attendance of the classes and other
temple activities was maintained, although at a less intense
level than during the previous months.
Throughout the whole period of fieldwork, structured and semi-structured interviews were conducted as necessary. Every opportunity was taken to meet and interview visiting sadhus and speakers from India who spoke at the two temples. Questions on such occasions were aimed at ascertaining what worries, if any, the individual had concerning the religious nurture of youngsters in Britain; whether formal religious nurture is a new phenomenon of Hinduism outside India; any views on how the temples are coping with providing such nurture; and what modes of formal religious nurture the individual would recommend from personal experience.

The method of research can broadly be described as inductive in approach. The primary aim of this research is to provide an account of the formal religious nurture of young people, in two temples in Leicester, and having done this to draw tentative conclusions as to the reasons for the great differences which become apparent between the nurture programmes in each temple. For this to be possible, the study must include information about the nature of the two institutions, their respective traditions, and the history of formal religious nurture in each tradition. In sum, the principal practical methods of research adopted have been participant observation, formal and informal interviews and the use of a questionnaire. By the use of such methods, as well as through a consideration of the relevant academic literature, information has been compiled on the subjects as outlined above. Beyond this basic representation an attempt has been made to
offer a general perspective relating the reported differences between the temples to the characteristics of their respective traditions.

Aspects of fieldwork procedure have an important place in any discussion of "social fieldwork". Particular observations on the experience of the researcher while utilizing many of the practical methods often used in sociological and anthropological research must be noted, since each individual's response to circumstances is different. The following are some observations of aspects of fieldwork procedure, which may be viewed as problems or difficulties, or, of which the researcher must at least be aware, when undertaking research of this kind. These observations are of two types. The first are applicable to this type of research in general, (24) and the second are relevant only to this particular study.

Firstly, in all such research, there are several issues which the researcher has to come to terms with. Feelings that one is intruding into a private and sensitive part of other people's lives have to be justified, and the question of how far one should go with enquiry must be adequately addressed. The need to guard against one's own cultural preconceptions and presuppositions is an important factor. The researcher must be as open as possible during fieldwork and subsequent consideration. One must come to an understanding of the religion being studied, in its own terms, without trying to categorize the observed phenomena in terms

of one's own Christian-based culture. In this particular study this issue was sometimes confused by the consistent use by respondents of those Western categories and terms which the researcher was attempting to avoid. (25) This, it came to be realized, was an attempt not only to make aspects of Hinduism and observed phenomena intelligible to someone based in a Western Christian culture, but also to make it acceptable. (26)

Inter-cultural research of this type is bound to produce a level of stress, differing with each individual, but perhaps inherent in the very nature of such research. This factor is important and must be recognized and overcome. As Pocock, whose circumstances were extreme, states,

"it is emotionally exhausting to subject oneself to the strain of entry to another culture and re-entry to one's own once a week over several months." (27)

Depending upon the situation it can be difficult to avoid becoming emotionally involved with the group one is meant to be studying, and yet an attempted objectivity is an essential factor involved in research. Friendships engaged in, are to varying degrees, used by the researcher to gather information, which is continually being sought. In this particular

(25) For examples, see the quotation given on page 111 below, taken from a publication of the National Council of Hindu Temples (U.K.), where the word "altar" is used to describe a home shrine. Secondly, see page 217 below, where the Bhagavad Gita is described as "the Bible to Hindus", by the secretary of the Shree Sanatan Mandir.
study, this raised various ethical questions which had to be tackled and justified in some way. For example, it is impossible not to form friendships when one spends several hours a week in the company of those being studied, and they are in the same age group as oneself. Is it right to use such friendships in the way a researcher must? What type of observation, gained through sincere relationships, should not be used? As Knott points out, such questions and attitudes

"should not be suppressed: it is important that one should become aware of them, and of the effects and repercussions they may have." (28)

In the process of observing and participating in activities during fieldwork, it is virtually impossible not to have some effect or influence on those present, in the most basic way, simply by being present, therefore making the others present self-aware. By asking questions, this process goes even further. Knott describes this as

"a reflexive effect on the people I have been studying, making them aware, for example, of their own 'religiousness' or of the possible meanings of their actions." (29)

(26) This is linked to the processes of "self consciousness" and "standardization" as discussed on pp. 52-58 below.

(27) POCOCK, 1976, 341.


(29) ibid., 3.
This has also been the case with the two temples involved in this piece of research. These then, are some of the difficulties involved with cross-cultural research in general.

Regarding the second type of observation, which involves fieldwork procedure particular to this study, the first factor to be mentioned is the most obvious, that is the language barrier. As most of the proceedings in each temple are conducted in Gujarati, I became indebted to certain key people, who were always available to translate for me, and offer explanation. Problems arose when it was decided to tape record ten consecutive classes in both temples, which effectively meant taping twenty classes at the Bochasanwasi Shree Akshar Purushottam Sanstha. As has been mentioned, it proved impossible to obtain consecutive recordings, and eight recordings from each class, made over a period of four months have been translated. Not only were classes regularly cancelled owing to other temple activities, but the recordings themselves were sometimes of an unacceptable quality for the translators to work from.

The second major problem was the translation of the tapes. Originally it was hoped to have all the tapes translated by one or two people who were not connected with either temple. In reality the task proved to be too enormous. All the tapes from the Shree Sanatan Mandir were translated by one member of that temple. However, the tapes from the Bochasanwasi
Shree Akshar Purushottam Sanstha were translated by nine members of this temple. The process of translation was extremely long and fraught with difficulties, and for these combined reasons, the number of transcriptions of each class was cut from ten to eight. It is still believed however, that the transcriptions fulfil their original purpose and the quality of the transcriptions is good, providing a clear view of the structure and content of the classes. As was stated earlier, nine transcriptions appear in the appendix, and it must be remembered that they are translations, which appear in their original form, as they were presented to the researcher. Apart from the transcriptions, the only other material used which was gained with the help of a translator is the interview with Mrs. C. the teacher of the Shishu-Kunj, which is quoted from, within the thesis.

Fieldwork in the sectarian temple was sometimes made awkward by the strict segregation of the sexes. I was given special permission to observe the male classes, but it was never made clear whether it was considered to be acceptable for me to talk to yuvuks (young male members of the Youth Organization) without being accompanied either by an adult or a yukti (young female member of the Sanstha), although I was aware that it was definitely not acceptable for a yukti to behave in such a way. This was one of the major disadvantages of being within the same age group as those on whom the emphasis of the study lay. The consequence of this is that I rarely had conversations with individual yuvuks without pre-arranging
the meeting, or being in the company of an adult or other females unless it was absolutely necessary, and on such occasions the conversation was kept as brief as possible. The result is that material gathered in this temple from the young people themselves was mostly obtained from females, and is therefore presented from this perspective.

The possible danger of studying two institutions is that one will become more involved with one of the groups than the other, thus spending a greater quantity of time with the group, which in turn may lead to a greater collection of information relating to that group so leading to a very uneven study. This is a situation which had to be actively avoided throughout the fieldwork involved in this research topic. One of the temples, for various reasons, including the size of its membership and general characteristics, was much more welcoming and friendly, and attempted to involve me in as many temple activities as possible. An effort continually had to be made to spend equal amounts of time at each institution, and to pursue objectivity in all my dealings with both temples.

This introduction is concluded with a brief description of the form or structure of the thesis as a whole. Before an examination of the formal religious nurture in both institutions is presented, the two relevant institutions must be introduced. In chapter one the temples are introduced as part of their particular religious traditions. The background from which both temples have evolved is outlined. The history of the Bochasanwasi Shree Akshar Purushottam Sanstha as a
sampradaya or sect is recounted from its inception, and its relationship to the main Swaminarayan sect is made clear. Its formation, doctrine and ideology are examined. The Shree Sanatan Mandir is shown to be part of mainstream or traditional Hinduism, known as sanatan dharma, as distinct from sectarianism. The way in which "dharma based" temples are adapting to the "migrant" situation (30) in which they find themselves in Britain, is discussed, with relation to the Shree Sanatan Mandir.

Chapter two involves an introduction of the two particular temples in Leicester. The chapter contains three sections, each dealing with a separate aspect of the temples. The first describes the establishment of both institutions, the second describes the administrative structure of both, and the third section describes the physical structure of the temples. (31)

Discussion in the third chapter is closely linked to material presented in chapter one. Chapter three includes information on how and why classes for the young people were started in each temple, and how and when the issue of formal religious


(31) The section on the physical structure of the temples is included, because as HAWLEY (43) states, "Anyone familiar with Indian religion knows the potency that Hindus sense in the experience of sight (darsan) ....... : perhaps nowhere else in the world is it so literally true that seeing is believing."
nurture became relevant in each temple. This is linked to the tradition to which both temples belong, providing a history of formal religious nurture in the two traditions.

Chapters four and five present a description of the formal religious nurture taking place at the Bochasanwasi Shree Akshar Purushottam Sanstha and the Shree Sanatan Mandir respectively. This involves a description not merely of the classes each temple provides, but also of any activity taking place within the temple setting which deliberately transmits any aspect of Hindu teaching to young people.

The sixth and concluding chapter compares the two nurture programmes described, and points out the major differences. Although the purpose of this study is definitely not to criticize in any way, it is possible at this stage to see how one temple succeeds in its aims in terms of formal religious nurture, in a way that the other temple does not. From material presented throughout the study it is possible to define certain criteria which must be fulfilled in order to promote a successful nurture programme. These criteria are discussed with regard to the two temples, and one temple is found to fulfil them while the other does not. Again drawing on material presented earlier in the study, particularly in chapters one and three, the final consideration links the success of the one temple to its sectarian allegiance, and certain characteristics inherent in such institutions.
CHAPTER ONE

THE RELATED TRADITIONS OF BOTH TEMPLES

This chapter provides an introduction to the religious traditions of both temples. The Bochasanwasi Shree Akshar Purushottam Sanstha (hereafter referred to as the A. P. Sanstha) will be discussed within its sectarian tradition. The mainstream Hindu tradition, or Sanatan Dharma, to which the Shree Sanatan Mandir (hereafter referred to as the Sanatan Mandir) belongs, will be examined. Within the scope of this study it is unnecessary to expound upon the general beliefs, philosophies and different phases of Hinduism. This has been done many times before. (1) It is sufficient within this study, simply to make clear the religious tradition of the Sanatan Mandir through the clarification of terms used to describe that tradition.

The History of the A. P. Sanstha

The A. P. Sanstha is a branch of the Swaminarayan sect founded in Gujarat by a sadhu known as Sahajanand Swami (1781-1830 A.D.). It is almost impossible to give a modern historical account of the life of the sadhu, since most of the stories within the movement are legendary in character, transmitted within the Sanstha to demonstrate the divine character of Sahajanand Swami. However, it is necessary

(1) BROCKINGTON, DE BARY, HOPKINS, LING, BOWES, NOSS and NOSS, SMART.
to give a brief account of his life story, because it provides the basis for much of the literature, iconography and ritual within the sect.

There were four distinct stages in the life of the founder of the Swaminarayan sect. As a child he was called Ghanashyam, one of the childhood names of Krishna, while as a youth his name was Neelkanth. (2) He was initiated by Swami Ramananda and given the name Sahajanand Swami, and later when he followed Swami Ramananda as the leader of the group of ascetics, he became accepted as God manifest on earth, and was revered as Swaminarayan.

Ghanashyam was born in the present-day state of Uttar Pradesh, on April 3rd, 1781. (3) His birthday fell on the day of Ramanavami, the festival marking the birth of Rama. As Parekh explains, Ghanashyam was born into a Brahman family, and "the religion of the family was Vaishnavism .... and looking at the names that were given to the boys it seems that both Rama and Krishna had an equal share of this worship." (4) Ghanashyam had two brothers, Ramapratap and Ichchharama.

Many of the legends of the life of Sahajanand Swami are found in the Satsangijivan (n.d.) a Sanskrit work of five volumes written in the style of the Bhagavata Purana by

(2) WILLIAMS (1984,97) explains that changes of name mark changes of status.

(3) DAVE, R. M., 1975 WILLIAMS, 1984

(4) PAREKH, 1
Shatananda Muni. In the first volume one reads of the circumstances of Ghanashyam's birth, his childhood activities, his wanderings as an ascetic, and his meeting with Ramananda Swami, followed by his leadership of the ashram after Ramananda's death.

The Satsangijivan begins before the birth of Ghanashyam, in Badrikaśram, the heavenly abode in the northern sky, where the mystical wise men receive the curse that they must be born into the world. They are promised that God will simultaneously take birth on earth in human form. (5)

As R. B. Williams writes, many of the stories of Ghanashyam as a child, support the claim that he was divine. (6) Some stories are mythological, such as the story of Hanuman rescuing Ghanashyam from the demon Kalidatta. (7) Another group of stories show Ghanashyam performing miracles. An example is the story of the fish being brought back to life, when the fisherman is shown a vision of the punishments awaiting the wicked in Yamapuri. (8) Yet other stories show Ghanashyam manifesting the character of divinity, as when Ghanashyam is found to have the sixteen sacred marks of God on his feet. (9)

(5) DAVE, R. M., 1975
(6) WILLIAMS, 1984, 9
(7) DAVE, R. M., 1975, 5
(8) ibid., 39
(9) ibid., 49
Many such childhood stories have a marked resemblance to stories of the child Krishna in the Puranas. An example is the story of Ghanashyam stealing butter, sugar and curds from the kitchen of his friend's mother. (10) This is similar to stories of Krishna's childhood pranks in the Bhagavata Purana (10:22, vv. 1-28). (11) Most of the childhood stories are legendary, being transmitted within the Sanstha to demonstrate the divine character of Sahajanand, many identifying him with the child Krishna, keeping within the Vaishnava tradition.

This merging of the stories and legends of Ghanashyam with those of Krishna, prepares for the teaching within the sect of Swaminarayan as a manifestation of God on earth. Vaishnavism is the religion of incarnations or avatars, and Swaminarayan is seen as the ultimate avatar. According to traditional Vaishnava teaching, whenever there is a great need, God manifests on earth of his own free will, in order to help mankind. (12) We read in the introduction to the Shikshapatri, of the prevailing moral decadence and corruption at the time Ghanashyam was born, and of how "the adherents of Dharma awaited the emergence of an incarnation for moral regeneration. Ghanashyam seemed to fulfil the prediction from a young age". (13) Swaminarayan is seen as either an incarnation or the incarnation of God, and therefore the stories of Ghanashyam highlight his divine characteristics.

(10) ibid., 66  
(11) RADICE, 219  
(12) SRIMAD BHAGAVATAM 1:3 v. 28  
BHAGAVAD GITA 4 vv. 6-8  
(13) SHIKSHAPATRI, 5
When Ghanashyam's parents died, he renounced the world and became an itinerant wanderer and ascetic, taking the name of Neelkanth. He visited various pilgrimage centres and studied the science of yoga. After seven years he arrived in Gujarat, where he came into contact with the group of ascetics who followed Ramananda Swami, a Vaishnava teacher who taught the vishistadvaita vedanta philosophy of Ramanuja. (14) The stories of Neelkanth's wanderings, again show him in a divine light, as the perfect wandering student or brahmachari, who practised pure austerities and strict celibacy. (15)

Neelkanth joined the ascetics of Ramananda's ashram, being initiated by Ramananda, so receiving vaishnavi diksha, initiation as a Vaishnava ascetic. He received the new name of Sahajanand Swami, remaining an ascetic at the ashram for approximately two years. Within this time, according to the literature of the sect, Ramananda came to see the divinity of Sahajanand. (16)

Ramananda appointed Sahajanand as the acharya, his spiritual successor, at a public ceremony, while Sahajanand was only twenty years old. There were other possible successors, who were older, with more claim to the archaryaship, such as Muktanand Swami. Ramananda died soon after the ceremony, and Sahajanand faced considerable opposition to his leadership,

(14) DAVE, H. T., 26
For more details of the philosophy of Ramanuja see Smart, 171 ff.

with some members leaving the group. (17) However, supported by Muktanand, the swami with the greatest claim to the leadership, Sahajanand soon came to be recognized as the new and undisputed leader by a nucleus of faithful followers.

The number of followers and ascetics under Sahajanand Swami, grew in the years of his leadership (A.D. 1802-A.D. 1830). (18) They formed a new religious movement which was based on the teaching of Sahajanand Swami, who soon came to be regarded by his followers as a manifestation or avatar of God. As Ramananda had often called Sahajanand by the name of Narayan Muni, he soon started to be known as Swami Narayan. (19)

Majumdar describes the new movement led by Sahajanand Swami as "the greatest of the reforming sects of Gujarat". (20) At the time there was major disorder in Gujarati society, as well as the breakdown of discipline among ascetics. (21) Sahajanand Swami demanded a strict discipline of renunciation from his ascetics. They were to be totally non-violent and to avoid all contact with women and money. Even though the ascetics followed strict rules of celibacy and poverty, they were sent to towns and villages to carry out many tasks, such as digging wells and repairing roads, and opening food kitchens for the destitute in times of famine, as well as to spread the teachings of Sahajanand Swami. (22)

(17) WILLIAMS, 1984, 12
PAREKH, 37

(18) WILLIAMS (1982, 83) estimates that Sahajanand Swami attracted two thousand ascetics and five hundred thousand families to the sect before his death.

(19) ibid., 12
PAREKH, 53

(20) MAJUMDAR, 716

(21) ibid

(22) PAREKH.
Before the British gained control of Gujarat, Sahajanand's followers were harassed both verbally and physically. The ascetics suffered most, being more visible, and having to refrain from retaliation. Sahajanand responded to the situation by initiating five hundred ascetics into the highest form of asceticism, paramhansas, which signifies total renunciation. (23) This meant that the rules prescribed in the scriptures did not apply to them, and they gave up all external rituals and marks, exhibiting no distinguishing marks by which to be recognized. This was a temporary measure which was stopped once the British established themselves in Gujarat. One of the ascetics who was honoured with this special initiation was Gunatitanand Swami, who is worshipped within the A. P. Sanstha as Akshar, the Abode of God on earth, and the closest devotee to Lord Swaminarayan. (24)

During these early days of Sahajanand Swami's leadership, he was seen to have the power to send people into a state of trance known as samadhi, (25) a phenomenon recorded by those inside as well as outside the fellowship. (26) The state of samadhi was brought about through contact with Sahajanand Swami, precipitating a loss of normal consciousness, where the devotee attained a higher consciousness or divine bliss, seeing Sahajanand as God. As Williams notes, "a constant

theme of the stories is that the men and women who had such visions saw Sahajanand Swami as the Supreme Being served by other divine figures, such as Rama or Krishna". (27) This is seen in the many stories of people reaching the state of \textit{samadhi} as recounted by Parekh. (28)

The phenomenon of \textit{samadhi}, together with the organized preaching tours of the ascetics, was probably responsible for the rapid growth of the movement. The phenomenon of \textit{samadhi} was only manifested on such a large scale for a few years, although it seems that people went into a state of \textit{samadhi} throughout Sahajanand Swami's lifetime. However, the phenomenon is mentioned less frequently later in his life.

In the Vachanamritam (Vartal 13, pp. 515-518) in the Vartal section, which records incidents which took place in approximately late 1825 and early 1826, Sahajanand Swami gives an explanation of \textit{samadhi}, in answer to the question, "How does samadhi occur?" He explains that in the same way that "Gokulwasis by the Darshan of Shree Krishna experienced the bliss of samadhi", in which they saw the divine abode of Shree Krishna, so "whenever God incarnates on earth, the divinity of His incarnated form attracts true aspirants and they all experience the bliss of samadhi".

(27) ibid
(28) PAREKH, chapter 5
Sahajanand Swami required that his devotees follow five main rules; not to steal, commit adultery, eat meat, drink intoxicants, nor take food from anyone belonging to a caste lower than one's own. These vows are still taken by devotees to date, and they provide the categories for the summary of teachings and regulations to be observed as far as possible by householders, as laid down in the Shikshapatri. (Shikshapatri, vv. 11-48).

The ascetics were expected to observe stricter vows. An account in the Asiatic Journal states;

"The ascetics receive a name and are instructed to submit to any usage without resistance ....... they are to foreswear all worldly goods and all the concerns of this world; they are not ever to possess any article made of metal, except a needle ..... and a knife ......; they are not to see, nor to think of a woman; if they do see one so as to distinguish her as such, if the idea of a woman comes into their minds, or if they touch one, they must fast for that day." (29)

These regulations are the basis for the rules of conduct to be observed by ascetics as written in the Shikshapatri by Sahajanand Swami in 1826. (Shikshapatri vv. 175-196).

One major element of reform brought about by Sahajanand Swami, was the strict discipline he expected of the ascetics within

(29) Quoted by WILLIAMS, 1984, 15
the fellowship. (30) Other reforms were also directed at the social conduct of lay members. Sahajanand Swami emphasized the doctrine of non-violence or *ahimsa*, requiring all devotees to become vegetarians, and to try to avoid killing or harming living creatures. He was strict on matters of sexual morality, insisting that men and women be separated in the temples, and in all meetings of devotees. Women were allowed to undertake the ascetic life after initially being refused. However, they had to live either in separate temples, or in separate parts of the temples, having no contact with the male ascetics.

Sahajanand Swami led three reforms which his devotees are particularly proud of. (31) He condemned animal sacrifices, which were widely carried out in Gujarat at the time, being considered essential and meritorious acts in accordance with *Vedic* regulations. (32) Sahajanand Swami taught that such sacrifices were not part of true *Vedic* religion, and he performed public bloodless sacrifices or *yagnas*, the first of which took place in Ahmedabad in 1808. He had many opponents on this subject, but continued to perform the sacrifices at large gatherings for many years before replacing them with

(30) An example for the strict lifestyle expected of the ascetics can be seen in a letter written by Sahajanand Swami in 1810, to "all the revered Paramhansas", recounted by PAREKH, 70.

(31) These reforms are often referred to within the *Sanstha*, and are talked about to the young people.

(32) DAVE, H. T., 1974, chapter 11.
WILLIAMS, 1984, 18
samaiyas or conventions for members of the fellowship, held
twice a year at Vadtal and Gadhada. These conventions are
still held to date. In the Shikshapatri (v.12), Sahajanand
Swami expressly states,

"None shall kill animals such as goats etc. even
for the purpose of performing sacrifices or
for propitiating a deity; for non-violence
itself is avowedly held as the highest ethical
code."

The second reform that devotees are proud of, was in the
area of infanticide. The practice of infanticide was the
custom among certain sections of society in Gujarat, namely
the Kathis and Jariyah Rajputs, who belonged to the military
class, many of whom were high ranking chiefs. (33) Newborn
female babies were drowned in milk so that dowries would not
have to be provided. Williams quotes statistics of the time
which show the extent to which the practice was carried out
in the province. (34). Sahajanand forbade this practice
among his devotees, drawing on his teaching of non-violence
as expressed in the Shikshapatri (v.13).

The third practice that Sahajanand Swami spoke out against
was that of sati, or widow suicide, where the widow was burnt
alive on her husband's funeral pyre. He campaigned against
this, and in the Shikshapatri not only does he forbid suicide
(v.14), but there is a whole section on the special duties of

(33) Parekh, chapter 7 (34) Williams, 1984, 23
widows (vv. 163-171) which emphasizes that the true duty of a widow is to live a life of devotion to God.

Six temples were constructed under the supervision of Sahajanand Swami during the last ten years of his life. These were in Ahmedabad, Bhuj, Vadtal, Junagadh, Dholera and Gadhada, and images of Krishna were given priority in these temples. However, in 1825, Sahajanand Swami installed an image of himself at the Vadtal temple in a side shrine.

At first Sahajanand Swami himself controlled the spiritual and administrative affairs of the fellowship, and he appointed sadhus as managers and chief ascetics of the temples. As the numbers of devotees and wealth of the fellowship increased, it became difficult for the ascetics to manage the temple affairs and keep their vows. In response to this situation, Sahajanand Swami established members of his family, who were householders, as acharyas or preceptors to oversee the affairs of the Satsang. (35)

Sahajanand Swami, having lost touch with his family, sent representatives to find them. He adopted a son of each of his two brothers in 1826, making them acharyas, one of Ahmedabad and the other of Vadtal. (36) He decreed that succession should be hereditary. By so doing, a line of religious

(35) Commented on by BAROT, 1987, 70.  
(36) There is a section on the special duties of the acharyas in the Shikshapatri (vv. 123-132)
specialists was established, who could trace their authority on a spiritual level back to Ramanuja, through Ramanand Swami who initiated Sahajanand Swami, and by blood descent, back to Sahajanand Swami himself. (37)

The Shikshapatri contains a section on the special duties of the acharyas, which shows that they were to be the chief administrators of the fellowship. (vv.123-132). The administration of the fellowship was divided into two geographical areas or territorial dioceses. The acharyas also performed the functions and duties of religious specialists, such as performing the ritual of installation of images in the temple of their dioceses.

It is at this stage that the differences become obvious between the Swaminarayan movement which looks to the aforementioned acharyas and the new branch of this movement known as the Bochasanwasi Shree Akshar Purushottam Sanstha. Pramukh Swami, or Narayanswarupdasji, is the preceptor and president of the A. P. Sanstha, a branch of the Swaminarayan sect which developed out of a split with the Vadtal diocese in 1906. This branch of the sect is now a separate organization, free from the administration of both Vadtal and Ahmedabad, having its own spiritual leader, its own following of devotees, many temples and shrines, as well as its own ascetics. The distinctive aspect of this branch is their

(37) WILLIAMS, 1982, 81 ff
theological concept of the nearest or "choicest" devotee, which refers to the special relationship between Sahajanand Swami as Purushottam, the Supreme God, and Gunatitanand Swami as Akshar, the Divine Abode of God. (38) This means that the leaders trace themselves to Sahajanand Swami, or Swaminarayan, through a spiritual line of perfect devotees, appointed by him, the first of which was Gunatitanand Swami, honoured as the original sadguru of the line.

In 1906 a particular Sadhu, Swami Yagnapurushdas, known as Shastriji Maharaj, broke away from the Vadital temple, partly on account of objections to the laxity of the leadership and of some ascetics, and partly on account of doctrinal differences. Shastriji Maharaj believed that Gunatitanand Swami was not only the spiritual successor of Sahajanand, but that he was also the personal manifestation of Akshar, the Divine Abode of God, and he tried to install an image of Gunatitanand for temple worship. (39)

Shastriji Maharaj, with a few followers, built a new temple in Bochasan, where the images of Swaminarayan and Gunatitanand Swami were installed. The spiritual line passes from Gunatitanand through a guru-parampara to the present leader, Pramukh Swami. The pictures and images of the guru-parampara are given reverence in worship and devotion; their birthdays

(38) This concept is discussed further on pp. 38-42 below.  (39) WILLIAMS, 1982, 89
are celebrated with festivals, and temples and shrines are built in their birth places.

As Williams explains,

"the place of the preceptor, not only in the sect but also in the divine hierarchy, is developed by an interpretation of two metaphysical terms which are central to the complex theology and philosophy of the sect: Purushottam and Akshar. Thence come the official name of the sect and the primary point of difference from the original sect of the Ahmedabad and Vadtal dioceses."  

All followers of Swaminarayan share the teachings regarding purushottam and akshar in its impersonal form. Sahajanand Swami taught that five eternal entities exist: parabrahman, aksharbrahman, maya, jiva and ishvara. Jiva and ishvara are affected by maya, whereas parabrahman and aksharbrahman are eternally free from maya. All the entities are dependent upon parabrahman, which is eternally independent. Swaminarayan is accepted or realized by devotees as the Supreme Person, the human manifestation of parabrahman. Aksharbrahman is the second eternal principle free from maya, and is realized as the eternal abode of purushottam or parabrahman, having an impersonal form, although according to the theology of the A. P. Sanstha, it also has a personal form. 

(40) ibid

(41) DAVE, H.T., 1974. Vachanamritam (Gad. I : 7, pp 7-8)

(42) WILLIAMS, 1985, 'Holy Man as the Abode of God'.

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Akshar in its impersonal form is the eternal abode of purushottam or parabrahman and the liberated souls of all the devotees attain this abode. In the Vachanamritam (Gad. I:63, pp. 111-117), when Sahajanand Swami is asked to explain "how a devotee who has attained knowledge that God even in human form is fully divine thinks of and esteems God", he answers;

"Such a devotee feels fulfilled as he enjoys the proximity of God, and feels that he enjoys the bliss of the Higher Abode of God-Akshardham here."

Sahajanand talks of "the infinite greatness of the Highest Abode-Akshardham, which is full of divine bliss, and wherein Lord Purushottam resides".

When purushottam was manifest on the earth as Swaminarayan, the akshar, or akshardham was not vacant. We read in the Vachanamritam;

"Lord Purushottam can manifest simultaneously in this divine form in each and every universe whenever He desires and in whatever form He desires ...... But at no time has He to leave His divine Abode, Akshar, for various such incarnation. He is always seated in His Akshardham inseparably attached to Akshar. Therefore, it is said that whenever He manifests, Akshar is said to be in the centre around Him." (Vac. Gad. II: 42, pp. 441-443).

The personal form of aksharbrahman which is central to the philosophy and theology of the A. P. Sanstha, is viewed as the abode of purushottam, but is believed to be always manifest in the perfect devotee. Shastriji Maharaj identified the akshar with Gunatitanand Swami, whom he believed to be
the perfect devotee of Swaminarayan, and as such, the abode of God and worthy of worship. Devotees believe they are following the instruction of Sahajanand Swami, who stated;

"as one offers worship to God by performing rituals, similarly the choicest devotee of God also should be equally offered worship by performing the same rituals and offering him the same sanctified offerings which are graced by God." (Vac. Var.: 5, pp. 501-503).

Gunatitanand as Akshar and Swaminarayan as Purushottam, represent the union of the two inseparable eternal entities. It is believed that akshar continually manifests on earth in the form of the perfect devotee. Each preceptor of the group, in the guru-parampara, is accepted as the incarnation of aksharbrahman, the very abode of God, and as such, absolutely divine. (43) It is maintained that aksharbrahman is one, and so each manifestation possesses all the characteristics of aksharbrahman. In the temples of the A. P. Sanstha, there are images of Lord Swaminarayan as well as Gunatitanand Swami, who represents all the manifestations of akshar; although the images of the guru-parampara are also present, and are objects of worship and devotion.

Williams (44) records that in a private interview with Pramukh Swami in 1980, the spiritual leader spoke of his understanding of his identification with akshar, intimating that he is constantly aware of being the abode of God. Pramukh Swami said he became aware of this identity when he met his spiritual

(43) WILLIAMS, 1982, 90  (44) WILLIAMS, 1985, 'Holy Man as the Abode of God', 151.
master and predecessor Yogiji Maharaj, or Swami Jnanjivandas, and his own spiritual heir is already known to him. He recognized him

"as soon as he entered the institution, because 'one soul knows another'."

The place of the personal form of akshar in the theology of the A. P. Sanstha is essential. It is believed that only after the devotee has reached the God-intoxicated saint, Akshar, can one reach Swaminarayan, Purushottam. As the abode of God on earth the spiritual leader has the authority of God, as the representative of God. The older fellowship believes that Swaminarayan manifests himself through the scriptures and the images in the temples. The A. P. Sanstha agree with this; however they hold the additional belief that Swaminarayan primarily manifests himself in akshar, his abode, the preceptor who is the nearest devotee. The perfect devotee leads one to God, to the end of the endless cycle of births and deaths, and the devotee who meditates on the human form of God will transcend maya and the flux of the world. (45)

Other than this central doctrine of the A. P. Sanstha, which separates devotees from those of the older fellowship, there is no other major difference in doctrine. The two groups share the same basic philosophy; that of Vishistadvaita, the qualified non-dualism of Ramanuja. (46) They also share the

(45) Validation for this belief is taken from the Vachanamritam (Gad II: 13, pp. 378-384).

(46) POCOCK, 1973, 138 ff
DAVE, H. T., 1974, 26. See note (14).
same sacred texts, the four primary works being, the Shikshapatri, the Vachanamritam, the Satsangijivan and the Lekh, in addition to the list of "authentic scriptures" given in the Shikshapatri (vv. 93-102). However, the A. P. Sanstha regard the Lekh, which deals with the establishment of the two territorial dioceses and the succession of acharyas, as an administrative rather than a sacred text. Other texts shared by the two groups are, the Yama Danda, the Bhakta Chintamani, the Shri Hari Lilamrit and the Swami ni Vato. The Swami ni Vato is given special attention by the A. P. Sanstha, as it contains the collected talks of Gunatitanand Swami.

There are however, several other differences between the two groups. For instance, as Pocock (47) suggests, it seems that the younger fellowship has been reformist in certain ways. An example is the reform regarding the rules of conduct concerning ascetics. The corpus of ascetics of the A. P. Sanstha strictly follow the rules of conduct set for them by Swaminarayan. They have their heads shaved once a month and wear only two plain, unstitched cloths. They travel in pairs, strictly observing rules of celibacy and poverty. The older fellowship has relaxed many of these strict rules for ascetics, to the point where the sadhus receive a monthly allowance, thereby being permitted to handle money. Of course the managers (mahants) of the temples, handle large sums of money. (48)

(47) POOCK, 1976, 344. (48) WILLIAMS, 1984, 94
A second example of reform concerns the internal organization and authority of the A. P. Sanstha. The organization set up by Sahajanand Swami, led by two householders related to him by blood, has been replaced in the A. P. Sanstha, by the supreme authority of the spiritual head of the Sanstha, who is an ascetic, tracing his spiritual line of authority back to Sahajanand Swami. In the establishment of the Sanstha, Yagnapurushdas effectively separated the spiritual and secular power, subordinating the secular to the spiritual power. Whether this was an express intention is not known, because the distinction at the present is blurred. Yogiji Maharaj, the spiritual heir of Shastriji Maharaj (Yagnapurushdas) chose Pramukh Swami as his heir. Pramukh Swami was already president or pramukh of the Sanstha, having been appointed to the position by Shastriji Maharaj.

Pramukh Swami has absolute and supreme authority in the sampradaya. This authority is devolved through temple committees, whose members have been chosen by Pramukh Swami himself. No major decision, financial or administrative, is made by any temple committee, in India or abroad, without prior consultation with Pramukh Swami. As well as being the chief administrator of the Sanstha, he is a counsellor and adviser for his devotees on a personal level. Considerable correspondence passes between Pramukh Swami and his devotees, who write to their leader, telephone him, or visit him, when

(49) POCOCK, 1976, 344
possible. He is consulted concerning various affairs, including business questions, marriage, naming of children, theological questions, or the purchasing of property. (50)

Only males are able to approach Pramukh Swami, either personally or by letter or telephone, although women may nominate a man to go before the leader on their behalf. This is because, as an ascetic, Pramukh Swami strictly follows the injunctions in the Shikshapatri concerning the observance of eight-fold celibacy, which involves avoidance of any form of contact with women. (vv. 175-182).

The younger group, the A. P. Sanstha, is dynamic and evangelical, being "a highly centralised and personality dependent" organization. (51) The Sanstha has spread all over Gujarat, attracting followers from both the Vadtal and Ahmedabad dioceses. Outside Gujarat, in cities of India, as well as abroad, in East Africa, England and America, temples and centres have been established under the guidance of the spiritual head. An administrative committee of trustees has been established in every country where there is a temple, with Pramukh Swami as the president. In England this committee is attached to the London temple of the group. The work of the Sanstha in different countries is co-ordinated through the central committee of trustees in India. This has certainly been effective in the growth of the group in recent years,

(50) WILLIAMS, 1985, 'The Guru as Religious Specialist'.
(51) POCOCK, 1976, 344.
especially in countries other than India.

A second factor in the growth of the Sanstha, overseas and in India, is that the spiritual leaders make regular visits to the various countries where the fellowship has temples. Yogiji Maharaj visited East Africa in 1955, 1960 and 1970, performing installation ceremonies for images in new temples during each visit. In 1970 he visited England, installing the images in the London temple. Pramukh Swami has visited England several times in the last fifteen years, attempting to spend some time at each temple in the country. These activities draw the devotees together as a community in each country, making them feel part of the wider community of the Sanstha, which has its headquarters in India.

The Sanstha produces its own publications (52) which are mailed to temples, as well as to individual devotees, throughout the world. Two monthly journals are produced by the sadhus, one in English and one in Gujarati. There is a quarterly magazine produced by leaders of the women's movement in India. A bi-weekly publication is produced by the sadhus, which provides details of the activities of Pramukh Swami, as well as designating and expounding upon the readings from the Vachanamritam and Swami ni Vato to be read and discussed at the weekly sabha meetings. These publications keep

(52) See p. 127 below, for the names of the Sanstha publications.
devotees in all parts of the world, in touch with each other, and the fellowship in Gujarat.

The ascetics play a vital part in the general life, as well as the growth, of the sect. Williams (53) estimates that in 1980 there were approximately two hundred and fifty ascetics in the Sanstha. They are trained in the arts of public speaking and communication. They hold many jobs, as assigned by Pramukh Swami, such as caring for the images in the temples, cooking, cleaning, working on publications, preaching and studying theology, music and art.

A group of ascetics always travel with Pramukh Swami when he is on tour. They take a very public role, leading worship and giving discourses. Many very highly educated young men, with university degrees, have given themselves for initiation as ascetics in the last few years; with a significant number from East Africa, England and America. During the bicenntenary celebrations of the birth of Swaminarayan in 1981, six young men from the Leicester temple were among the two hundred and seven who presented themselves for initiation.

This then, is the tradition to which the A. P. Sanstha in Leicester belongs. The temple is part of an international fellowship which is based in Bochasan, in India, which worships Lord Swaminarayan as the Supreme Lord, and which

(53) WILLIAMS, 1984, 54
looks to a spiritual line of preceptors as the continuation of the manifestation of akshar, the abode of God. The fellowship is a centralized institution centred around the absolute authority of the present spiritual leader, Pramukh Swami Maharaj, who is also the object of worship and devotion. In the next chapter the link between the temple in Leicester and the religious tradition as outlined above, will become obvious, through the description of the administrative and physical structure of the temple.

The Sanatan Mandir

The Sanatan Mandir is part of what may conveniently be termed "mainstream Hinduism", or what many Hindus call "sanatan dharma". The term dharma has multiple dimensions (54), such as sadharana dharma, the general code of ethics applying to all, involving injunctions to perform such meritorious acts as going on pilgrimages, honouring Brahman, as well as certain prohibitions. There is also varnashrama dharma, which is nowadays understood as following the customs and rules of one's caste or jati. (55) However, as Barot points out;

"although Hindus attach different meanings to the word dharma, its actual usage in a specific sociocultural context makes it clear to the participants which particular meaning is being conveyed." (56)

(54) For more information on the concept of dharma, see O'FLAHERTY and DERRETT.

(55) WEIGHTMAN, 209.

(56) BAROT, 1981, 17.
Barot further states that sanatan dharma implies values "which are believed to apply universally to all. The word sanatan means eternal, perpetual, permanent, everlasting, primeval and ancient". (57).

In the context of discussing the term "sanatan dharma", Barot distinguishes between the two categories of dharma and sampradaya, so making obvious the distinction between the two temples in this study; the sectarian A. P. Sanstha, and the mainstream Sanatan Mandir. Barot explains that organizations having the expression "sanatan dharma in their title are open to all Hindus both in theory as well as in practice". (58) Such organizations follow the wider precepts of Hindu beliefs not associated with a particular spiritual master or guru. The word sampradaya has a much narrower meaning, implying a group or organization which has particular concepts, forms of worship, and follows a specific leader, or the physical or spiritual descendant of a specific leader.

Barot further states that Hindus apply the concept of sampradaya to Swaminarayan organizations in Britain. (59)

Knott explains that the term sanatan dharma is used,

"to refer to 'that which remains of an ancient system of knowledge', to certain beliefs and practices of a traditional nature, such as transmigration and rebirth ..... liberation ..... divine incarnation ..... duties according to one's caste and stage of life ..... worship ..... and service to god." (60)

(57) ibid (58) ibid., 19
(59) ibid., 20

However, informal comments based on preliminary research suggest that theory and practice do not always coincide.
She goes on to explain that Hindus see sanatan dharma as signifying a system which incorporates all Hindus in spite of ethnic or sectarian divisions. She quotes from a handout produced by the Leeds Hindu Temple which makes clear their understanding of the term "sanatan dharma":

"The Hindus call their religion Sanatana Dharma. Sanatana means Eternal. The word Dharma is difficult to interpret as it has no equivalent in English .... the word 'Religion' does not mean 'Dharma'. Dharma means the ethical and religious ideals, social and religious duties." (61)

The National Council of Hindu Temples (U.K.) published a booklet in 1983 entitled, 'Hinduism: An Introduction To The World's Oldest Living Religion'. The Sanatan Mandir is one of the leading temples within the Council, and copies of this booklet are distributed to visitors at the temple. The concepts of "dharma" and "sanatan dharma" are explained within the booklet:

"The Sanskrit word 'dharma' is usually translated as 'religion', but it has a deeper significance. 'Dharma' refers to our essential nature .... The Vedas teach that the dharma of all beings is to serve others .... The Hindu or Vedic culture teaches everyone the duties and responsibilities we must uphold according to our own status and occupation in life ..... but beyond the dharma of one's material situation which is temporary, there is the eternal dharma of the spirit soul. Sanatan-dharma, which is to render service to God with love. Sanatan-dharma is the intrinsic nature of the soul and is universal for all beings, for all time, place and circumstances". (62)

(60) KNOTT, 1987, 164
(61) ibid
It thus becomes clear that when referring to a temple as part of sanatan dharma, this implies that the temple is non-sectarian, open to all Hindus, and follows universally-held beliefs of a traditional nature. Even though, as is apparent, it is generally believed that dharma cannot be translated by the word "religion", on several occasions at the Sanatan Mandir, it was observed that the term "sanatan dharma" was translated as "eternal religion". The important aspect of the phrase or concept seems to be the eternal aspect which is linked with the traditional aspect, translated by Brockington as "smārta, following the traditional smṛti literature". (63)

Smriti literally means what is remembered, as compared to shruti, meaning what is heard. The foundational scriptures of the Hindus are the Vedas, which Hindus believe are not composed by any human mind. They are believed to be eternal truths revealed to great rishis or seers, who saw or heard them. The word "Veda" means knowledge or wisdom and represents the spiritual experiences of the ancient sages. All other scriptural texts are loosely called smṛiti, although the works expressly called smṛiti are the lawbooks, dharma-shastras. Smṛiti is a recollection of the direct experience of shruti, so it is "what is remembered"; smṛiti is tradition. Smṛitis draw inspiration from the Vedas and regard the Veda as the final authority. (64) It is this tradition, with the concept of the Vedas as eternal revealed

(63) BROCKINGTON, 190  (64) BOUQUET, WALKER, MACKENZIE — BROWN

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truths, which the term *sanatan dharma* encapsulates.

Barot states that Hindus distinguish dharma as "encompassing sampradaya and providing its basis ..... although they also recognise that in its degree of exclusiveness sampradaya is apart from dharma". (65) Brockington reinforces this with his explanation that in some ways sects can be seen as "something added on to ordinary Hindu practice, a particular set of doctrines and practices which supplement the basic pattern of rituals and beliefs". (66) This is observed to be the case with the A. P. Sanstha. It was noted above how the main Swaminarayan sect grew out of traditional Vaishnavism. Devotees are required to regard certain religious scriptures as authentic and authoritative, the first of these mentioned in the Shikshapatri (vv. 93-102) being the four Vedas.

The A. P. Sanstha can be seen to fit into the category of sampradaya as Barot defines it, as approximating "What is usually understood as a sect in the English language". (67) The Sanatan Mandir is one of the "dharma-based bodies" which Barot identifies, being part of the sanatan dharma tradition, and thereby open to all Hindus. (68) This attitude is illustrated by the shrines found within the temple, which are dedicated to a number of deities. As it states in a temple publication;

(65) BAROT, 1981, 19.  
(66) BROCKINGTON, 190.  
(68) ibid
"Temples in India are devoted to a single main god and any other shrines are to related gods. This is not possible in this country, and here temples, like this one, usually have shrines for the followers of Vishnu, Shiva and the mother goddess. Because of this there are several separate shrines in the temple." (69)

Knott (70) writes of the term sanatan dharma as a system incorporating all Hindus, which is the focus for dialogue with those of other faiths. Knott links this concept with what she defines as the "standardization" of Hinduism, and the reinterpretation of temple Hinduism. It is not within the scope of this study to deal in any detail with this area; it is a research topic in its own right. However, it is important briefly to discuss the main points with reference to the Sanatan Mandir.

Knott points out that Hindus use the term sanatan dharma when explaining about their own religion, as is the case at the Sanatan Mandir. The real importance of the term according to Knott is that it represents for those who use it, "an awareness of the principles and practices of their faith in relation to the principles and practices of the faiths of those with whom they interact". (71) She believes that this is largely a new development, connected to the circumstances of Hinduism outside India. This transplantation,

(69) EMMETT
(70) KNOTT, 1987
(71) KNOTT, n.d., 16.
in which Hinduism is now a religion among many religions, has produced a self-consciousness, and a realization of the need for the interpretation of Hinduism for the sake of Hindus and non-Hindus alike.

Knott explains that Hindu spokesmen and temple representatives are aware of the problems and pressures, and believe that their roles are those of interpreters. However, in their interpretation these people have "standardized" the complex religious tradition of Hinduism, developing "the doctrinal and ethical components... those elements which can easily be recognised by non-Hindus". (72) Hinduism is being presented to non-Hindus as theistically similar to the other major world religions, such as Christianity; and presented to Hindus and non-Hindus alike as "the religion of the great sruti texts and the major popular deities". (73) Often when the spokesmen of Hinduism (such as members of the management committees, or those responsible for compiling temple literature), use the term sanatan dharma, the concept they articulate is that of a unified system of belief and practice, which as Knott points out, is a form of standardization.

The type of religious self-awareness as discussed above is perhaps not new to sects or sampradayas such as the A. P. Sanstha. The very fact that they hold distinctive beliefs and special concepts as apart from non-sectarian Hinduism,

(72) KNOTT, 1987, 164
(73) KNOTT, n.d., 17
puts them in the same category in which 'mainstream' Hinduism finds itself today in Britain; that of a minority religion vying for control over the lives of its adherents. The sect or sampradaya, having been in this situation since its inception, has this self-awareness built into its structure. As will become apparent throughout this study, the A.P. Sanstha already has clearly-defined working systems for the presentation of its principles and practices to sect members and non-sect members alike. These systems are little different in either India or Britain. An example is the thriving Youth Movement which transmits the tradition to young people and children.

For the mainstream or dharma-based temples, this self-awareness is something new. Having said this, those Asians who arrived in England from East Africa, comprising a large proportion of the Hindu population in Leicester, were in a similar situation in East Africa to that in which Hindus find themselves in Britain. There too, temple worship would have been a way to promote community solidarity and reinforce and transmit traditional beliefs, practices and values. It is probable that religious self-awareness (in the sense in which the term is being used here) started among the Hindus in East Africa, and it is possible that the process of standardization was also started in East Africa. It is certainly the case that the East African Hindu population was responsible for founding many of the temples now found in Britain. (74)
This type of religious self-awareness is evident in the Sanatan Mandir, on both an individual and institutional level. An example of the former is that the first few times the temple was visited, the researcher was approached by members (sometimes committee members) who wanted to give a guided tour of the temple, giving explanations of the various shrines, and providing a brief introduction to Hindu beliefs. The point that all seemed to think was most important to grasp was that "Hindus do not worship idols". It was explained again and again that Hindus believe in one God, "just like Christians", and that the different images in the temple represent forms or manifestations of the one God.

An example of institutional self-awareness is that visitors to the temple are given a booklet published by the National Council of Hindu Temples (U.K.), which provides an introduction to Hinduism. The Sanatan Mandir has also recently produced a leaflet which contains a visual guide to the temple, which is given to visitors.

A further manifestation of institutional self-awareness is the existence of the National Council of Hindu Temples (U.K.) formed in 1976 through the joint effort of the Sanatan Mandir and the Shree Gujarat Hindu Society in Preston. The Secretary of the Council is the former secretary of the

(74) ibid., 18
TAMBS-LYCHE, 1975, 350
see chapter two, pp. 60, 64.
Sanatan Mandir, and this temple is the headquarters for the Council. There are thirty-five affiliated temples to date. The aim and function of the Council is primarily to act as a form of self-help group, such that experience can be pooled and help given wherever necessary to temples within the Council. Help is given in such cases as the establishment of a new temple, or in contacting appropriate priests to carry out specific ceremonies. The temples share common problems, and through the Council they attempt to find common solutions. The Council arranges for sadhus from India to visit England on lecture tours. These sadhus give talks in various or all of the affiliated temples.

Since the booklet entitled 'Hinduism' (75) is a clear example of what is here termed institutional self-awareness, as well as the process of standardization, it merits further discussion. In its introduction the booklet is described as "a simple yet informative introduction to our Hindu religion, which for many is bewildering in its breadth and seeming complexity". It continues by suggesting the booklet is important because,

"Britain is now a nation of many faiths and cultures ...; there is little likelihood of harmony and integration for an ethnic community unless its culture is understood and, to some degree, appreciated by the host society .... We feel particularly concerned when our young generation has to defend their religion against misinformed criticisms." (76)

(75) National Council of Hindu Temples (U.K.)
(76) ibid
It states that the booklet was produced to present "a clear, concise and authoritative insight to (sic) the Hindu religion, its theology, practices, temple worship, customs and festivals". This it does in eight pages.

Within the booklet Hinduism is called either the Vedic tradition or the Vedic culture and it includes the following headings: "Hinduism, the Overall View", where the three major Hindu denominations (sic) are introduced. Under the heading "Hinduism, a philosophy to live by", the concept of dharma is explained, and under "Not Just A Religion, More A Way Of Life", religious practices and duties are discussed. The next heading is "The Hindu Temple - Its Purpose and Function", followed by "The Deity Form Of God", where the concept of the deity is discussed with reference to Krishna, Rama, Shiva and "the goddess". The last two headings are, "The Vedic Scriptures - Oldest Religious Texts In The World", and "The Colourful Festivals of Hinduism". The festivals briefly described are Janmashtami, Ramanavami, Divali, Dussehra and Navratri, Holi and Rathayatra. It is interesting to note that every scriptural quotation used is taken from the Bhagavad Gita. (77) The booklet concludes that,

(77) KING (1981, 26 ff) discusses the importance of the Bhagavad Gita since the late nineteenth century.
"The whole objective of every aspect of the Vedic culture is to fulfill the purpose of human life - to re-establish our loving relationship with God, that we may return to His service in the spiritual world." (78)

What Knott (79) calls the two-fold levelling process (where Hinduism is presented to non-Hindus as theistically similar to other world religions, and presented to all as the religion of the "great sruti texts and the major popular deities"), is at work at least in the temples affiliated to the Council, of which the Sanatan Mandir is the flagship. The booklet discussed above is a good example of the process and development towards this new and standardized form of Hinduism, in which

"'dharma' and the folk or little traditions of India's villages and towns develops into 'Hinduism' and the great tradition of Hindu temples abroad." (80)

It can be seen that the Sanatan Mandir is definitely a dharma-based institution, being part of sanatan dharma, a term which connotes the traditional, eternal or universal aspects of Hinduism. As such, the temple is involved, along with other dharma-based bodies, in the defined process of standardization; a direct consequence of what is termed religious self-awareness, which operates on both an individual and institutional level. This self-awareness has come about

(80) KNOTT, 1987, 165.
through the experience of the transplantation of Hinduism to Britain. This is the tradition to which the Sanatan Mandir belongs. In the next chapter the practical, organizational aspect of the temple will be examined.
CHAPTER TWO

THE TEMPLES

In this chapter, three particular aspects of the two temples in Leicester, the A. P. Sanstha and the Sanatan Mandir, will be discussed. These aspects are, the establishment of both temples, the administrative structure and the physical structure of the temples.

The Establishment of the Temples

The A. P. Sanstha will be discussed first. In 1970 Yogiji Maharaj visited England at the invitation of a group of devotees in London, who "were mainly those who had emigrated to England from the East African territories of Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania with a sprinkling of those who had come from India". (1) These followers in London, had bought a church hall in Islington and converted it into a temple. They invited Yogiji Maharaj to London to perform the installation ceremony of the images (chitra-pratima), in the temple. During his visit the spiritual leader performed a ceremony on the River Thames in London which involved bathing the image of Lord Swaminarayan in the river; thus the Thames became a sacred river. Yogiji Maharaj was propagating the Swaminarayan

(1) PANDYA, 61
faith in England, and legitimizing the efforts of his devotees to form temples and carry on their religious practices in this country.

At the time of Yogiji Maharaj's visit, there were five or six families of devotees in Leicester. They had all lived previously in East Africa, and had been satsangis before arriving in England. They had made no attempt to establish a temple, but the families did meet together at individual residences. Following the advice of their spiritual leader while he was in England, this group started to hold regular formal meetings or satsangs once a week, meeting at private houses on a rotational basis. The group grew steadily as more Hindus arrived in Leicester, mainly from Uganda. (2) By 1972 the group of satsangis in Leicester had grown to include approximately forty-five families.

In 1974 Pramukh Swami visited England on a ninety day tour. It is estimated within the sect that during the four years since the visit of Yogiji Maharaj, the membership of the A. P. Sanstha in England grew from three thousand to thirty thousand. Pramukh Swami visited Leicester in August 1974, and the group of satsangis hosted two public programmes. While he was in Leicester, the spiritual leader advised the devotees to buy a building, and while he was in the city, Pramukh Swami accompanied certain members to look at two premises, which were found to be unsuitable.

(2) WILKINSON
In 1975 a building was found. It was a semi-detached house next to the house of one of the devotees, a Mr. D. S. Patel. Mr. Patel bought the house, at the address of 148 Doncaster Road, in the Belgrave area, and it was converted into a temple. A temple committee was formed, and the building was bought from Mr. Patel. The satsangis met at the new temple every Sunday for their weekly satsang meetings.

The temple was without images, and after a while the devotees decided that they needed images, and Pramukh Swami was consulted. The spiritual leader agreed to bring murtis from India and install them in the temple himself, on his next visit to England. This next visit took place in 1977, when the images were installed, and a pujari was found to live in the temple building. The images were in picture form not in statue form, so the temple was a hari mandir rather than a shikar mandir (3). These murtis were transferred when the temple was moved to its new premises, and are the murtis still to be found in the main shrine room. The new temple is therefore also a hari mandir.

Once the temple had murtis, there was a rapid growth in the number of devotees. This growth was aided by the visit of Pramukh Swami, which received tremendous publicity. However, this led to serious problems. Firstly, the temple soon

(3) WILLIAMS (1984, 104-105), explains that there are two types of temples. Shikar mandirs have metal or marble murtis, and hari mandirs have pictures.
became too small for the number of people using it for worship. Secondly, the temple was situated in a residential area, and the residents living nearby complained about the increased level of noise and traffic. The Council became involved, and eventually gave the leaders of the temple six months to find new premises. Pramukh Swami was consulted, and he affirmed that somewhere new must be found as soon as possible.

Once again the members started looking for a new building. In 1978, the building which currently houses the temple, at 3 St. James Street, was found. It had previously been the union headquarters for boot and shoe workers in the city, but had long been empty. The plans of the building were sent to Pramukh Swami, who approved them, encouraging the members to buy the building even though it was rather more expensive than could be afforded, and it needed much renovation work. Many private donations were made by devotees, fund raising activities were held, and the deposit for the building was put down later that year. As soon as this was done, the images and the pujari were moved to the new premises, and renovation was started immediately, most of it being carried out by devotees.

In 1980 Pramukh Swami made a third trip to England. During this time he visited Leicester, staying at the house of one of the devotees. He performed the ceremony for the installation of the images in the new temple. By the time the spiritual leader came to England again, visiting Leicester in 1982, a set of rooms had been prepared for him at the back of the
temple, and this is where he and his retinue of sadhus stayed. After he had gone, one of these rooms was converted into a second shrine room in the temple, and when Pramukh Swami visited Leicester in 1984, he performed the appropriate ceremony for the murtis in this shrine. It is this second shrine which is now used by the women for their Sunday sabha and arti ceremony.

The establishment of the Sanatan Mandir will now be discussed. Before any temples were formed in Leicester, groups of devotees would meet together for satsang regularly, either in a private house, or a public place such as a community hall. This seems to have been the case wherever Hindus settled in reasonably large numbers, where there were no temples. (4)

The particular group which founded the Sanatan Mandir in Leicester was the Radhe Sham Bhajan Mandal. The name of this group is still to be found on the letterhead of all official temple publications. This group consisted mainly of Gujaratis who had lived in East Africa. They met once or twice a week at a private house, and hired a public hall to hold large meetings, kathas, to celebrate festivals such as Divali or Navratri, or to hold weddings.

(4) Similar situations are described by Bowen (1981, 40) with reference to Bradford, and by Jackson (1981, 66) with reference to Coventry.
It was during a public meeting held by the Radhe Sham Bhajan Mandal, at which a sadhu from India called Ram Bhakta was giving a discourse, that the group was first inspired to buy their own building and form a temple. Towards the end of the evening the lecture was running a few minutes late. The caretaker arrived and wanted to close the hall for the night. An awkward and embarrassing situation ensued. It was after this that Ram Bhakta advised the leaders of the group to buy a building and found a new temple in Leicester.

There was already one temple in Leicester at this time, the Hindu Temple at Cromford Street; the first temple in Leicester, as well as the first temple established in England. It still occupies its original premises, a converted terraced house in Highfields. However, not only was the temple too small to serve the Hindu communities in the city, it was also a long way from Belgrave, the area where most of the Gujarati Hindus were settled.

It was the incident just narrated which made members of the Mandal start looking for a suitable building. In 1969 the present site for the temple was found. The building was a disused Baptist Chapel on the corner of Weymouth and Catherine Street in Belgrave. The cost of the building was approximately eleven thousand pounds, and through private donations and various fund raising activities, the money for the deposit was raised. On September 29th, 1970, the deposit was put down, and on the very next day the first Management Committee was appointed. Renovation work started immediately.
A series of public meetings was held to discuss which images to have in the temple. It was decided that the main shrine would be dedicated to Radha and Krishna, although there were many other suggestions, including Sita and Ram, and Lakshmi and Vishnu. It was decided that at a later date shrines to other deities would be added.

The refurbishment of the temple took a long time. It was not until June 1974 that the first shrine, dedicated to Radha and Krishna was installed; the ceremony being performed by Pundita Abaji, a Brahman priest living in Leicester. The murtis were imported from India, from Udaipur in Rajasthan. The money for the Krishna murti was donated by an individual in India. The money for the other murtis was donated by devotees in Leicester. Over the next few years other shrines were installed within the temple, including the three major shrines to Ramadarbar, Shiva and Ambaji, and the shrines to Gaumata, Jalaram Bapu, Aumkara, the Rig Vedas, Baliyadev and Shitalamata. (5)

In 1982 another building was bought by the temple committee. It was a disused school building two streets away from the temple. The reason for its purchase was to provide somewhere for the young people to meet and learn about their culture. The building is called the Shree Sanatan Centre, and functions as a youth club and community centre, providing various sports and recreational facilities. (6)

(5) The shrines are discussed in more detail on p. 91 ff.  (6) For more details see pp. 227-230 below.
Through the foregoing discussion of the establishment of the two temples in Leicester, certain differences between the two institutions will have become apparent. The A. P. Sanstha will take no major decision without first consulting the spiritual head of the sampradaya. At every stage in the growth and development of the Sanstha in Leicester, there was consultation with the spiritual leader in India, and all the installation ceremonies were performed by him. As Williams states of the A. P. Sanstha; the spiritual head "speaks to followers with the authority of God", so he is "consulted by followers about all kind of affairs", acting as both counsellor and adviser. (7) This is seen to be the case in the A. P. Sanstha in Leicester, where the devotees accept Pramukh Swami's decisions as the direction of God, and never act without consulting him first.

In the Sanatan Mandir the situation is different. Although it was originally Ram Bhakta who suggested that the Radhe Sham Bhajan Mandal should look for appropriate premises to establish a temple, it was the devotees in Leicester themselves who made the decisions and carried out plans, such as deciding upon what structural form the temple should take. Also, all the installation ceremonies were performed by various individuals, all of them based in England.

(7) WILLIAMS, 1985, 145
'Guru as Religious Specialist'.

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Ram Bhakta has not lost contact with the temple he helped to found; (8) he has visited Leicester since, and he is one of two honorary patrons of the temple, the other being His Holiness Swami Satyamitranand Giri. The temple committee is in contact with various sadhus in India, and each year a number of sadhus visiting England, are invited to the temple to give discourses. The committee accepts advice from the visiting sadhus, putting such advice into practice if possible. (9)

In Hinduism the relationship between a 'guru' or spiritual master or teacher and a disciple is a significant aspect of religion. (10) The guru is seen as imparting truth in such a way that he becomes the mediator between God and his followers. It is therefore extremely important for a person seeking God to follow a guru. As Williams states, "the relationship between an appropriate guru and a receptive disciple is thought to be necessary to religious development and salvation". (11) This aspect of Hinduism is believed to be just as important among Hindus in Leicester, as anywhere else. However, the Sanatan Mandir caters for many different Hindu communities in Leicester. Amongst those Hindus who

(8) Ram Bhakta wrote the artis for Rama, Shiva and Amba, which are sung each day in the temple, as well as the last prayer sung at the weekly Shishu-Kunj.

(9) See the incident reported on pp. 223-224 below.

(10) WILLIAMS (1982) discusses the importance of the acharya or guru within the Vaishnava tradition.

BRENT (1) quotes Kabir; "In the midst of the highest heaven there is a shining light: he who has no Guru cannot reach the palace: he only will reach it who is under the guidance of a true Guru".
worship at the temple are many who belong to other groups, such as those who follow the same spiritual master or guru, who meet privately to worship together. Such a group consists of those who have been "initiated" by Swami Akhandanand Sagarji, accepting him as their spiritual master. This group meets for satsang on every second Friday, keeping in touch with the sadhu as a group.

In sum, the A. P. Sanstha is centralized, with devotees looking to the same spiritual master, who receives absolute allegiance from all members of the Sanstha. In the Sanatan Mandir there is no centralized group. Those who worship at the temple show special devotion to a deity of their choice, and follow a spiritual master of their choice. Those who worship at the Sanatan Mandir are not a homogeneous community, whereas those within the A. P. Sanstha most definitely are. This is the basis for many of the differences between the two institutions.

The Administrative Structure of the Temples

The examination of the administrative structure of the temples will focus specifically upon the committee structure and the method of membership. The situation at the A. P. Sanstha will be studied first.

(11) WILLIAMS, 1982, 89
A Board of Trustees is based at the London Temple of the sect, which is situated in Neasden, and this is the governing body of all the temples within the *sampradaya* in Britain. It has full legal responsibility for them all. Pramukh Swami is the head of the board, and no major decision is taken without his advice and direction. Under this central Board of Trustees are the management committees, which have responsibility for the management and maintenance of the individual temples. The management committees have the power to form sub-committees when and where they believe there is a need.

At the *A. P. Sanstha* in Leicester, in 1985, the only sub-committee to have been formed was the Youth Organization Committee, which came into being in 1977. However, with regard to the committee structure within the temple, it has been stated that "there are two main committees, the Management Committee and the Youth Organization Committee". (12) This points to the important role of the Youth Organization Committee within the administrative structure of the temple. It is not viewed simply as a sub-committee. It is made up solely of *yuvuks* or young men, and plays an important part in the running and organization of the temple. One of the *Bal Mandal* teachers explained that,

"there is more emphasis on the young people in the temple than on anyone else. It is generally felt that the young people are there to organize things."

(13)

(12) Communication with temple secretary - 7.11.86.
(13) Personal communication - 24.7.86.
The Youth Organization Committee is the administrative structure which enables them to participate in the organizational side of the temple.

In 1987 the Mahila Mandal or Women's Committee was formed. This is essentially a sub-committee made up of both women and yuktis. It is expected to divide in the near future; therefore the yuktis will have their own committee. The Mahila Mandal was formed in response to the wishes of the women, who believed that as they are starting to organize women's activities, such as festivals, (the first of which was organized in 1986), they should have their own committee. (14)

There is also a group called the Bal Mandal Sanchalak, which has nine members, all of whom teach the balaks on Sunday mornings. These teachers or sanchalaks, meet regularly to discuss the progress of their classes, and to decide upon activities for the coming weeks.

Within the temple there is then, one management committee, and two sub-committees; the Youth Organization Committee and the Mahila Mandal. There is also a separate group called the Bal Mandal Sanchalak. The members of the two sub-committees

(14) For information on the traditional role of women in Hinduism, see PRABHU, (263-289) and LESLIE.
are elected within the temple at the annual general meeting. The members of the Management Committee however, are selected by Pramukh Swami. At the end of the year, all temple members are requested to fill in nomination forms, selecting specific people for posts on the Management Committee. These forms are then sent to India, via the temple in London, where they are seen by the Board of Trustees (U.K.), and Pramukh Swami selects the committee members, allocating the posts as well. This is usually done annually, but in 1986 Pramukh Swami stipulated that the posts are to be held for two years.

There are two types of membership of the temple. One is described by the secretary of the temple as "spiritual membership", and the other as "material membership". The spiritual membership is viewed as the "real" membership. There are three types of material membership, including life, honorary and ordinary membership, the latter of which involves an annual subscription fee of one pound. There are usually approximately two hundred annually subscribed members, with fifteen life members and four honorary members, one of whom is Pramukh Swami.

The annual subscription membership is open to anyone. However, there are many "spiritual" or "real" members who have become such by undergoing a short initiation ceremony, who do not pay the annual subscription fee. This is quite acceptable within the temple. One can also simply become a member by paying the subscription fee, and one is not necessarily
expected to go through the initiation. Although there are only two hundred subscribed members each year, the temple has a mailing list with approximately seven hundred names on it. The mailing list includes not only those who are subscribed members, but also those who have undergone the initiation ceremony. This suggests that there are some five hundred people, (other than the subscribed members) who have gone through the initiation, being considered members no less than anyone else, having voting rights at meetings and being allowed to hold official positions within the temple. (15)

The spiritual membership involves an initiation ceremony called panch-vartaman. The ceremony is short and fairly simple, being conducted by the resident priest for males, and the wife of the priest for females, although any female devotee can be elected to perform the ritual. At the Leicester temple, the wife of the priest has been elected. The ceremony consists of the initiate chanting the phrase, "I give over to Swaminarayan my mind, body, wealth and the sins of previous births". The person conducting the ceremony then says,

"From today, whatever your sins, Swaminarayan destroys them - your soul is under His guidance. Take these oaths, and from now on, having your previous sins destroyed, you must take renewed responsibility for the way you lead your life."

(15) This is contrary to what is stated in the temple Constitution (5), where spiritual membership is not mentioned. It states: "any ordinary member who does not pay his subscription within three months of the due date shall automatically cease to be a member". Further, it states that only members have the right to vote.
Water is poured over the right hand and the Swaminarayan mantra is repeated. The initiate then takes five vows, which are the five main vows of the fellowship; not to eat meat, which includes the active practice of ahimsa or non-violence; not to take alcohol or any other intoxicant; not to commit adultery; not to steal, and not to defile oneself or others; which refers generally to rules of ritual purity. Then the two-string kanthi or necklace of beads is put on by the initiate as directed in the Shikshapatri (vv. 41, 44, 45) and this kanthi must be worn always.

Panch-vartaman can take place at any stage in a devotee's life, from the age of five weeks. There is a two year old girl at the temple who already wears a kanthi. Another young girl of eleven also wears a kanthi and says she received hers when she was a baby. One of the yuktis who is now twenty-six, received her kanthi four years ago when she was seriously ill in hospital, having been given days to live. Although she and her family had been devotees all her life, she had never bothered to go through the ceremony. It was her mother, believing that her daughter was about to die, who arranged for the ceremony to take place in the hospital.

The Sanatan Mandir and the administrative structure found there will now be discussed. There is a board of seven trustees, and the whole temple, including both mobile and immobile property, is in the name of the Board of Trustees. There is an executive or management committee, which is the
forum for policy making, having thirty-five members. A monthly meeting between the trustees and the Management Committee is held, but the Management Committee can meet separately, more frequently if necessary. It has the power to form sub-committees. There are usually nine sub-committees, covering the various aspects of temple life. These are maintenance, cleaning, stores, shrine maintenance, accounts, festivals, Sanatan Centre, shishu-kunj and seva dal. The Seva Dal Sub-committee is responsible for organizing the activities of the seva dal group or voluntary group.

The sub-committees consist of members of the Management Committee, each sub-committee having seven members. There are no young people under the age of twenty-five on the Management Committee at the moment, although four years ago there were three young people on the committee. (16)

The election of committee members takes place at the annual general meeting held in June. A circular is sent out to all members, three weeks in advance, and on the day before the general meeting the accounts are disclosed and the committee is dissolved. Persons are nominated on the day for committee posts, and democratic ballot voting is used to elect the next committee. Only subscribed members are allowed to vote.

(16) See p.79 below, for information on the experiences of one of these young people.
There is an annual membership of approximately four hundred, which is based solely upon an annual subscription fee of one pound. There are three types of membership: life, honorary and annual membership. There is no form of initiation ceremony, the only qualification is that the person be over eighteen years of age.

The temple is used for worship by many different Hindu groups in the city, differentiated by caste, particular devotion to one deity or saint, or by allegiance to a spiritual master or guru. Therefore, although there is an annual membership of approximately four hundred; on the occasion of large festivals such as Diwali, there may be an attendance at the temple of nearer four thousand.

Several differences between the administrative structures of the two temples will now have become obvious (see fig. 1.). The first to be discussed is the method of the election of committee members. In the Sanatan Mandir the committee members are both nominated and elected by the subscribed members themselves. In the A. P. Sanstha, although the members (both subscribed and initiated) can nominate individuals for posts on the Management Committee, these nominations are sent to India, where Pramukh Swami makes the final selection. Once again the centralization of the sect is seen in practice. Committee members in the A. P. Sanstha are given special authority to hold their posts, having been personally invested with this authority by the spiritual leader of the sect.
Figure 1. THE COMMITTEE STRUCTURES OF BOTH TEMPLES

Shree Sanatan Mandir

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE


S.C. = sub-committee

Bochasanwasi Shree Akshar Purushottam Sanstha

BOARD OF TRUSTEES INDIA

BOARD OF TRUSTEES U.K.

MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

YOUTH ORGANIZATION COMMITTEE

MAHILA MANDAL
Williams reports on an interview with Pramukh Swami, where the leader expressed full confidence in his decisions and advice, stating that he is "always aware of the presence of god" and,

"he is always sure of the correctness of the advice he gives because god's inspiration is always there and the advice is always god inspired." (17)

Therefore any decisions made by Pramukh Swami are believed to be directives from God, not only by the religious leader himself, but also by his devotees. The committee, chosen by Pramukh Swami is given a "charismatic" authority, where the members are likely to be highly respected and their decisions followed more directly, than if the committee was elected by the local congregation.

The type of dissension which is avoided by the election process of the A. P. Sanstha is represented by the attitude of one devotee at the Sanatan Mandir. (18) With reference to the membership of the temple he stated that the membership was not representative of the people who worshipped there, because many people do not pay the annual subscription fee. Furthermore, he believed that many of those who were members had been coerced to join, in order to gain voting rights, by acquaintances who wanted their vote at the annual general meeting, to gain a place on the Management Committee.

(18) Personal communication - 2.9.86.
There is a greater chance of disagreement within the committee itself when the members are elected by the local congregation. An example of this took place at the Sanatan Mandir, when a young man who was a committee member three years ago, has since refused to stand for re-election. He claims that some of the older members of the committee made it impossible for him to continue his work on the committee because they disapproved of such a young man being in such a position of responsibility. They also did not approve of his efforts to encourage more young people to stand for election, or the fact that he radically reorganized the Shishu Kunj on Sunday mornings.

Within the A. P. Sanstha the type of tension and bad feeling mentioned above will be less likely to occur. This is not only because the committee has been given special authority to make decisions concerning the day-to-day running of the temple, having been chosen by Pramukh Swami, but also because there is a very strong feeling in the temple of working together for Pramukh Swami. "We are doing this for Bapa", or "We are doing this to please Bapa" are phrases commonly heard in the temple. Disagreements do occur, such as when a group of yuktis were rehearsing a play to perform at a shibir. The play had been written by an older man on the Management Committee, and was in very difficult Gujarati. Many of the girls found it boring, and hard to learn their lines, and many eventually wanted to give up. The director of the play called a meeting and reminded everyone that,
"We are doing this for Bapa, to please him, therefore we must do it as well as we can". The rehearsals thereafter continued, with renewed enthusiasm.

It is the strong feeling of working together for Pramukh Swami which permeates every aspect of temple life. The knowledge that the Management Committee has been chosen by Pramukh Swami leaves little room for dissension either within the committee itself or among the members of the temple. The authority of the committee is firmly established.

The second difference between the two temples, apart from the method of the election of committee members, is that the A. P. Sanstha has a Youth Organization Committee. Members of the youth group or Yuvuk Mandal are between the ages of fifteen and thirty-five. Members of the Youth Organization Committee are yuvuks and sanchalaks. Therefore the sub-committee does not consist of members of the Management Committee. Although the Youth Organization Committee is a sub-committee, it is viewed within the temple, as one of two main committees, being entrusted with much responsibility for the general running of the temple.

In contrast, the Sanatan Mandir does not have a separate youth committee, and there are no young people on the Management Committee. There are three sub-committees concerned with the activities of the children and young people. These are the Seva Dal, the Shishu Kunj and the Sanatan Centre.
sub-committees. At the last annual general meeting however, the Seva Dal and Shishu Kunj sub-committees were amalgamated into one. The Seva Dal Sub-committee was originally formed to direct the activities of the seva dal group which was established in the first few days of the temple. The aim was to have a corpus of young volunteers who could be called upon to help in the temple as necessary. There were at one time between thirty and forty members of the seva dal group, but now there is not one. The group still officially exists, but only on paper. Many of the young people who were members of the group, formed their own group four years ago called the Shree Ram Mandir Seva Trust. It has around twenty active members to date.

It was explained that the above situation came about because although there were many young people in the seva dal group who had much energy and wanted to work within the temple, they came to feel that they were being used as "slave labour" by the committee, instead of being asked to work as equals. They were never allowed to organize their own programmes, or to make suggestions; they were simply asked to help with preparations for programmes already organized by the committee. The young people grew tired of this perceived inequality, and as described by one of the founder members of the Shree Ram Mandir Seva Trust, "We needed to find another outlet for our creative energy". (19)

(19) Personal cummunication - 8.10.86
The trust was formed with the aim of raising money for, and organizing, various projects involved with promoting Hinduism. An example of their activity is the eleven day programme organized jointly with the Hindu Temple in July 1987. The programme consisted of the recitation of the Ramayana by the speaker Ramdas Bapu. Most of the young people in the Trust still worship at the Sanatan Mandir regularly, and they will still give their help if asked by the committee, but they are no longer part of the seva dal group; they have formed their own autonomous group.

The last major difference between the two temples is the question of membership. In the Sanatan Mandir the one way of becoming a member is by paying the annual subscription fee. In the A. P. Sanstha there are the two types of membership mentioned. The "spiritual" membership is effectively the step of initiation into the sect, which is essentially very different from the "material" membership. One then has become a devotee of Lord Swaminarayan, which involves accepting the philosophy of the sampradaya, and living according to the rules of the sect as far as possible, as presented in the Shikshapatri and reiterated by the spiritual leader. The undertaking of the ceremony brings about certain responsibilities; the initiate has a "shared ground of meaning" with other sansangis, and a "shared system of values and goals". (20)

(20) WILLIAMS, 1987, 6.
The Sanatan Mandir does not have the unity of the A. P. Sanstha; it caters for different groups of Hindus in Leicester. Therefore the membership of the temple is purely formal, involving no ceremony. Many people who worship at the temple will be followers of a specific spiritual master; they will have gone through a form of initiation ceremony with their guru, receiving a mantra from him, and receiving teaching from him together with a group of fellow disciples. The Sanatan Mandir is a common place of worship. The temple has no unity in the way the A. P. Sanstha has, and therefore can have no similar form of "spiritual" membership. (21)

The Temple Buildings

This section provides a description of the physical structure of the temples, focusing mainly on the particular shrines found within each. The A. P. Sanstha will be discussed first.

The temple is housed in a large building in the town centre, barely recognizable as a Hindu temple except for the small sign above the main entrance, which states, "The Swaminarayan Hindu Mission. Bochasanwasi Shri Akshar Purushottam Sanstha". The building has three storeys, housing two shrine rooms, four rooms used as classrooms and storerooms, a bedroom and

(21) See p. 47 ff. for the discussion of the differences between "dharma-based" institutions and sampradayas.
kitchen for the pujari, a bedroom kept for Pramukh Swami, and a room which has been converted into a library. There is also a large kitchen, a dining hall, a wedding or samaiya hall, a general office, as well as shower and toilet facilities. The building is large enough for several activities to be held simultaneously.

The main shrine room is situated on the first floor. The main images in the shrine are of Lord Swaminarayan and Gunatitanand Swami (see fig. 2). They are representations of Swami and Narayan, Akshar and Purushottam, Atma and Paramatma and Brahman and Parabrahman. Gunatitanand Swami is portrayed on the left of Lord Swaminarayan. (22) These two images are contained within the main picture in the centre of the shrine. The picture on the left (as facing the shrine) contains the images of Krishna and Radha. The picture on the right contains the images of members of the guru-parampara, including Bhagatji Maharaj, Shastriji Maharaj, Yogiji Maharaj and Pramukh Swami Maharaj. On the left hand side of the shrine is the image of Ganesha or Ganapati, and on the opposite side is the image of Hanuman, both in statue form.

(22) The consort is traditionally portrayed on the left of the deity, as in the Shikshapatri (v. 1.); "Krishna .... on whose left is Radha".
(The image of Lord Swaminarayan in statue form belongs to the London temple and therefore is not usually present.)
The *murtis* are the original ones brought by Pramukh Swami from India and installed in the Doncaster Road temple. This does not include the *murtis* of Ganesha and Hanuman, which were brought from India by Pramukh Swami at a later date, and installed by him in 1982. Below the shrine, in a glass enclosure are various pictures and photographs, including a painting of Shastriji Maharaj, a photograph of Pramukh Swami, and a photograph of the *murti* of Lord Swaminarayan in the Gondal Temple, in India. The whole shrine area is enclosed by a small wooden barrier, being a restricted area for anyone other than the *pujari*.

The shrine is covered by a large domed structure, which is common to all Hindu temples; although in India the temple building itself will usually have large domes and spires. (23) This is to remind devotees "that at the sacred place of the residence of the gods the plane between the earthly and the divine is broken". (24) The reaching of the domes into the sky signifies that the highest goal and aspiration of human life is to attain God, and the purpose of visiting the temple is to aid the devotees' spiritual ascent. (25)

(23) KRAMRISCH

(24) WILLIAMS, 1984, 107

(25) ELIADE (1974, 12), refers to such phenomena as "the architectonic symbolism of the Centre", where "every temple is a sacred mountain, thus becoming a Centre ..... Being an axis mundi, the temple is regarded as the meeting point of heaven, earth and hell".
Other features common to all Hindu temples are the two shrines of Hanuman and Ganesha. They are usually placed just before the main shrine, so the devotee can make an offering and have darshan, before going on to the shrine of the main deities. However, in this case, the two murtis are within the actual structure of the shrine, behind the wooden barrier. The explanation (26) for the presence of these two murtis is that they prepare devotees to go before the main shrine with the proper attitude of mind. Ganesha is associated with the preservation of physical well being and material wealth. Hanuman is believed to be responsible for the protection of people and their possessions from evil. These are secondary concerns compared to spiritual growth; so the devotee makes requests concerning worldly affairs to these two deities, and then enters the main shrine free from anxieties about worldly affairs, able to concentrate fully on spiritual matters.

The shrine room is divided by a rope barrier into two separate areas, (fig. 3), both with their own door. The area at the back is reserved for women, and the front area is for men only. There is a small collection box between the two doors, enabling devotees to make an offering as they arrive or leave.

In preparation for the visit of Pramukh Swami in 1982, two rooms were prepared for him and the accompanying sadhus. These are on the second floor, at the back of the building. One room was a bedroom and the other room was converted into

(26) Personal communication with the pujari - 7.11.86.
Figure 3. PLAN OF THE MAIN SHRINE ROOM IN THE
BOCHASANWASI SHREE AKSHAR
PURUSHOTTAM SANSTHA

1 - the shrine
2 - vyaspith
3 - area reserved for men
4 - area reserved for women
5 - women's doorway
6 - main doorway
7 - collection box
8 - rope barrier
a private shrine. (27) After the visit, the room was little used, and it was decided that the women should use the room which had acted as a private shrine for Pramukh Swami, to hold their weekly sabha and arti ceremony on Sundays. In 1984 Pramukh Swami performed the appropriate ceremony for the images in the new shrine, and since then it has been used as a second shrine room.

The shrine contains seven separate pictures. The main picture in the centre contains the image of Lord Swaminarayan, with Gunatitanand Swami on his left (28) and Gopalanand Swami on his right. The four surrounding images are of the four spiritual leaders, Bhagatji Maharaj, Shastriji Maharaj, Yogiji Maharaj and Pramukh Swami. The separate picture on the right (as facing the shrine) contains an image of Pramukh Swami; while on the left are the images of Krishna and Radha.

The second shrine is used by the women on Sundays and by the yuvuks on Saturday evenings, who hold their weekly sabha and perform arti and thal in the shrine room. The shrine is only used at weekends, and is kept closed at all other times. The pujari spends his time attending to the needs of the

(27) To enable the ascetics to worship privately, away from women; thus fulfilling the commands in the Shikshapatri (vv. 175-196) concerning celibacy.

(28) See note 22 above.
murtis in the main shrine, being the only person allowed to do so. (29) In the second shrine however, the devotees themselves can perform the religious activities, such as arti and thal.

The physical structure of the Sanatan Mandir will now be discussed. The building where the mandir is now housed was originally a Baptist Chapel. Much renovation work was undertaken to convert it into a temple; the pews on the ground floor were ripped out, and the Communion Table was replaced by the main shrine. The temple is in the residential area of Belgrave, and is recognizable as a temple from the outside because of the sign bearing the words "Shree Sanatan Mandir", and the flag or dhavja which flies from the top of the building, declaring that God is in residence.

The building is large with two storeys, containing the shrine room which houses all the shrines, a dining hall, a kitchen and main office, all on the ground floor. On the first floor there is a wedding hall, committee room and a gallery area from which the shrines below can be viewed, which still has its original pews. Near the back entrance on the ground floor is the caretaker's room, where all the personal items of the deities are kept, such as clothes. The toilets are also in this area of the building. Two streets away is the

(29) For a detailed account of the daily needs of deities, see BARZ (48-49) and STEVENSON (401-403).
Sanatan Centre which provides the space and the facilities for recreational and social activities.

The Sanatan Mandir is seen to have a "typical temple layout" in accordance with a publication produced by the National Council of Hindu Temples (U.K.) (30) (fig. 4), which states that at the end of the hall where the deities are resident, is the main shrine, where the predominant deities of the temple stand. The temple may also contain side shrines, which is the case at the Sanatan Mandir, with the main shrine dedicated to Radha and Krishna, and the side shrines dedicated to various other deities.

The Sanatan Mandir contains marble images in statue form, and is therefore a Shikar Mandir. (31) The marble images in the main shrine room were installed in June 1974. (fig. 5) Krishna is blue in colour since his name means "dark complexioned", and he is depicted playing a flute. (32) In front of Krishna is a small image of a cow, which is a reminder to the devotee of his early life as a cowherd, as related in Puranic texts such as the Bhagavata Purana. Male deities are usually accompanied by their Shakti, or creative female aspect. In


(31) See note 3 above.

(32) The iconographical pose known as 'Krishna-Venudhara', BHATTACHARYA, 83.
Figure 4. PLAN OF THE SHRINE ROOM IN
THE SHREE SANATAN MANDIR

1 - Radha Krishna  7 - Jalaram Bapu
2 - Shiva  8 - Baliyadev
3 - Nandi  9 - Shitlamata
4 - Mataji  10 - Rig Veda
5 - Ramadarbar  11 - Ganesha
6 - Gaumata  12 - Hanuman
13 - Vyaspith

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Figure 5. THE RADHA KRISHNA SHRINE IN THE SHREE SANATAN MANDIR
this case it is Radha, who is popularly viewed as the consort of Krishna, since in the Brahmavaivarta Purana (I:V, vv. 18-35) she emerges as pre-eminent among the gopis as Krishna's self-giving lover and wife, symbolizing the worshipper in relation to God. (33)

All the main shrines have domes or shikars over them, so each can be seen as a building within a building. (34) A publication produced by the Sanatan Mandir explains that the domes over the shrines are "a reminder of the mountains where the gods have their homes". (35) Walkways surround the four main shrines, thus enabling the devotee to circumambulate the shrines. On the walkway in front of the Radha Krishna shrine are the two smaller shrines to Ganesha and Hanuman. (fig. 6).

In July 1978 the two shrines dedicated to Shiva and the mother goddess, universally referred to by devotees as Mataji, Honoured Mother, were installed. The ceremony was performed by Dr. Krishnamurti Mathur, the secretary general of the Indian Cultural Institute in London. Whereas Vishnu is seen as the preserver, Shiva is the union of opposites, embodying both the forces of destruction and creation. (36)

(33) Mackenzie Brown, 105-106.
(34) See note 25 above.
(35) EMMETT
(36) BOWES, 219, 237.
BROCKINGTON, 72.
Figure 6. THE RADHA KRISHNA SHRINE IN THE SHREE SANATAN MANDIR (SHOWING THE SURROUNDING WALKWAY AND THE SHRINES DEDICATED TO GANESHA AND HANUMAN)
The Shiva shrine houses a small stone lingam surrounded at the base by a yoni, which acts as a channel for milk when it is poured over the lingam during certain rituals. The lingam is entwined by a five-headed cobra. The phallic symbolism of the lingam is a reminder of the creative and generative forces of Shiva, as well as the destructive forces. (37) Jackson emphasizes that,

"the lingam is simply regarded by worshippers as a focus for the worship of Shiva and there is no link between the iconography and the devotions addressed to the deity." (38)

Behind the lingam is a marble image of Shiva's wife, Parvati, as well as two pictorial images of Shiva himself, adorned with snakes. In front of the shrine is a marble bull, Nandi, Shiva's vehicle, who sits outside the shrine looking inward. It is believed that an invisible rope runs between the bull and the deity. Shiva, the ascetic, is lost in meditation; as the devotee approaches the shrine, she/he touches the head of the bull, which shakes its head, so jerking the rope in Shiva's hand, and thereby attracting the attention of the deity. (39)

In front of the bull is a marble tortoise, which is referred to in the Bhagavad Gita (2:58), as the representative of

(37) See BROCKINGTON (204) and O'FLAHERTY. (1973) for a fuller discussion of the symbolism of the lingam.

(38) JACKSON, 1981, 68.

(39) STEVENSON, 371.
Substantiated by devotees.
sense control; having the ability to contract the five senses from the physical world into the spiritual world. This not only reminds the devotee that Shiva is the great ascetic, the god of yogis, but it also symbolically reminds the devotee that she/he must attempt to develop such qualities of detachment.

On the opposite side of the shrine room is the shrine dedicated to the mother goddess. It contains the image of Amba in her eight-armed form. Amba is one of the many forms in which the goddess is worshipped. The image is of marble, depicting the goddess smiling, while holding a flower in one hand and weapons of war in other hands; thus exhibiting her many qualities, fierce as well as kind. She is riding on a ferocious tiger, her vehicle. She is worshipped at the Navratri festival, along with the other forms of the goddess, such as Lakshmi and Sarasvati.

In 1984 the Ramadarbar and Rig Veda shrines were installed, both ceremonies being carried out by a priest from Preston. The Ramadarbar shrine holds the marble images of Rama, Sita, Lakshman and Hanuman, Rama's devoted helper in the Ramayana.

Next to this shrine is the Rig Veda shrine, which consists of a Sanskrit copy of the Rig Veda encased in glass, which is regarded as the source of Hinduism; (40) one of the oldest

(40) See p. 50 above.
and most holy of all Hindu scriptures. On the other side of the Ramadarbar shrine is the shrine dedicated to Jalaram Bapu, a saint from Gujarat who was a devoted follower of Rama. This shrine was installed in 1984 by Pundita Abaji, and contains a marble image of Jalaram Bapu.

There are three other shrines in the temple. One is dedicated to the two goddesses, Baliyadev and Shitalamata. This shrine was installed in 1983, and the two goddesses symbolize another aspect of the mother goddess, as disease. Shitalamata is the goddess of smallpox and other serious or fatal illnesses. Baliyadev is responsible for less serious ailments. Both can either cause or cure diseases, therefore offerings and vows are made to them both during the illness and after the cure. (41) The shrine contains the marble head of Baliyadev on the left, and the complete image of Shitalamata on the right.

The Gaumata shrine contains the marble image of a cow. (42) The roots of reverence for the cow practised by Hindus are extremely ancient,

"being based on the symbolism of the divine bounty of the earth; in this way the cow is the alternative of the earth as the 'mother' of gods and men." (43)

(41) Personal communication with the pujari - 7.11.86.
(42) See O'MALLEY for further discussion on the symbolism of the cow.
(43) HINNELLS and SHARPE, 119.
The cow can be seen as the alternative image of mother nature or the earth mother. The above mentioned scholars continue, to show how the mother goddess Aditi is called "the cow, the sinless" (R.V. VIII, 90, 15). In the Atharva Veda, we see how the cow sums up within herself the whole creation:

"the cow accepted the sacrifice; the cow sustained the sun; within the cow entered the rice-dish and the priest. The cow they worship as death; the cow becomes this all-gods, men, Asuras, Fathers, seers. Who so knoweth this, he may accept the cow ...." (A.V. X, 10, 25-27).

The marble image of the cow is placed in a small alcove near the Shiva shrine, and devotees seldom forget to show reverence to her before leaving the shrine room.

Around the balcony are hung more images of the deities in picture form, portraying incidents from their lives, or depicting them in other forms. These are divided, as are the main shrines, into those related to Vishnu, Shiva or the mother goddess. There are more pictures hung on the back wall of the shrine room depicting various religious teachers or saints, such as Satya Sai Baba and Shirdi Sai Baba, Jalaram Bapu, Mahatma Gandhi, Ramakrishna and Guru Nanak.

The whole temple is decorated in bright, rich colours, as is the A. P. Sanstha. The murtis themselves are garlanded and the shrines are decorated with bright coloured lights,
tinsel and flowers. In the case of the A. P. Sanstha, the pictures are garlanded, and Lord Swaminarayan, as well as Krishna and Radha are always shown wearing rich and opulent clothes. However, the line of spiritual heads of the Sanstha are portrayed in their sadhus robes.

In the Sanatan Mandir, the murtis are dressed in beautiful colourful clothes, rich ornaments and jewellery, which are changed every day. In a temple publication the Mandir is described as, "a house of God .... a palace - where God lives in the manner of a king". In the same publication, when describing the murti of Amba, it is stated that, "her beautiful dress and rich ornaments show how she is treated just like any earthly queen". (44)

In Hinduism there is a parallel between the deities and the way in which earthly royalty are treated. (45) As described by the pujari at the Sanatan Mandir, God is regarded as the King of kings, therefore everything presented or provided must be of the best quality; the most opulent and illustrious. (46) Hence the general colourful and decorated aspect of the temple, and the fact that the deities are gorgeously dressed in the finest fabrics and decorated with ornaments, jewellery and flowers. These general precepts are carried out in both the temples.

(44) EMMETT
(45) HINNELLS and SHARPE, 104.
BROCKINGTON, 202.
(46) Personal communication - 7.11.86.
In this chapter, the two temples under discussion have been considered from three points of view: the circumstances of their establishment; their administrative structures, and the physical arrangements within them. In the following chapter, the history of formal religious nurture within the two relevant traditions will be examined.
CHAPTER THREE

THE HISTORY OF FORMAL RELIGIOUS NURTURE
WITHIN THE TWO TRADITIONS

In this chapter the history of the formal religious nurture of young people within the two traditions represented by the temples (as discussed in chapter one) will be examined. This involves showing the evolution of the role of the temple within the mainstream tradition, or "sanatan dharma". A comparison will be made between the role of the temple in the A. P. Sanstha, and the traditional role of the temple in mainstream Hinduism. This discussion will highlight the reasons both for the different history of formal religious nurture within the two temples in Leicester, and the difference in their organizational structure, as well as their differing attitudes towards the nurture activities. This chapter prepares for a full examination of the formal religious nurture provided in the temples, as presented in the next two chapters.

The Sanatan Mandir will be considered first, as the mainstream temple, which is in circumstances which are very similar to most mainstream or traditional Hindu temples in Britain. The A. P. Sanstha, being sectarian, does not share the same circumstances, or the same problems as the Sanatan Mandir. The discussion of the A. P. Sanstha will clarify its particular problems and general situation, which come about
because of its separateness and distinctiveness as a sect. We are reminded of Brockingtons explanation of a sect as "something added on to ordinary Hindu practice ......." (1) It is because of this "something added on" that the A. P. Sanstha deals with the religious nurture of its young people in a unique way, and does not share the same problems as the traditional Sanatan Mandir in trying to cope with bringing up young people within Hinduism, in the "alien" environment of Britain.

The Sanatan Mandir

It is obvious when speaking to any committee member at the Sanatan Mandir that there is much anxiety about what is seen as the problem of getting young people interested in their religion, or even getting them to come to the temple. (2) This is a problem which involves not only young people, but the older generations also. As a committee member explained, "In England, a lot of things go against our way of life, like the weather, the time when people must work, and distractions from television". (3) He went on to explain that the majority of people who attend the temple came to England from East Africa, being Gujarati by ethnicity. In East Africa the

(1) BROCKINGTON, 190
(2) According to the temple Consititution, one of the aims of the temple is "the advancement of the Hindu religion" through religious education, and the maintenance of the doctrines and tenets of the religion.
(3) Personal communication - 13.11.86.
situation was similar to that in India. The examples given were three: firstly, there was no television in either country to the extent that it is present in England. Secondly, the weather in the two countries is similar: in England people tend to stay at home because of bad weather. Thirdly, the working hours in East Africa and India were flexible, because in Africa most of the Asians were business people, and "in India people are either farmers or business people". (4)

The committee member continued, by pointing out that in Britain there are many changes. There are now young people who were born in Britain, and know little about their native religion or culture. The significant point is that these young people have little opportunity to find out about their religion or culture. The interviewee pinpointed the major cause as the way of life in Britain. He explained that usually both parents work full-time, and there is little time for communication between adults and children. What communication there is, is hampered by the distraction of television.

The responses of this particular interviewee represent general attitudes and sentiments prevailing among devotees (both committee members and ordinary members) within the temple. The explanation continued:

(4) ibid
"...So, children are not educated. Here the young people are not acquainted with basic things. If you ask them 'who is Ram?' they won't know, half of them. If you ask, 'who is Krishna?' or 'who was Ram's brother?' they won't know. We have to start from the basics and work upwards." (5)

A major problem is actually getting the young people to go to the temple, even for the weekly children's class or Shishu-Kunj. The interviewee explained that in East Africa sabhas or classes could be held twice a week, or even every other day, but in Britain (for the various reasons discussed above) this is not possible;

"... out of about forty thousand Hindus in Leicester I should imagine that about twenty-five percent or ten thousand, must be young people. Every Sunday at the Sanatan Mandir we have an attendance of only about one hundred at the Shishu-Kunj, which is quite a disappointing figure. So, there is a problem." (6)

The formal attitude as expressed by the committee, is one of anxiety about the younger generations and the difficulties they face being brought up in Britain, and trying to come to an understanding of their own religion. The general situation in Britain is seen as not conducive towards helping the young people to learn of their religion. In too many cases the parents do not have the time, or necessarily the knowledge, to teach their children about Hinduism. Therefore, the religious leaders of the Sanatan Mandir are anxious that the young people should come to the temple, so that religious

(5) ibid
(6) ibid
teaching and the transmission of religious ideas can take place in a formal setting. In this "new" environment of Britain, where Hinduism is one minority religion among many, all fighting for survival, the temple takes on a new meaning and importance.

It can be seen that the role of the temple has changed over the last few years in Britain. By briefly focusing on this wider subject, the factors leading to the awareness of a need for formal nurture for young people within the temple will become obvious.

In 1963 Desai noted an absence of Hindu temples in Britain;

".... Hindus do not have temples here. The elaborate rituals which are required in the temple are forbidden by custom on foreign soil. Then too, worship at the temple is on the decline among the relatively Westernized Hindus in Gujarat and the Punjab .... And .... at the regional and all-India level, Hindu religious life is based on personal belief of a philosophical nature, which need not find expression in worship at a temple." (7)

The absence of temples was reiterated by later accounts, such as the study undertaken in Sparkbrook by Rex and Moore. (8) In 1969, Rose stated that there were no Hindu temples in Britain, because "Hinduism does not need to find expression in temple worship; it is a religion which is practised in the home". (9) This is a similar explanation to those given by Rex and Moore.

(7) DESAI, 93. (8) REX and MOORE, 176. (9) ROSE, 468-469.
In 1969 the first Hindu temple was established, in Leicester, and in 1970 a Hindu temple was opened in East London. (10) The situation reported by Desai, Rose and Rex and Moore was soon out of date. Temples were established throughout the 1970s, and as Knott writes,

"In the nineteen eighties the Hindus, like their Sikh and Muslim neighbours are to be found in most industrial cities where they have established thriving community centres and places of worship." (11)

An explanation for the comparative lateness of the appearance of Hindu temples in Britain is connected to the fact that it was not until the mid-sixties that Hindus started to leave East Africa in large numbers and enter Britain. Hindus continued to migrate direct from the India sub-continent, but Asians were migrating to Britain in large numbers as a result of the Africanization policies in Kenya and Tanzania. (12) Knott (13) mentions three reasons for the relative lateness of the establishment of temples. Firstly, in the mid-sixties the Hindu communities were too small to finance such projects. Secondly, temple worship is traditionally secondary in importance compared to domestic worship. Lastly, the establishment of such institutions outside India is very complicated and daunting.

(11) ibid., 3.
However, the East African Asians were a group used to practising their religion outside India. They had already undertaken the process of the transplantation of Hinduism to foreign lands; many Hindu temples had been established in East Africa. (14) It was the East African Hindus who were responsible for establishing many temples in Britain. (15) The East African Asians have been described as a group

"accustomed to Western forms of bureaucracy and administration, and to temple worship as a means of promoting community solidarity and the reinforcement of traditional beliefs, values and practices." (16)

In the interview quoted above, (17) it was stated that Hindus found life in East Africa very similar to life in India in many ways. Therefore Hinduism would have been relatively easily transplanted to African soil. However, in transplanting their religion within East Africa, the Hindus learnt the necessary skills to transplant it within the more difficult environment of Britain. It would seem though, that the nurture of Hinduism among the young and old alike, was not as great a problem as it is here. (18) It is this long-term process of nurture which is new to the Hindu communities and religious leaders. It is a combination of the aforementioned facts which has led towards the change in meaning

(14) TAMBS-LYCHE, 1975
(15) ibid
JACKSON, 1981
See pp. 60, 64; both the Sanatan Mandir and the A. P. Sanstha were established owing to the efforts of groups which consisted mainly of East African Asians.

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and importance of the Hindu temple. A process which seems
to have started in East Africa, is now continuing in Britain.

The Secretary of the Sanatan Mandir explained that,

"In Hinduism the temple has an important place, but
there is also decentralization of the temple, in
that each Hindu house has a small temple within it,
where members of the family meet and pray and carry
out daily worship. On some occasions we form a
small group." (19)

He went on to say that the practice of devotees meeting
together, or satsang, is very common. In East Africa people
met in the temple or in private houses for satsang, in small
groups. This practice is continued in Britain. However, the
secretary stated that, "where there are twelve to twenty
families, they will feel the need for a temple". (20)

In response to the question of whether he thought the temple
plays a different role in Britain from the role it tradition­
ally plays in India, the answer of the secretary was
affirmative. It was explained that in India the temples do
not represent the community. They do not have to, because
"there are different community and political groups" which

(17) See note 3.
(18) See the discussion on pp. 103-106 above.
(19) Personal communication - 30.6.87. See BOWEN (1981, 42)
for a description of a household shrine.
(20) Personal communication - 30.6.87.
fulfil these functions. (21) However, in Britain the temples are seen as a uniting factor (22) which does represent the Hindu communities, and "can speak with one voice" (23) in a way that the smaller caste group associations and satsang mandals cannot do. An important new role of the temple in Britain therefore, is as a representative of Hindus in general, which can communicate with the wider non-Hindu society and endorse shared values of the members.

As we see above, the temple, or representatives of the committee, can recognize the needs of the people it caters for, and set processes in motion to cater for these needs. The establishment of the Shishu-Kunj in 1974 was the fulfilment of an educational need. The temple also caters for social needs. As explained by a committee member, adults can suffer isolation and loneliness, but when they visit the temple they can meet together. "They can preserve their belief and find a familiar atmosphere in the temple". (24)

The committee member told of his own experience as an example. He lived in Leeds, where "there is a temple, but it is difficult to get to". Because of this

"many people think they will go to Leicester. When I retired, after living for twelve years in Leeds, I came to Leicester and bought a house .... very near to the temple". (25)

(21) ibid
(22) KING, 1984
(23) Personal communication - 30.6.87
The temple has become an institution where members not only sustain their cultural and religious heritage, they also receive support and affirmation of their identity in a "new" environment. The temple has become a focus for religious identity.

In a publication produced by the National Council of Hindu Temples (U.K.), under the section headed, "The Hindu Temple - Its Purpose and Function", it is stated that,

"although every Hindu home contains an altar, a place for personal worship, the temple holds a special place in the life of the people.... Worship in the temple is considered more beneficial than worship at home". (26)

When it is remembered that traditionally among Hindus, religious practice is a domestic matter, and communal worship is usually seen as secondary in importance, (27), the new significance and meaning given to the temple by Hindus in Britain is made clear. As Jackson states, "temple worship in the migrant situation ..... has a vital role to play in maintaining the community's identity". (28) Temple Hinduism in Britain has taken on a new significance, and this change has occurred owing to the new awareness and

(24) Personal communication - 29.6.87.
(25) ibid
self-consciousness of Hinduism as a religion among other
religions. (29) Many, particularly the women, continue to
worship at the home or domestic shrine. This aspect definitely
has not died out. However, the temple has become more
important in the socio-religious areas mentioned. It has
extended its function and developed social functions in
addition to its religious ones. (30)

A manifestation of the aforementioned self-awareness or self-
consciousness can be seen in the anxiety about the transmission
of religious and cultural ideals to the young people.
Traditionally in India, the temples are not directly concerned
with the religious nurture of children or young people. There
are no activities arranged in temples such as the Shishu-Kunj,
specifically for youngsters. (31) Religious teaching is also
excluded from the curriculum of state schools in India. (32)
Although the temples will not organize such activities,
tending to devote themselves to rituals and ceremonies,
different groups or organizations may establish a school or
activity for teaching Hinduism or Hindu scriptures. These
would be based on private donations. (33)

(29) See full discussion, pp. 52-58 above.
(30) KNOTT, 1986, 'Hinduism in Britain'.
(31) Personal communication with Dr. Wageshwari Devi -14.3.87.
    Personal communication with Swami Akhandanand Sagarji -
    29.5.87.
(33) Personal communication with the secretary - 30.6.87.
In India, Hinduism is more a way of life than a religion, and pervades the environment in which people live. Jackson describes the religious nurture of children in India as "natural and partly unconscious", being

"centred on the home, but fostered by many aspects of cultural life such as temple worship and festivals as well as street processions and religious dramas associated with the latter." (34)

Killingley offers similar sentiments when he describes children in India being brought up "in an informal, implicit way". (35) Jean Holm (36) points out that in India children learn by observation rather than by instruction, seeing religious practices taking place at the home shrine, and spending a large amount of time in the company of adults, hardly ever being excluded from activities. There are likely to be at least three generations in a household, so the youngsters will spend much time with their grandmother, whose job it is traditionally to tell religious stories.

As Jackson (37) explains, such exposure does not guarantee that children will necessarily grow up with a knowledge of the meaning of customary religious practices, or a clear understanding of their religion in general. In Britain however, Hindu youngsters have very restricted access to such

(34) JACKSON, 1985, 69.
(35) KILLINGLEY, 1984, 150.
(36) HOLM, 117-118.
(37) JACKSON, 1985, 69.
features as described above. They are exposed to many non-Hindu influences in Britain; often grandparents are not in this country, and for these and the reasons explained by the committee member in the conversation quoted above, (38) religious leaders, certainly at the Sanatan Mandir, are anxious that Hinduism be successfully perpetuated among the young. Steps have been taken formally to transmit Hinduism to the young within the temple setting. This formal transmission or nurture often takes the form of supplementary religious classes run specially for young people, organized by the temple committee and taking place in the temple building. (39) This is the case at the Sanatan Mandir, where the weekly Shishu-Kunj, meaning literally "children's group" in Sanskrit, meets on Sunday mornings.

Supplementary religious classes are not a new concept to Hindus in Britain. Although there are no such classes organized by temples in India, (40) similar classes were started in temples in East Africa, long before the Asians started to emigrate on a large scale. One such class was run by the woman who now runs the Shishu-Kunj at the Sanatan Mandir. She was in charge of instructing a group called the Gita Class, in Nairobi, Kenya, which was one of five such groups. The names of the other groups were the Shishu-Kunj,

(38) See note 3.
(39) JACKSON and NESBITT, 1986.
(40) See note 31 above.
The Gita Class took place within the building of the Shiva Temple, and the other activities took place at various other locations in Nairobi. All five groups were catering for the religious educational needs of the young people. The Gita Class was concerned with teaching the youngsters specifically about the Gita. The age range was from five to twenty-five years old, with the group being split into four separate classes according to age, each with a particular teacher.

There is no available information concerning what was taught to the other four groups, who ran them, or how these groups were started. However a brief summary of how the Gita Class was started in Nairobi is useful since it was the prototype for the Shishu-Kunj in Leicester, and is therefore connected to the history of how the Shishu-Kunj came to be started at the Sanatan Mandir.

In 1954 Swami Vitianand visited Nairobi, to give a series of discourses on the Bhagavad Gita. The sadhu was particularly interested in trying to encourage the children to learn the holy scripture, and he decided that an educational programme should be set up for the youngsters. Under his guidance five people (one of whom now runs the Shishu-Kunj in Leicester, Mrs. C.) studied the Bhagavad Gita and started the Gita Class after the sadhu returned to India.
At first the activity was not very popular. In 1962 Swami Akhandanand Sagarji visited Nairobi, and gave the activities much publicity, publicly blessing everyone who attended them. It was after this that the attendance of the class grew.

The Gita Class took place twice weekly, and sometimes more often, for example, if they were practising for something. The class held "annual programmes of celebrations, containing various things like raas and garba and Gita chants, and various dramatical (sic) programmes". (41)

The Shishu-Kunj was set up at the Sanatan Mandir in 1974. Mrs. C. arrived in Leicester in 1972 and regularly attended the Sanatan Mandir. In 1973 Swami Krishnanandji gave a lecture at the Mandir, and while he was there he met Mrs. C. whom he know from East Africa. He encouraged her to start her educational activities in Leicester, in her own house. Mrs. C. responded by starting the Gita Class in her own home, later in 1973. She taught the same things she had been teaching in Nairobi. Every Sunday thirty youngsters went to her house, to be taught about and from the Bhagavad Gita.

The temple had been established for four years before it was decided that a programme of religious education for the children and young people was needed. It had been discussed during the four years, but people were busy trying to

(41) Personal communication with Mrs. C. - 29.7.87.
organize the newly-established temple, and there was no time
to start a class. The secretary of the temple states that
the committee decided to start the Shishu-Kunj on account of
demand from the public;

"When you are in another country, there is a need
for retaining the culture, language and traditions.
This is what was being felt at the time. People
turned to the temple to do something because the
temple is the only place where people can get
together." (42)

The temple had a large building, and the resources to
organize an activity for youngsters which smaller associations,
such as caste group associations, would not have had. At
the Sanatan Mandir, the activity would also essentially be
provided for everyone, being open to all Hindus.

The secretary went on the explain that it was noticed that
other communities such as Sikhs and Muslims provide classes
for their young people. The aim of the Shishu-Kunj was
originally to teach the children "the religion, customs and
traditions". (43) The reason for having the activity in
the temple building was to encourage the youngsters to attend
the temple. It is believed that "religion is not just about
gaining information, it is also for practice". (44) Just
being in the temple is important and acts as a visual aid

(42) Personal communication - 30.6.87.
(43) ibid
(44) ibid
to learning for the young people. The temple surroundings, the sacred pictures and the images of the deity as well as the actions of the adults, all convey Hindu concepts. This is part of what Jackson and Nesbitt describe as the "hidden curriculum". (45)

It was a group of devotees who had lived in Nairobi and knew of Mrs. C. and her activities there, who suggested that she be asked to start those same activities at the temple. It was known that Mrs. C. taught the Bhagavad Gita, and it was believed that it would be beneficial to have the Gita classes in the temple.

Mrs. C. started what came to be called the Shishu-Kunj in 1974, with the thirty children who had already been attending the class in her home. It was scheduled for ten forty-five every Sunday morning, to start directly after the arti ceremony which takes place at ten o'clock on Sundays. Swami Krishnanand donated over one hundred copies of the Bhagavad Gita in English translation. Slowly the number of those attending rose to approximately one hundred and fifty at its peak about four years ago. Now there are usually around seventy youngsters present, although the attendance is not stable, and sometimes there are many more, and sometimes less.

(45) JACKSON and NESBITT, 1986, 27.
Now, almost fourteen years after the Shishu-Kunj was started, no-one is happy with the results. The original purpose of having a class in the temple, is not being fulfilled. Committee members are worried, and the secretary believes that the class is not serving the needs of the youngsters in the way originally intended, and proposals for changes are being considered. Mrs. C. the teacher of the Shishu-Kunj believes that, "the activities that are being run presently are not enough. It needs to expand". (46) A youth worker who was at one time very involved with the organization of the Shishu-Kunj believes that the activity is in decline, with the numbers of those attending falling slowly because the young people themselves are not satisfied. This leads to youngsters not wanting to attend the activity, and this worries their parents. The young people themselves have their own comments to make on the Shishu-Kunj. The whole question of why the class is not believed to be working in the way that it should, will be discussed in chapter six, after the actual activity has been examined.

To sum up, so far the history of the Shishu-Kunj has been examined, through a discussion of the wider issues of why formal religious nurture is felt to be necessary at the Sanatan Mandir when traditionally it has no part in temple life in India. This led to a discussion of how the whole concept of the Hindu temple has changed over the years in

(46) Personal communication - 29.7.87.
Britain, and how this process can be seen to have started in East Africa. The general attitude seems to be that life in East Africa was more conducive to being able to follow the traditional Hindu way of life, and to bring up children as Hindus. (47) There are believed to be many more pressures involved in being in a migrant situation in Britain as opposed to East Africa, and the children and young people are perceived as the ones who suffer most, living between two cultures. (48)

The worry of the older people and the leaders of religious institutions such as the Sanatan Mandir, is that the youngsters will lose their religious and cultural identity, never really getting the chance to learn about Hinduism. The Shishu-Kunj was set up to counteract this problem, and it has been running for many years. However, it is now believed to be inadequate. It does not serve the needs of the young people. No-one involved in the activity is content with the present situation, and plans are underway to make changes; to ensure that the younger generation will be

(47) WILLIAMS (1984, 179) supports this when he points out that before Independence in the East African territories, the "tripartite colonial system" was in operation. This led to the separation of Europeans, Asians and Africans. Each group established separate schools, hospitals and recreational facilities. This gave each group "some measure of freedom to pursue its own culture, language, religious beliefs and activities". One of the results was that among Gujaratis, religion functioned as one of many aspects of cultural identity.

(48) KING, 1984, 3.
successfully taught the "background to our religion, culture and way of living. To make them aware of and understand their parental and ancestral background". (49)

The A. P. Sanstha

The A. P. Sanstha is now turned to, and it will be seen that the history of the classes or young people's sabhas is peculiar to the sect; although the members of the temple, like those of the Sanatan Mandir, are mostly "East African Asians", and share the same history of immigration, resettlement and establishment of their particular temples. However, because the A. P. Sanstha is part of a large, thriving sectarian movement, (50) the history of its attempts at the religious nurture of its young members is quite distinctive.

The transmission of the religious ideals of the sect is given priority in the temple. As in the Sanatan Mandir, under the aims or objects in the constitution, is the

"advancement and propagation of the Hindu religion among its members and others",

except that in this case, it is to be

(49) Personal communication - 17.11.86.

(50) KING (1984,4) reports that the movement is the fastest growing group among the hundred different Hindu religious groups in Britain.
"with particular references (sic) to the teachings and principles of Lord Swaminarayan and Gunatitanand Swami as propounded by Bochasanwasi Shri Akshar Purushottam Sanstha, India." (51)

However, in this constitution, a list is given of how these objects are to be achieved; and one of the points reads, by "the provision of religious and recreational youth activities". (52)

Later in the same constitution there is a whole section devoted to the Youth Organization, which, as is stated, will be promoted by the Management Committee. The objects of the Youth Organization are listed, and include the advancement and propagation of the teachings and principles propounded by the sect, as well as "to run educational and language classes for its members". It continues;

"to participate and promote music, drama and folk dances and other social and cultural activities. To participate in and promote elocution and debating activities. To participate in and promote sports and recreational activities amongst its members. To liaise and participate in the activities of other Youth Organizations. To establish and promote a Volunteer Youth Force to assist the (sic) needy persons ...... " (53)

As can be seen then, the temple makes ample provision for the religious nurture of its young people, and as will be

(52) ibid, 2.
(53) ibid, 5.
seen in the next chapter, it tries hard to fulfil the above objectives.

The important point to note is that the same objectives will be printed within the constitutions of all temples belonging to the sect. The A. P. Sanstha in Leicester does not stand alone as a temple; it is part of the highly-organized, highly-motivated network of the sampradaya. When the secretary of the temple says, "there is more emphasis on the young people in the temple than on anyone else", this also means that there is more emphasis on young people within the sect as a whole, than on anyone else. The temple can never be viewed independently from the sect, since the temple never acts independently from the sect. Everything is sanctioned first by the headquarters in India. (54)

Because of the nature of the beliefs of the A. P. Sanstha, and its particular customs and practices, the temple in Leicester has not experienced, and is not experiencing those difficulties which, as explained above, are being faced by the Sanatan Mandir. The reference to "difficulties" applies not only to the anxieties about the religious nurture of the young people, and the general dissatisfaction with the current nurture programme; but also to the evolving nature of the Hindu temple which started in East Africa, and has continued in Britain.

(54) See pp. 67, 69, 70 above, for examples of the centralization of the Sanstha.
The religious leaders of the A. P. Sanstha, along with their counterparts in the Sanatan Mandir, believe that the situation is very different in England from the way it was in either East Africa or India, and they identify much the same causes. However, they seem more confident in their nurture programme, and more able in their efforts to get young people interested in their religion. Although they identify an "urgent sort of need because of the generation gap", (55) there is much confidence that the gap can be bridged, and much energy directed towards bridging it. This confidence comes from the knowledge that they are carrying out the wishes of their religious leader, Pramukh Swami, (56) and the work that was started by the previous leader, Yogiji Maharaj, who set up and promoted the Youth Organization. This knowledge gives them, "the power, self-assurance and ability necessary to perform the tasks required," and helps to "relieve them of anxieties," as Williams explains. (57)

The fact that there is so much contact with the sect in India, and that Pramukh Swami is the ultimate authority both spiritually and administratively, is an important factor. To carry out the wishes or agna of Pramukh Swami is to carry out the wishes of God. As Williams writes, this

(55) Personal communication with the secretary - 11.10.87
(56) See pp. 38-41 for the full discussion of the place of the spiritual leader within the philosophy of the Sanstha.
(57) WILLIAMS, 1986, 335.
"process places the immigrant in touch with 'home' and with the authority figure who can facilitate the adaption of traditions and practices from India to the new situation in England.... Thus, it is part of a valuable religious mechanism for adaption and adjustment for members of the first generation of immigrants." (58)

It was Pramukh Swami who told the temple committee in 1977 that they should start classes for the young people as soon as possible, so that the children would be brought up within the fellowship from a very early age.

The transition from living in East Africa or India, to living in England, has been made easier then, with regard to religious nurture, in two ways. Firstly, by starting youth activities at the temple, the members have followed the direct orders of Pramukh Swami. Therefore there is confidence that what they are doing is right. Secondly, the sect has different traditions and customs from mainstream Hinduism; temple worship and the role of the temple has a different significance. Youth activities are an extremely important part of temple life in India, having originated from India during the time of Yogiji Maharaj, and extended to the East African territories. The Youth Organization has evolved simultaneously in India and abroad, and has given the overseas temples a firm base and strong role model from which to work.

Temple worship took on a new importance from the time of Sahajanand Swami. For example, he introduced conventions or

(58) ibid., 339.
Samaiyas (59) which were held twice yearly, where devotees and sadhus gather, to worship together and hold religious discourses. This practice has continued, and samaiyas have become more frequent. In the A. P. Sanstha in Leicester most festivals are celebrated in a congregational way, in the form of samaiyas. This is true of the sect in general.

Sahajanand Swami started a temple building programme, constructing six in his lifetime. These temples became the home of resident ascetics, needing management and administration. Today in India, large prosperous temples are found in the cities, with temple compounds holding residence halls for sadhus, and pilgrims who travel to the temples at festival times. Large numbers of people daily crowd into the temple for darshan of the images, and the temples have become so prosperous that some of them support schools, colleges, medical clinics and libraries, as well as the temples and residence halls themselves.

The A. P. Sanstha, having separated from the main Swaminarayan sect, gave the role of the temple even more significance. Not only is the temple the centre of spiritual activity, but it has become the centre for social and propagational activity. Two of the listed disciplines of the Sanstha are to worship daily, and to visit the temple at least once a day. (60)

(59) PAREKH.

(60) "The Handbook of the Celebrations of the Bi-Centenary of Lord Swaminarayan", 9.

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The temples provide residence for the sadhus. The sect also produces its own publications, such as sacred texts, biographies of its religious leaders, text books for the religious courses leading to examinations and commentaries on sacred texts. As well as this, it publishes its own periodicals, which include "Swaminarayan Bliss Personified" (monthly in English), "Swaminarayan Prakash" (monthly in Gujarati), "Swaminarayan Satsang Patrika" (bi-weekly in Gujarati), "Premvati" (quarterly in Gujarati) and "Nilkanth" (monthly in Gujarati). The publication office is given the title "Swaminarayan Akshar Pith"; the printing takes place in Ahmedabad, and all the work is undertaken by the sadhus and bhagats.

The sect has built and continues to sponsor a Residential High School in Gondal and a hostel for college students in Vallabh Vidyanagar, and it gives scholarships to promising students. There are a number of Schools of Sanskrit Studies run by the sect, in Bombay, Sarangpur and Ahmedabad. Music and Fine Arts Centres are run in Bombay, Ahmedabad, Sarangpur and Gondal. A number of libraries have been built, and a "School of Philosophy" instituted in the Shree Akshar Purushottam Temple in Ahmedabad, in which a number of sadhus study.

The Sanstha is proud of its youth activities which take place "at hundreds of centres with a membership of fifteen thousand". (61) The aim of these activities is "to remove superstitions

(61) ibid.
and addictions, to promote cultural activity, to remove illiteracy, to conduct libraries, to resurrect moral values". (62) Sunday meetings are a regular feature at all the centres, which are usually temples, where prayers and discourses are held, and guidelines are given. Examinations are held every year, with the syllabus' concentrating on the study of the biographies of important personalities in the Sanstha, and on the philosophy of the Sanstha. The young people are encouraged to sit these examinations "in India as well as in foreign countries, thus, the new generation remains well-informed with the fundamentals of the religion". (63).

Video tapes have been made and are circulated within the Sanstha, such as the documentary on the life and achievements of Lord Swaminarayan, and the video tape made about the Cultural Festival of India at Alexandra Palace in 1985. Sermons of Yogiji Maharaj and Pramukh Swami have been tape recorded, as well as sermons by eminent sadhus. Tape recordings have also been made of kirtans sung both in Gujarati and Hindi, and this activity is expanding. These video and cassette tapes are sent to temples in India and abroad, and are sold to devotees.

The video tapes are also sometimes used to explain the religion to those outside the Sanstha. For example, the video

(62) ibid.
(63) ibid., 10.
tape on the life and achievements of Lord Swaminarayan was once shown to a group of visiting council workers taking part in a scheme called "Know Your Neighbour".

It is apparent that the Sanstha is a highly-organized institution which gives the temples within its fold a new dimension and role, quite different from the traditional concept of a Hindu temple. (64) However, the Sanstha is a recent institution, which has been constantly evolving since its inception at the beginning of this century. The Sanstha describes itself as having "the fervour of freshness and originality", (65) and the indisputable fervour and energy which it shows now, seems to have been a characteristic of the institution since the days of Shastriji Maharaj, and to have increased as the movement has expanded.

As has been described,(66) Swami Shree Yagnapurushdas, known as Shastriji Maharaj, left the main Swaminarayan sect to form his own group. The main reason for the secession was a doctrinal issue, but an additional reason was that the sadhu found fault with the lax behaviour of some sadhus in the Vadtal diocese. The new sect which emerged with Shastriji Maharaj as its spiritual head was a reforming sect, re-instituting, for the sadhus, strict observance of the rules

(64) See the sentiments of the secretary of the Sanatan Mandir quoted on p. 109, which are backed up by KNOTT on p. 111 above.


(66) See p. 37 above.
regarding money, women and ritual observances. During the lifetime of Shastriji Maharaj, five main temples were built at his instruction.

The new sect grew extremely quickly. From six sadhus when the schism first occurred, the number had risen to approximately fifty by the time of Shastriji Maharaj's death in 1951. (67) This would seem proof of its vitality and dynamism. It managed to survive the split with the parent group, in spite of radical doctrinal differences, a very small following at first, and a long and bitter court case involving a suit filed against Shastriji Maharaj and the A. P. Sanstha by the Acharya of Vadtal. (68)

As suggested (69), the role of most traditional or mainstream Hindu temples has only started to change since the "diaspora", with the temple acquiring a new significance as "an important centre and meeting place for an ethnic or religious minority", so helping "to express and enforce a separate religious and cultural identity". (70). Thus the temple acquires a new function which is unnecessary in India.

However, as is apparent, the main Swaminarayan sect originally had to forge an identity for itself within the

(67) WILLIAMS, 1984, 47.
(68) For further details see WILLIAMS, 1984, 47 ff.
(69) See pp. 111-112 above.
(70) KING, 1984, 6.
vast Hindu tradition, to be visible, as a separate sect or sampradaya, to other Hindus and non-Hindus alike. The A. P. Sanstha had to go even further and make itself identifiable in its status as separate and distinct from the main Swaminarayan sect with whom it shares many beliefs. Therefore, from its inception, the institution and its temples have had to fulfil the function of expressing and enforcing a separate religious identity. In East Africa and Britain the temples were formed with this in-built characteristic. The new dimension added outside India is that as well as reinforcing a separate religious identity, the temples also reinforce a separate cultural identity.

The great period of growth for the A. P. Sanstha actually started under the spiritual leadership of Yogiji Maharaj and continues under that of Pramukh Swami. Most of the social, propagational and recreational activities mentioned above (71) have been established since 1951 when Yogiji Maharaj took over as spiritual leader of the Sanstha. It is possible that such activities were established, or at least given an impetus, because the Sanstha was so successful in recruiting members and establishing temples in East Africa.

In the first quarter of this century, many followers of the main Swaminarayan sect lived in East Africa, continuing their religious activity in their homes. They started to meet in

(71) See pp. 125-129 above.
each other's homes after various individuals had made visits to India and became inspired by meeting the religious leaders and sadhus. One young man became inspired by Shastriji Maharaj during a visit to India, and the growth of the A. P. Sanstha in East Africa is generally attributed to his untiring efforts in encouraging his fellow workers on the railway to follow the dictates and rituals of the Sanstha. (72)

By 1932 regular Sunday evening meetings had begun to be held for the worship of Akshar and Purushottam, in private homes. In these early days most devotees worked on the railway, and as they were transferred throughout Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda, so the Sanstha spread. Letters were written by religious leaders of both the main sect and the A. P. Sanstha, and these were circulated among devotees. (73) The first temple on the continent was the Swaminarayan Temple in Nairobi, built in 1945, used by all branches of the Swaminarayan tradition, who joined together in building it and for worship in it.

In 1950, Shastriji Maharaj instructed the devotees in East Africa to hold separate meetings, and the first A. P. Sanstha temple was built in Mombasa and consecrated by Yogiji Maharaj when he visited East Africa in 1955. This visit spurred the growth of the Sanstha, and within the next fifteen years,

(72) WILLIAMS, 1984, 175.
(73) ibid., 176-177
several other temples were constructed. (74) Nine temples were eventually established in East Africa. Yogiji Maharaj visited the African continent again in 1960 and for the last time in 1970. The A. P. Sanstha organized a central committee in Mombasa in 1952, which co-ordinated the activities of the Sanstha in East Africa. By the time of Yogiji Maharaj's last visit, a strong and effective lay leadership had developed, which fulfilled the functions carried out by the sadhus in India. (75)

This lay leadership was actively encouraged by Yogiji Maharaj, because without it the Sanstha in East Africa could not function as part of the sect in India. The sadhus in India are very involved with the day-to-day running of the temples and the institution in general, but they are not allowed to reside outside India. (76) Therefore, if the sect is to flourish outside India, lay members have to take on the duties of the sadhus, such as running the temples and attending to the murtis in the temples, and giving religious discourses at meetings and samaiyas.

As is stated above, one can speculate in the absence of firm evidence that the establishment of many of the social and propagational activities of the Sanstha was a response to the

(74) ibid., 177.
(75) ibid., 189.
(76) ibid.
needs of the growing fellowship abroad. A clear example is the tape recording of speeches given by the religious leaders and eminent sadhus, and their distribution for sale to all the temples; another is the publication and distribution of periodicals and books. At least it is possible to say that once these activities were started, they became an important part of religious life for devotees living abroad, and these activities have definitely developed because of the need of the overseas community of believers. For example, the publication entitled "Swaminarayan Bliss Personified" was started under the instruction of Pramukh Swami in 1974. It is written in English, catering for young people in the Sanstha who live abroad. This publication and others benefit from the knowledge of sadhus who have been educated perhaps at one of the Schools run by the sect in India. (77)

One of the activities that can be seen to have developed and flourished because of the need of the overseas community of devotees is the Youth Organization. A history of the Youth Organization to its establishment at the Leicester temple, makes clear the tradition to which the Leicester activities belong, and shows how the Youth Organization has evolved to facilitate the needs of the young people. Under the spiritual leadership of Shastriji Maharaj, weekly satsang meetings of devotees at the temples were encouraged. Yogiji Maharaj decided that young men should have their own weekly meetings. It was in 1952 that Yogiji Maharaj instructed young male

(77) See p. 127 above.
devotees in Bombay to begin a youth organization with regular Sunday meetings. The Youth Organization has grown from that beginning, and from that original group in Bombay, several university students and graduates entered the corpus of sadhus. In fact the Youth Organization has been, and continues to be, the main recruitment area for new sadhus, as well as for lay leaders of the Sanstha.

A parallel initiative to the Youth Organization, was the practice, begun by Yogiji Maharaj, of having young men spend their school and university holidays with him, travelling in the villages, and observing festivals in the main temples. Many of these young men returned to their homes or university towns at the end of the holidays and formed branches of the Youth Organization. Many finished their education and took up the ascetic life. Yogiji Maharaj seems to have had a rapport with young people, and to have been able effectively to present the beliefs of the Sanstha to them. Williams states that many sadhus tell of how they accepted Yogiji Maharaj's challenge to become sadhus because "they were drawn to him 'as an idol of love' during these vacation visits". (78) Pramukh Swami continues this practice, and young men from India and abroad often spend part of their holidays with him.

When Yogiji Maharaj visited East Africa in 1955, he encouraged the devotees to start youth organization activities, similar to those in India. He kept a personal record of each

(78) WILLIAMS, 1984, 95.
individual youth group, corresponding with them regularly. It took less than ten years for Yogiji Maharaj to form groups of dedicated youths, or yuvuk mandals in various parts of Gujarat and East Africa. This was aided by the publication of the monthly "Swaminarayan Prakash" which contains articles and stories of interest, and the "Swaminarayan Satsang Patrika", which provides news regarding the activities of the spiritual leader and members of the various temples, as well as instructions to enable devotees to conduct regular Sunday meetings. These two publications were distributed to temples in India and East Africa.

During those ten years, groups for younger boys were also established, forming the Bal Mandal. Religious instruction was provided for the boys, who went up to the age of fifteen. Members of both the bal mandals and yuvuk mandals were encouraged to get involved with the general activities of the temple, for example, by taking part in the samaiyas, by staging dramas, giving speeches or performing dances. They were also encouraged to participate in the asanas, such as fasting, as referred to in the Shikshapatri (vv. 76-79). The young people in the Sanstha are encouraged to fast on the appropriate days, and to take on additional religious duties during the month of Shravan.

As explained by the secretary of the Leicester temple, the development of the Youth Organization in East Africa followed the development of the Youth Organization in India.
Yuvuk and bal mandals were established in East Africa, although the content of the yuvuk weekly sabha is slightly different in England from how it was in East Africa. The material has not changed, but its presentation has.

"there was a weekly sabha just as there is here, but it was more academic ..... then, illustrations were given from the classical Indian sacred books such as the Ramayana ..... but now we can't do that, they won't understand. They need illustrations of today, not of the ancient scriptures." (79)

In East Africa, although things were much the same for the Youth Organization as they were in India; in Britain, for the same reasons as examined when discussing the Sanatan Mandir, (80) the children grow up in what is much more of a migrant situation, and know less about their religion than their parents did. Therefore extra measures have to be taken to make sure that religious ideals are transmitted to the younger generation. In the case of the A. P. Sanstha, by the time emigration started on a large scale in the mid-sixties, it was a flourishing organization, used to existing with a large overseas community of devotees, and the Youth Organization was firmly established as a vital part of the Sanstha.

In Britain, the Youth Organization was formed with the establishment of the first A. P. Sanstha temple, in London in

(79) Personal communication with the secretary - 11.10.87.
(80) See pp. 103-106 above.
1970. The Bal Mandal was established in 1974. In Leicester the Youth Organization was started in 1977, once the images were installed in the Doncaster Road temple. (81) There were originally only eight young men, with any younger children joining in with their sabhas. When the group expanded, it split into two separate groups, forming the yuvuk and bal mandals.

The Youth Organization in Britain was based on the youth activities in East Africa and India. However, the Youth Organization soon under-went modification in Britain, as well as within the sampradaya generally. This modification was a direct response to the situation in which devotees found themselves in both Britain and America. The important point is that the response did not come from individual temples, but from the headquarters of the sampradaya in India, and the modifications were instituted within the Sanstha as a whole. This was possible for various reasons: first, many young men who had grown up in East Africa, (a large percentage of them very highly educated), had taken the vows of asceticism. These sadhus understood at least some of the problems and pressures involved with living and growing up outside India. (82) Secondly, the Sanstha has an extremely

(81) See p. 62 above.

(82) WILLIAMS (1984, 182) notes that "the recruitment of western educated and English speaking young men from East Africa has given the Akshar Purushottam Sanstha a well-trained corps of sadhus equipped to establish contact with devotees in East Africa, Great Britain and the United states".
efficient communication network, and individual temples, if not individual members, keep in close contact with the spiritual leader. (83) Therefore any difficulties would quickly come to the attention of the religious leaders in India. Thirdly, being used to having such a large number of devotees living overseas, the Sanstha in India would be used to dealing with any problems caused by this, and would be likely to respond as far as possible to their needs.

The measures undertaken by the Sanstha as a response to the difficulties of devotees in Britain and America, were put into practice throughout the sampradaya. The example of the measures taken, clearly show how the spiritual leader is capable of facilitating the adaptation of the traditions and practices of the Sanstha, as necessary. One of the first measures, mentioned above, was the publication of the "Swaminarayan Bliss Personified" which began in 1974. The "Bliss" as it is commonly called, was, and is, very similar in content to "Swaminarayan Prakash", containing interesting articles and stories connected to the beliefs of the Sanstha; the only major difference is that the "Bliss" is written in English and is obviously directed at those living outside India.

The fact that the "Bliss" is published in English highlights a problem. Many of the young people brought up in Britain, or even those who finished most of their education

(83) See pp. 43-44 above.
in East Africa before arriving in Britain, have a very low standard of Gujarati. Most can speak at least basic Gujarati, but they require formal instruction in reading and writing the language. (84) While within the Sanstha, the importance of Gujarati is stressed, the "Bliss" is produced, being published quarterly at first, but then monthly.

A set of religious primers providing the basis for annual graded examinations were published in 1974 also, with the first four sets of books in English, and the last in Gujarati. These examination books contain teachings on the history and doctrine of the Sanstha. The annual examinations were introduced in 1975.

There was a general move towards translating Sanstha literature into English. (85) In 1977 an English edition of both the Vachanamritam and the Shikshapatri was published. Since then numerous books and pamphlets have been published in English, including a translation of some of the important spiritual discourses of Gunatitanand Swami, a profile of Gunatitanand Swami, booklets on Lord Swaminarayan as a social reformer; and the teachings of Lord Swaminarayan on the subject of meditation; and a booklet on the concept of aksharbrahman in the philosophy of Lord Swaminarayan.

(84) POCOCK (1976) discusses this problem.

(85) ibid.
One interesting adaptation or innovation was the establishment of the Yukti Mandal in 1984, and the Balika Mandal a year later. The yuktis or young women (sixteen to thirty-five years old) split from the older women or mahilas in Leicester to hold their own Sunday meetings and separate activities in 1984. Before that, no special activities had been provided for the yuktis; they had joined with the older women in worship.

A yukti mandal had been established in the London temple before this, and in some temples in India. However there is little information as to exactly how or where they were first introduced. The secretary of the Leicester temple believes that yukti mandals started outside India;

"There have been separate ladies activities in the temples in India since the movement started. So the idea could have been adapted. It is difficult to say exactly where it started, but I feel inclined to say abroad; because here there is that urgent sort of need because of the generation gap." (86)

The concept of yukti mandals is new; it is a response to new needs. They are now an important part of the Sanstha, with their activities based on those of the yuvuk mandals.

The Balika Mandal in Leicester was the first in Britain. They are found in India, having been established at approximately the same time, but it is uncertain whether they

(86) Personal communication with the secretary - 11.10.87.
originated in this country or the Indian subcontinent. In Leicester it was the balikas themselves (young girls under sixteen) who requested that they have separate sabhas from the yuktis. Originally there was a mixed sabha, but the balikas complained that they were bored and did not understand most of the proceedings. Pramukh Swami was consulted, and agreed that a balika class should be started, which would follow the same syllabus as the Bal Mandal. This class has now been running successfully for two years.

Such are the examples of the way the Sanstha as a whole has adapted to meet the needs of its devotees living outside India. Unlike in the case of the Sanatan Mandir, the process of adaptation has been relatively easy, because of the nature of the Sanstha and the firm support offered by it.

The A. P. Sanstha in Leicester holds a yuvuk sabha on Saturday evening, balak classes on Sunday morning and the balika class and yukti sabha on Sunday afternoon. The six balak teachers are yuvuks and the balika teacher is a yukti. The yuvuk sabha is largely organized by the yuvuks themselves, although there are always older men present, who often take an active part. The yuktis also largely organize their own sabha, but there is a mahila always present, who explains the Vachanamritam and generally facilitates.

The aims of the Youth Organization in Leicester, as set out in a leaflet produced by the temple, (87) are to save young

(87) A. P. Sanstha, 'Our Aims'
people from "the degeneration of moral, ethical and spiritual values". The main aim of both the yuvuk and bal mandais, is "to inculcate moral, cultural and religious values in young people". The leaflet provides general information about the activities of the Yuvuk Mandal and the Bal Mandal.

Many of the youngsters who attend the weekly classes were not born into the religion, and sometimes the parents of such youngsters never go into the temple except to take their offspring to, or pick them up from, the weekly activities. Either the children (or the young people) hear about the activities from friends who attend, and are given permission by their parents to attend; or the parents themselves hear good reports of the activities, and bring their offspring to the temple. It is often the case that the parents eventually become drawn into the temple activities, perhaps even becoming satsangis. This gives an indication of the success of the youth activities at the A. P. Sanstha in Leicester.

Compared to the reaction of the leaders of the Sanatan Mandir to the question of how effective the classes for young people are believed to be, or whether the objectives of the classes are being fulfilled, the reaction at the A. P. Sanstha is very positive. The secretary sees the classes as a long-term commitment, upon which a start has been made, "even by getting the young people into the temple". (88)

(88) Personal communication with the secretary - 22.11.86.
The attitude towards the religious education of the young people is more relaxed at the A. P. Sanstha than it is at the Sanatan Mandir. There is much anxiety at the mainstream temple; it is realized that the activities are not fulfilling their original objectives, and therefore need to be changed. The problem they face is in deciding upon what changes to make. This is part of the reason why the National Council of Hindu Temples (U.K.) was formed, to help individual temples to make decisions on difficult issues, so relieving some of the tensions of existing as a temple alone.

The A. P. Sanstha in Leicester is part of an international Sanstha, which is capable of evolving and adapting as a whole to meet new needs in new situations. The temple leaders believe that the Youth Organization has made a start in trying to achieve the aims set out for it. However, the anxiety over what measures should be taken to improve things is absent, since it is known that the wishes of Pramukh Swami are being fulfilled in what they do, and that the Sanstha is constantly evolving to cope with new situations. The important fact is that the Sanstha as a whole evolves. An example is that in India, temples are establishing premvati mandals, which cater for young married women who are not old enough to join the mahilas, and not young enough to join the yuktis. A need for a new mandal has been recognized, because many such young women have children which they have to take to the sabhas with them and which the younger yuktis find a source of distraction. This has not been started in Britain yet, although the London temple is soon to institute it, and
in Leicester it is a popular idea.

From what has been discussed in this chapter, the differences between the two temples with regard to the establishment of weekly classes or sabhas for young people, has been made clear. The history of religious classes in the two traditions has been examined, emphasizing the different situations each temple has to face. The degree of success in fulfilling the desired aims of the activities has been shown to be very differently estimated at the two temples. The reasons for this will be discussed more fully in the last chapter. First the activities themselves will be examined in detail.
CHAPTER FOUR

FORMAL RELIGIOUS NURTURE IN THE
BOCHASANWASI SHREE AKSHAR PURUSHOTTAM SANSTHA

There are four separate groups which have weekly classes or sabhas: the yuvuks, or young men between the ages of fifteen and thirty-five; the balaks, or boys between the ages of five and fifteen; the yuktis, or young women between fifteen and thirty-five; and the balikas, or girls between five and fifteen. Although all four groups will be mentioned, it is the yuvuks and yuktis who will be discussed in detail.

The following discussion is in two parts. First the classes or sabhas will be examined. Secondly, other forms of formal religious nurture will be examined, apart from that which takes place in the classes.

The Classes

Separation of the sexes is an important feature. The yuvuks and yuktis have separate meetings, as do the balaks and balikas. The Youth Organization is synonymous with the Yuvuk Mandal. However, although the yuktis are in the same age range as the yuvuks, they have not been incorporated into the Youth Organization since the formation of the Yukti Mandal, and such a fusion will never take place. The Youth Organization was established by Yogiji Maharaj (1) specifically for young men, and as the secretary of the temple says of the

(1) See pp. 134-135 above.
yuvuks and yuktis,

"age group wise we feel they are the same. Yet they are never going to work together. That is the thing. Technically they are all the same because they are the same group, but when we come to the way that we work we have to make sure there is no mixing at all." (2)

The importance of this separation comes from two direct commands of Lord Swaminarayan, found in the Shikshapatri (vv. 34, 40). As Pocock (3) points out, Sahajanand Swami laid considerable stress on the separation of the sexes in the temple, and this is still a feature of major importance in the Sanstha today. (4)

When Pocock (5) wrote his article on the A. P. Sanstha in 1976, the yukti and balika mandais had not then been established. Pocock wrote that the religious instruction of the girls was not quite neglected,

"because this goes on in the home and in such circumstances as women meet together; it does not mean however that instruction for girls is not seen as being of major importance or as important as the instruction of boys. To the extent that both Bal Mandal and Yuvuk Mandal provide elementary instruction in reading and writing Gujarati, the girls are likely to miss out on this entirely." (6)

(2) Personal communication - 11.10.87.
(3) POCOCK, 1976, 355.
(4) BAROT (1981, 251-252) discusses the separation of the sexes in the Shree Swaminarayan Siddhanta Sajivan Mandal.
(5) POCOCK, 1976.
(6) ibid., 355.
Now, with the establishment of yukti and balika mandals, this is no longer the case. Young females now have their own activities, and the balika class is taught Gujarati. However, the females are very much left to organize their own activities. The two mandals in Leicester were formed largely owing to the demand of the females themselves, and they continue to exist because of the enthusiasm and energy of their members. The balika teacher uses the balak syllabus book as a guide for her classes. The yukti sabha is modelled on the activities that take place in the yuvuk sabha.

Much of what Pocock wrote is now out of date, although it does seem as though religious instruction for females, now provided in the temple setting, is still not considered as important as the instruction of males. The explanation for this attitude given by Pocock still seems relevant, in that it is associated with the unofficial but prevailing view about the relation between the Sanstha and marriage;

"the Sanstha is not endogamous and inevitably girls are married to non-Sanstha members. While it is piously hoped that they will continue to practise their beliefs, and even convert their husbands and children, there is no doubt that the older custom that a woman should follow the religion of her husband is still respected. " (7)

This explanation is still relevant, but the young women themselves are starting to object to the fact that there is a great possibility that they will marry non-Sanstha members.

(7) ibid.

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A group of yuktis at the Leicester temple have written to Pramukh Swami, telling him of their worries. The spiritual leader replied, writing that

"he thought it would be alright to marry within the religion and outside the caste .... It is very difficult though, because parents and older people want to stick to traditions, so there are still only a few marriages outside the caste and inside the religion." (8)

The separation of the sexes within the temple is linked to the ideal of Brahmacarya, or celibacy, as practised by the sadhus of the Sanstha, and Pramukh Swami, the perfect example of celibacy. By following the rule of separation within the temple, one is carrying out the wishes of Lord Swaminarayan and Pramukh Swami, as well as following their example. Observance of these rules by the young people is extremely strict. The yuvuks held their weekly sabha in the main shrine room until recently. Early in 1987, drama practices were held in the main hall on Saturday afternoons, in preparation for a forthcoming women's shibir. After the rehearsals, several yuktis would enter the main shrine room and sit at the back, listening to the yuvuk sabha while waiting for lifts home. This was objected to by some of the yuvuks, and the issue was raised in a committee meeting. All females were banned from attending the yuvuk sabhas, and the activity was moved to the second shrine room to be totally private.

(8) Personal communication with a yukti - 22.11.86.
In autumn 1987 a notice was read out in both the yuvuk and yukti sabhas, stating that the rule of separation within the temple must be firmly adhered to, as it had been noticed that the rule was not being properly followed. The notice went on to say that whenever a yukti and a yuvuk talked to one another, a peer, or an adult should be present. All within the sabha were in agreement with this, admitting that behaviour had been getting lax.

Having discussed the separation of the sexes within the temple, an examination of the classes now follows. The detailed arrangement of the balak classes will be discussed first, since many of those who attend the yuvuk sabha have been balaks, and there are certain basic things that balaks are expected to know before entering the yuvuk sabha.

The balak classes (and they are classes rather than meetings or sabhas) take place on Sunday mornings at eleven o'clock. There are six teachers and four separate classes, which are held in four rooms on the second and third floors of the building. Each of the rooms has a small shrine, and before every class, deva is performed, incense sticks are lit and a har is put on the forehead of each murti. This is usually performed by a balak.

The first class is for five to nine year olds; the second class is for nine to thirteen year olds; the next class being for thirteen to fifteen year olds. The final class
caters for those who, irrespective of age, have been attending the classes for many years and therefore have a good understanding of the basic tenets of the Sanstha.

There is an average attendance of sixty balaks each week, and a register of those attending is kept. The six teachers form the Bal Mandal Sanchalak, and they meet once a month to discuss progress, and to plan for the forthcoming month. The sanchalaks try to visit the parents of each balak in their homes at least twice a year, to report on the progress of the child, and to encourage the parents to help their child both with school work and with what is learnt at the temple. All school reports are given to the sanchalaks, and annual prizes are given out to the best school pupils, as well as to the best balaks. These include prizes for the highest achievers as well as for the hard workers. All-round education is stressed in the temple, with the balaks often being told by their teachers that "education and religion are parallel".

Most of the balaks are not born into the Sanstha; they either came to the classes for the first time with friends, or because their parents had heard of the classes. (9) When the boys first start attending, most know very little about the A. P. Sanstha, or Hinduism in general. (10) Of

(9) See p. 143 above.
(10) Personal communication with a sanchalak - 27.4.86.
those who start attending, approximately 80% speak English, and most speak Gujarati, although very few can read or write Gujarati. Even the spoken Gujarati is in general very basic, and if the children are of school age, the English is much more fluent than the Gujarati. (11)

Considerable stress is laid upon the teaching of Gujarati in the temple. It is taught to both balaks and balikas, and by the time they are yuvuks and yuktis, Gujarati is expected to be used at all times within the temple, specifically during sabhas. It is considered of vital importance that the young people come to be able to speak and read Gujarati fairly fluently, since the sacred scriptures, major publications and rituals and doctrines of the Sanstha, are in Gujarati. As the secretary explained,

"there are translations but they are not the same. I can read a passage from the Vachanamritam in English and I will be able to understand it. But when I read that same passage in Gujarati, suddenly the meaning becomes absolutely clear. The scriptures in Gujarati speak to you in a way the translation never can." (12)

Two strategies are in use in the Sanstha, to try to overcome the problem of decreasing standards of Gujarati among the young. The first is the translation of certain sacred texts

(11) WILLIAMS (1984, 190 ff) discusses the standard of English and Gujarati among Bal Mandal members.

(12) Personal communication - 22.10.87. POCOCK (1976, 348) discusses the problem of decreasing standards of Gujarati among the young within the Sanstha.
and literature of the Sanstha into English. (13) This however, is difficult, as translation is more than the translation of words; it involves interpretation, "and especially so in this case where the doctrine involves terms and concepts based on a world-view foreign to that of the host culture". (14) The translations are of uneven quality; in some cases the standard of English being of a much lower standard than that of the young people using the books. (15)

The second strategy, which works alongside the first, is the provision of Gujarati lessons within the classes run by the temples. The hope is that in the future, through learning Gujarati, the young people will have access to the sacred scriptures, the rituals and the publications in Gujarati. (16) There are two teachers in the Bal Mandal in Leicester, available specifically to teach Gujarati. (17) The whole class takes place as far as possible in Gujarati, using English when necessary for explanation, but half an hour is set aside each week for Gujarati lessons, where the boys learn to read and write it.

(13) See p. 140 above.
(14) WILLIAMS, 1984, 191.
(15) POCOCK (1976) discusses this in detail. It has also been noted in this research, but it would be invidious to add further examples.
(16) BAROT (1981, 331 ff.) discusses the need for Gujarati classes for the young in the Shree Swaminarayan Siddhanta Sajivan Mandal.
The sanchalaks attempt to do two things in the classes. The first is to teach the boys about their religion, trying to relate everything to wider world issues, so broadly teaching the children moral values. The second is to teach the boys Gujarati. Between eleven o'clock and twelve-fifteen the main "religious" teaching takes place. For the next fifteen minutes the arti ceremony is performed, and all the boys join in. From twelve-thirty until one o'clock the boys are taught Gujarati. Then they go to the dining hall where they are provided with a full traditional meal, cooked either by mahilas or yuktis.

A weekly sabha syllabus for the Bal Mandal was prepared by the London temple in 1980. In the preface it states that

"This booklet has been prepared so that the sabha can be conducted more easily..... It is our earnest desire that all sanchalaks shall conduct the sabha as per this booklet." (18)

Before this booklet was prepared there was no official syllabus, and sanchalaks taught the balaks what they thought was necessary. The syllabus book is self explanatory, setting out the basic devotional necessities for the children to become familiar with, such as jay naad, various dhoons and prathanas, dhyan, stuti, arti and thals. It states

(18) A. P. Sanstha, "Bal Satsang".

See pp. 43-44, 67, 69, 70 above, for various other examples of the centralized nature of the Sanstha.
that a kirtan or kirtans should be sung each week by a balak or balaks, and if nobody knows how to sing a kirtan, then a tape recording of kirtans should be brought to the class and listened to, and so learnt this way. It states that Swami ni vats should be learnt regularly, according to a booklet prepared by the London temple, entitled "Swami ni Vato". Also, shlokas should be taught according to the booklet "Shlokas" prepared by the London temple.

Apart from the above, a thirteen-fold pledge must be learnt and said regularly, including,

"we shall never steal, ...... tell a lie, ...... eat out in a hotel. We shall always obey out parents. We shall never quarrel over trifles, ...... drink unfiltered water or milk. We will shun bad company and keep away from addicts. We shall always tell the truth, ...... respect our elders, ...... worship God, ...... be studious, ...... attend our Bal Mandal meetings. We shall always obey our Guru." (19)

According to the booklet, there should be Gujarati language teaching, and a quiz should be prepared for at least every two months. Guidelines are given for competitions and games, as well as for telling stories, which should be based on the events of the Ramayana, Mahabharata, the life of Lord Swaminarayan, the guru-parampara, and the sadhus and hari bhaktas in the Sanstha. Readings are to be taken from a long list of children's publications of the Sanstha, which includes many examination books.

Suggested questions to ask the balaks are given under headings, including "Name Series", which involves asking for the former names of members of the guru-parampara before they became spiritual leaders of the Sanstha. Another heading is "Birth Dates", which contains questions on the dates of birth of all the spiritual leaders. A large section of the booklet comes under the heading of "General Knowledge", which contains miscellaneous pieces of information about the Sanstha, which it is believed should be part of the basic knowledge and vocabulary of a balak by the time he becomes a yuvuk. This section contains sub-headings and information concerning the philosophical tenets of the sampradaya, such as, "Three Gunas", and "Four Purushaarth" (types of endeavour), and "Five Vishesh Vartamaanas" (special code of conduct). There are also sub-headings concerning the history of the Sanstha, such as "Six Temples Built by Shreeji Maharaj", and "Eight Temples of Akshar Purushottam Maharaj". Other sub-headings deal with general information about the Sanstha, such as "Nine Shastras" (scriptures), and others deal with general information about Hinduism, such as "Ten Avataras". The range of topics that the balaks are taught is seen to be very broad.

Short essays are expected from the balaks every few months, on topics chosen at the discretion of the sanchalaks. A collection of such essays, as well as other work done in the classes, was produced by the Bal Mandal in booklet form in 1985, to commemorate the thirtieth anniversary of the
establishment of the Bal Mandal in India, in 1955. The essays are an excellent example of the type of questions set for the balaks, as well as good examples of what is taught in the classes, and how this is assimilated by the children. Below is a selection of essays from the anniversary booklet.

One essay is entitled, "My Daily Puja", and was submitted by a ten year old;

"I wake up early in the morning and I do my pooja. (If I don't wake up early, I do mala.) Before I do my pooja I have my bath and I brush my teeth. Then I put fresh clothes on. How to do pooja: First you set your pooja out. Then you think of God and ask him to wake up and come to your pooja. Then you do your tilak chandlo on your forehead. Then you do six malas sitting down. Then you do one mala standing on one leg. Then you do another mala going round your pooja. Then you do seven dandvats to the murtis in the pooja. Then you read five verses of the Shikshapatri. Then pray to God to be good at school and not lie. Remember to respect your parents at home and if possible go to the Mandir. And that is the end of the pooja." (20)

Another essay, written by a ten year old is entitled, "Why Should We Do Tilak Chandlo?"

"Christians have a symbol of a cross on their neck. So we have tilak and chandlo on our forehead as our symbol. Our tilak stands for the feet of Sahajanand Swami (Charnavind) and the chandlo stands for Gunatitanand Swami. If you have got your tilak and chandlo you will feel like doing good things only. Even if you think of doing something bad, you will not feel like doing it because you have your tilak and chandlo on. The main reason is that we please Pramukh Swami when we do tilak and chandlo. So even if other people laugh at you, let them. At least you will make Pramukh Swami happy." (21)

A third essay, with the title of "The Spiritual Way to Akshardham" was written by a twelve year old balak;

"If you want to go to Akshardham, you should do the right things such as pooja every day, do Katha Varta, sing bhajans, and go to Bal Mandal Sabha every Sunday. These are the things you should not do - such as steal, swear, tell lies, eat meat, drink alcohol, adultery and speak back to your elders. Always respect your elders. These are some ways of reaching Akshardham. Akshardham is your resting place. Earth is like a guest house because you are here and just like guests, one day you will pass away and go to hell or Akshardham, but no-one on earth knows. It depends whether you have done good or bad in your life. If you have done good, you are sure to reach Akshardham. Pramukh Swami will open the doors to Akshardham - just for you and other good people like you." (22)

Other essay titles include, "A Letter to Pramukh Swami", and "If I Had Three Wishes From God ...." All the essays in the booklet are in English. This is because the children can express themselves on paper much more fluently in English than in Gujarati. As one thirteen year old writes in "A Letter to Pramukh Swami",

"Could you help me in Gujarati classes so that I can read, write and then I will be able to write to you in Gujarati and not in English". (23)

Although they write in English, the balaks use the transliterated form of Gujarati words when referring to religious concepts and phenomena, such as har, tilak and chandlo, pooja, seva and Akshardham. These concepts and phenomena are explained and taught to the children in Gujarati, using English when necessary, for further explanation.

(22) ibid., 18 (23) ibid., 6. - 158 -
The children are learning Gujarati through the classes on two levels. Firstly, they are taught in Gujarati. When English books are read, such as the examination books, they will then be discussed in Gujarati. Thus the children build up a vocabulary of religious terms, which they learn to conceptualize through what they are taught in Gujarati. Also, all the devotional forms of worship they learn are in Gujarati. Secondly, the children have Gujarati lessons, where they learn to read and write, starting with the basics, learning the alphabet.

In the first half of 1987, a book was published in India by the A. P. Sanstha, under the instruction of Pramukh Swami. It is called "Janava Jevu" or What We Should Know. The book contains specific questions and answers which Pramukh Swami believes all balaks should know. The book is in the process of being circulated among all balak mandals. In Leicester it has been photocopied and each sanchalak has his own photocopy. It is considered to be Pramukh Swami's agna that the balaks know these particular facts, so in the temple it is felt to be imperative that the balaks are taught what has been set out in the book.

The questions and answers provided are divided into three parts. The first part is concerned with Sahajanand Swami, the second part with the guru-parampara, and part three is headed "Basic Facts". Under the third part are found such diverse questions as, "Which are our three main scriptures?"
and "Who is our God?"; "Whose ashes are kept in the Akshar
Deri?" and "Which audio cassette has been produced by the
Sanstha for balaks?". At the end of the book is a small
section which contains things which the balaks must commit
to memory. This includes arti, thal, two prathanas, two
kirtans, a dhoon, and as many Swami ni vats as possible,
from the booklet "Bal Satsang".

Such is the basic knowledge that the balaks should have
acquired by the time they leave the balak classes, and start
attending the yuvuk sabha. This usually happens when the
boys are about fifteen, and it is to this second class that
we now turn.

The yuvuk sabha is held on Saturday evenings at five forty-
five, in the second shrine room, although it was originally
held in the main shrine room. Approximately forty yuvuks
attend each week. Many older men attend also, sitting on the
opposite side of the room from the yuvuks. All sit facing
the shrine, and before the sabha begins, deva is performed
(24), incense sticks are lit, and a har is put on the forehead of
all the murtis, as well as on the forehead of all those
present.

There is a standard form that the sabha follows, (25) with
certain things being done every week according to the wishes

(24) This is the standard procedure at the beginning of
each class or sabha.

(25) See Appendix C for the standard items of the sabha.
of Pramukh Swami. If anything new is to be added to the standardized form of the sabha, Pramukh Swami will make this known through the fortnightly "Patrika". (26) Apart from these specific items, whatever else takes place is largely left to the discretion of the leaders of the temple, and the articulated needs of the yuvuks themselves. There is one older yuvuk who is a member of the Youth Organization Committee, who has the responsibility for organizing and preparing for the weekly sabhas. (27) He has held this post for five years, which involves deciding who will lead or read the standard items, who will be responsible for singing the kirtans, and who will prepare and lead any extra items such as quizzes, talks, explanations. The yuvuk delegates this work among other yuvuks, giving them time to prepare in advance.

Often one or two of the older men who attend regularly are asked to speak on certain topics. Throughout the sabha, the older men present correct the yuvuks if they make mistakes, and offer explanations if there is something which no-one else understands. There are usually at least two members of the Management Committee present. Although the yuvuks run the sabha mainly by themselves, they have constant supervision and support, and are expected to show a high degree of commitment, as well as general knowledge of the Sanstha, such as that gained in the balak classes. If the yuvuks are

(26) See p. 127 above for information on Sanstha publications.
(27) See Appendix D, "Seva Descriptions", n. 9.
unresponsive to questions in their sabha, or if they answer incorrectly, they will often get a sharp rebuke from one of the older men. The yuvuks were once told during a sabha by a committee member, that they should be able to answer 99% of the questions asked.

Most of the sabha is conducted in Gujarati. However, some yuvuks do not have very good spoken Gujarati, so when they give talks, they are in English. As in the balak classes, if a difficult concept is explained in Gujarati, it sometimes requires further clarification in English before a full understanding is reached. Furthermore, occasionally as the yuvuks are reading something such as the "Patrika", in Gujarati, they come across a word which they do not understand. One of the older men will then give the equivalent English word, or failing that, explain it in Gujarati until one of the yuvuks finds the equivalent English word.

The sabha contains the following standard items; the jay naad, dhoon, dhyan, prathana, the reading of the "Swaminarayan Satsang Patrika", at least two kirtans, the arti and thal, the reading and explanation of the Vachanamritan or some Swami ni vats, and a final Sanskrit shloka. (28) Apart from the above items, there are talks given on various

(28) See Appendix C for the transcriptions of tape recordings of three yuvuk sabhas.
subjects as thought appropriate by the organizer; for example, before the birthdays of members of the guru-parampara, there will be talks about the particular spiritual leader, and readings will be taken out of books on the lives of the spiritual leaders. Furthermore, the kirtans sung will often be in praise of that particular guru.

The sabha of May 16th offers a good example: on this occasion, all three kirtans sung are in praise of Yogiji Maharaj, since it was the celebration of the birth of Yogiji Maharaj on May 24th. On May 25th, extracts were read from "Digantma Danka"; which contains various stories of incidents from the life of the guru. One of the kirtans sung at the sabha of May 16th is shown below.

"You have stolen my mind, oh Yogi.  
Your form is so charming - where are you going?  
Tilak adorns your forehead, my mind is enchanted.  
Your eyes are like magic; bestow your grace on me.  
Your talks are divine, brimmed with nectar.  
I have tasted that nectar and I am fulfilled.  
Your walk enchants me, my heart is never satisfied.  
You have made me run after you.  
Swami, Shriji, reside in my heart.  
The supporter of my life, oh Yogi.  
Yogi, protector of your devotees.  
You are the apple of my eyes.  
Your love has entwined me so much that my heart longs for your darshan.  
And my life is fulfilled - nothing else to achieve now."

The harmonium and tabla are always played by various yuvuks in accompaniment to the kirtans.
It was Shastriji Maharaj's birthday on February 7th, so in the sabha prior to this date there were talks, readings and kirtans relating to the spiritual leader. A sadguru named Nishkulanand Swami, who is specifically famous for the beautiful kirtans he wrote during his lifetime, shares the same birthday as Shastriji Maharaj. During the sabha of February 21st, a talk in English was given by a yuvuk, on the life story of Nishkulanand Swami. (29) The talk was based on a chapter of an examination book. The kirtans of the sadguru are treasured within the Sanstha because he lived at the same time as Sahajanand Swami and Gunatitanand Swami, and he writes about events in their lives that he actually witnessed. One of the two kirtans sung during the sabha of February 21st was written by Nishkulanand Swami, who was called Lalji Suthar before he was initiated. The other kirtan sung describes an incident in Sahajanand Swami's life which the sadguru witnessed, in Bhadra. It describes a miracle performed by Sahajanand Swami, and repeats the statement made about Gunatitanand Swami, that he "is my divine abode. Realize this, and worship me, you will be redeemed". (30)

On March 14th, the birthday of Bhagatji Maharaj was celebrated, so one of the kirtans sung in the sabha of March 7th was in praise of this spiritual leader. "A saint like him ..... 

(29) See Appendix C, yuvuk sabha - 21.2.87.

(30) ibid.
one who has the true qualities of God". (31) There was a reading and discussion about the life of Shastriji Maharaj, taken from a chapter of a second-year examination book, which described the true guru-disciple relationship between Shastriji Maharaj and Bhagatji Maharaj. In such a way, kirtans, as standard items, are made relevant to particular events and dates within the Sanstha calendar. This draws them to the attention of the young people.

Apart from the standard items, the organizer of the sabha will ask people to prepare a variety of other items, such as the talk given on April 25th by an older man who is much respected for his religious knowledge in the Sanstha. The talk was on "those things that either bring happiness or unhappiness in every human being".

A quiz is prepared every couple of months, involving questions on general knowledge that has been taught in preceding weeks. One week the "Patrika" was not read, but an article on Lord Swaminarayan from the "Swaminarayan Bliss" was read instead. This took place on April 25th, one week after the birthday of Sahajanand Swami, and the article read was one of a series of articles on the life of the spiritual leader. The reading of the article was followed by a series of questions relating to the life of Lord Swaminarayan, such as, "at what age did Maharaj leave his

(31) ibid., yuvuk sabha - 7.3.87.
home?"; "why did he leave his home?", and "what is the collection of letters that Maharaj wrote to saints, now in the form of a book, called?".

When periodicals arrive such as the monthly "Prakash", articles are often selected and read out to the yuvuks. These articles are followed by comments or explanations from the person reading. The sabha organizer tries to be aware of the needs of the yuvuks and to respond by providing relevant material for the sabhas. Discussions often take place at the end of the sabha amongst those present, as to what aspects of religious knowledge people feel unsure about. These discussions also take place in Youth Organization Committee meetings, and suggestions for future material for forthcoming sabhas are welcomed.

In March, the organizer, with the help of others, produced a booklet containing a basic glossary of terms used in spiritual discussions with which it was believed that every yuvuk should be familiar. A copy was handed out to every yuvuk in the sabha of March 21st. For the next few weeks, fifteen minutes of each sabha was set aside for the discussion and explanation of different sections of the booklet. This was always led by a yuvuk, and the discussion nearly always took place in English even if it originally started in Gujarati. The booklet was in English, using the transliterated form of Gujarati words for philosophical terms. The booklet contained a short explanation of the following; "Three Gunas of Maya", 

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"Three Dehas"; "Three Avasthas"; "Trividh Tapa"; "Antah-
karan"; Composite Form of Mana, Buddhi, Chitta and Ahamkar". Also, "Four Purushaartha"; "Five Anaadi Bheds"; "Panchvish-
ayas"; "Vishesh Panchavartaamaan"; "Samanya Panchvartaamaan"; "Panch Mahabhutta"; "Panch Jnanindriya"; "Ekantika Char
Guna or Lakshno", and "Navdha Bhakti".

In April, time was spent explaining what the "Patrika" is, and in encouraging the yuvuks to take an interest in what was being read out from the "Patrika" every week. In one sabha the time usually spent reading out parts of the periodical, was spent instead, explaining what the "Patrika" is, who established it and why. Then the text was read slowly with long intervals while the speaker asked questions about what had just been read, and he led discussions on related topics. For example, after reading that on February 28th Swamiji had carried out an image installation ceremony, the speaker went on to say:

"Now, there are two types of temples; what are they? Yes, a hari mandir and a shikar mandir. So what is our mandir? A hari mandir. What is the London mandir? A hari mandir. So what is a shikar mandir?"

(32)

Similarly, it was noticed that many of the yuvuks did not fully understand the meaning of the kirtans they sing in the sabha. Therefore a section of one sabha (33) was spent

(32) Yuvuk sabha - 18.4.87.
(33) Yuvuk sabha - 21.3.87.
in explaining the kirtan just sung, the name of which was written on the blackboard as the quotation of the day, "Oh My Lord. Do Not Give Me Anything Else Except Your Divine Form". The explanation of kirtans was so popular, it has become a regular feature of the sabhas.

As for the standard features of the sabha, the reading out and explanation of the Vachanamritam and Swami ni Vato is always undertaken in Gujarati, by an older man. The particular texts to be read each week are made known in the "Patrika", with a comprehensive explanation to help the lay leaders with their explanations and comments. The yuvuks always take the leading role in the arti and thal, performing the arti, offering the food to the murtis, and taking it away at the end of the thal to mix with the rest of the food which is distributed after the sabha as prasad. (34)

To turn now to the females, the balika class will be discussed first, to show how the young girls are prepared for the yukti sabha. It must be remembered that the balika class was only set up recently, and the yukti sabha started in 1984, so neither have been established long.

(34) It is taken in turn by devotees to provide the food which is distributed after the arti ceremony following the sabhas and classes on Saturday and Sunday. The pujari prepares food which is offered to the deities during thal, which is afterwards mixed with the food brought by devotees. This is then distributed as prasad.
The balika class is held on Sunday afternoons from four-thirty to six o'clock, when the arti ceremony is held. On Sunday evenings because so many attend the arti ceremony, the women and girls perform the ceremony separately from the men, in the second shrine room. The women hold the mahila sabha in the afternoon in the second shrine room, being joined by the yuktis and balikas at six o'clock for arti and thal.

The balika class is held in a room on the third floor. The age range is the same as that of the balaks, and there is an average attendance of fifteen. The teacher is a yukti who has a daughter of her own in the class. She teaches all the balikas in one class, sometimes with the help of other yuktis. The teacher is happy in that she feels she is fulfilling the agna of Pramukh Swami by teaching the balikas. Her only worry is that by teaching, she misses attending either the yukti or mahila sabha.

The balika teacher uses the balak syllabus book as a guide for the content of her class, as there is no separate syllabus book for balikas. All those attending sit in a semi-circle around the shrine. One of the balikas will as always, perform deva (35), light an incense stick and put a har on the murtis. The basic structure and standard items of the sabha closely follow that of the balak classes. The jay naad

(35) See note 24 above.
is said, followed by a dhoon, a dhyan and then a prathana. The teacher tries to encourage a different balika to lead each item in turn, so that everyone will learn them. However, the standard of Gujarati among the balikas when they first arrive is usually very poor, and they are therefore extremely shy when it comes to their turn to lead an item in Gujarati. It is noticeable that over a period of several months the younger balikas quickly learn the standard items, (probably because of the repitition each week) thereby gaining confidence in the class situation.

Like the balaks, the balikas are not taught from the Vachanamritam, as it is considered too difficult. However, they are taught from the Swami ni Vato, and are expected to memorise as many Swami ni vats as possible. Every week new Swami ni vats are taught, and the next week those attending are examined orally on those taught the week before. Sometimes everyone is given the task of learning one or two Swami ni vats during the week. At the next class they must be repeated and the meaning explained. As the Swami ni Vato has not been translated into English, all of this must be done in Gujarati.

The class is conducted in Gujarati as far as possible, with necessary extra explanation or instructions in English. The "Swaminarayan Bliss" is used each week. Sometimes the teacher will have chosen an article to read from the "Bliss" and sometimes one of the balikas will bring her own copy to read from. The new section of the periodical aimed
specifically at the younger children in the \textit{Sanstha}, called "Ghanashyam's Heart" is especially popular. The teacher emphasizes to the \textit{balikas} the importance of reading the "Bliss" on their own at home.

The periodical is read in English, but the questions and discussions which follow are held in Gujarati. After everything that is read, the teacher asks one of the \textit{balikas} to give a short synopsis, and then asks general questions, to ensure that all has been understood.

The first-year examination books are used regularly in the class. Stories are read from them each week, and often a quiz will be made up from their contents to test the \textit{balikas}. As it states in the introduction to one of the three first-year examination books, the book contains "basic religious vows (vrats) of satsanga, pooja (worship), arti, thal (offering of food to the deity) etc., along with life sketches of Shriji Maharaj and His foremost devotee, Akshar Brahman Gunatitanand Swami, and illustrations from the discourses given by the Swami ..... This literature will infuse in them (the satsangi youths) greater understanding and greater attachment to satsanga." (36)

At least one \textit{kirtan} is sung each week, with either the teacher or a \textit{balika} leading. Sometimes games are played down in the main hall, and there are regular competitions. An important aspect of the class is the Gujarati lesson

(36) \textsc{Dave, K. M., 1983, 'Kishore Satsang Prarambha'}. 

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which takes place at almost all weekly classes. Usually only about twenty minutes can be allotted to Gujarati lessons, because, as the teacher is very aware, the age range is extremely broad, and the interest of the younger members must be kept. If much more than twenty minutes is spent on Gujarati lessons, the younger balikas start to get restless and disturb the older members of the class. Most of the balikas cannot read or write Gujarati when they start attending the class. Teaching Gujarati to the class is a difficult task as everyone is at different stages, and new balikas arrive throughout each year. The needs of all must be catered for. The teacher always starts with the basics; the alphabet and correct pronunciation, and allows everyone to work at her own pace. The aim is that before the balikas join the yukti sabha they will be able to read and write at least all of the standard items of the sabha in Gujarati.

Girls become yuktis when they are approximately fifteen. In 1986 three girls were transferred from the balika class to the yukti sabha by the balika teacher. The yuktis meet on Sunday afternoons simultaneously with the balikas. The sabha is held in a room on the second floor, and there is an average attendance of twenty-five. The mahila, Mrs. M. who attends, fulfils the role of facilitator rather than teacher, and is an active member of the Mahila Mandal and the Mahila Committee. In 1984, when the Yukti Mandal was formed, Mrs. M. was the obvious choice for facilitator, since she is a respected and learned female lay leader, with
much knowledge of the philosophy and teaching of the Sanstha. She is also a teacher by profession.

It was Mrs. M. and the yuktis themselves who gradually worked out a standard formula for the sabha to follow. The example of the yuvuk sabha was followed, so most of the standard items are the same as those of the yuvuk sabha; the jay naad, a dhoon, a dhyan, a prathana, the reading and explanation of the Vachanamritam as set down in the "Patrika", the reading of the "Patrika", the singing of at least one kirtan, the recitation and discussion of several Swami ni vats, and a final Sanskrit shloka. (37) At the end of the sabha, the yuktis take an active part in the arti and thal which is performed with the mahilas and balikas.

There are some differences in the standard items between the two sabhas. Firstly, the yuktis usually start the sabha by reciting three shlokas. The shloka known as the "Gunatitanand Shloka" (38) was incorporated into the sabha in 1985. The yuktis heard it in London at the Bicentennial Celebrations at Alexandra Palace in 1985. They liked it, so they incorporated it into the sabha. The other two shlokas were taken from the booklet entitled "Shlokas" prepared by the London temple as a supplement to the balak syllabus book. These two shlokas are taken from the Vedas.

(37) See Appendix B for the standard items of the sabha.

(38) ibid.
and are in Sanskrit, being recited at various times in most mainstream Hindu temples.

A second difference is that at the start of the yuvuk sabha there is usually a personal dhyan; silent concentration on the form of Lord Swaminarayan and Gunatitanand Swami. The dhyan in the yukti sabha is always spoken aloud by the yuktis simultaneously, and it is the same each week, being the dhyan recommended in the balak syllabus book. (39)

The general atmosphere of the sabha is very different from that of the yuvuk sabha. Once again, those present sit in a semi-circle around the shrine. Deva is performed, (40) incense sticks are lit and a har is put on the forehead of each murti. There is no official organizer, as there is in the yuvuk sabha, although the president of the Yukti Mandal usually tries to prepare for the sabhas the week before. This organization does not usually involve arranging for particular people to participate in a specific way in advance, which is what the yuvuk organizer is responsible for. The yukti president requests everyone to bring along anything, such as an article which they find interesting, to read out. Yuktis are also encouraged to prepare kirtans to sing in the sabha. People usually volunteer to lead kirtans or the prathana or dhoon, on the day. There is not the degree of

(39) ibid.

(40) See note 24 above.
organization that goes into the running of the yuvuk sabha: before the actual sabha, no-one knows precisely what items, (apart from the standard ones), will be included, or who will take part. However, Mrs. M. is always present to read and explain the Vachanamritam.

The general atmosphere of the sabha is much less authoritarian than that of the yuvuk sabha. What happens in the sabha depends entirely on the enthusiasm of the yuktis themselves. There is much more discussion in this sabha than in the yuvuk sabha; everything that is read out is discussed. When the Vachanamritam is read, Mrs. M. tries to bring in examples of everyday life to make difficult concepts easier to understand; she encourages the yuktis to participate, to interrupt and ask questions, and to put forward examples of their own.

Once again, the sabha is conducted in Gujarati as far as possible. Almost all of the yuktis have good conversational Gujarati, but most are much more at home using English. Often a discussion will change from Gujarati to English almost without anyone appearing to notice. However, much emphasis is placed on speaking in Gujarati in the sabha, and Mrs. M. very rarely uses English even when re-explaining something that the yuktis have not understood. Approximately half of those who attend have good enough Gujarati to read the "Patrika" or the Vachanamritam or Swami ni vats. A yukti is always asked to read the "Patrika", and sometimes

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Mrs. M. asks a yukti to read and explain a text of the Vachanamritam. If the yuktis cannot manage the Gujarati, they are sometimes allowed to read it in translation, but occasionally they are asked to struggle through the passage in Gujarati, with much help from Mrs. M. and the other yuktis.

Other than the standard items, either Mrs. M. or the yukti president brings the relevant copy of "Swaminarayan Prakash" or "Premvati" to the sabha. (41) "Premvati" is the Gujarati magazine published especially for women in the Sanstha. It is produced by female devotees in Ahmedabad, and contains articles from women in the Sanstha and information about the activities of different mahila, yukti and balika mandals in the Sanstha. "Premvati" contains a "Children's Corner" which often contains articles in English, such as the article read out at one sabha entitled "Why Can't Our Sadhus Look at Women? Isn't It Discrimination?" (42) The "Children's Corner" is a recent addition to the magazine. Mrs. M. explained that it had been started particularly to answer questions in English that young people living outside India might be asking.

Most of the articles brought in by the yuktis are from the "Bliss". (43) They are read in English and discussed in

(41) See Appendix B, yukti sabha - 8.3.87.
(42) ibid yukti sabha - 26.4.87
(43) See Appendix B, yukti sabha - 22.2.87.
Gujarati. Sometimes old copies of other Sanstha periodicals are brought in and read out, and occasionally a short section of one of the examination books will be read out and then be discussed. In July 1987 a yukti read out several Swami ni vats from one of the first-year examination books. This reminded everyone that they had not been reciting Swami ni vats in the sabha recently, and that it is important to do so. From then on, at least two Swami ni vats were read out every week from the two hundred Swami ni vats published by the Sanstha in a pocket booklet, and these were expounded upon.

Occasionally a section of the Shikshapatri will be read and discussed, and sometimes one of the yuktis will prepare a quiz, and all the yuktis are tested. The quiz will either be on general knowledge of the Sanstha, or about the life of a member of the guru-parampara. On February 1st a quiz was prepared relating to the life of Shastriji Maharaj, since it was his birthday on February 4th.

One week a tape recording produced by the Sanstha in India was brought to the sabha by a yukti. (44) The audiotape contained a talk given by a sadhu popularly known as "Doctor Swami", which was given to a group of yuvuks in England in 1986 while they were on a camping holiday with some visiting sadhus from India. The title of the talk was "The Value Of

(44) See Appendix B, yukti sabha - 15.2.87.
The Human Body. The audiotape and a tape recorder were brought to the sabha and the whole talk was listened to.

The women have recently started having their own separate samaiyas, and much of the organization for these events is left to the yuktis. During the sabha, agendas for forthcoming samaiyas are discussed and finalized, with yuktis volunteering for various things including speeches, performing in dramas or dances. Some of the rehearsals for items take place during sabha time, either in the sabha itself, in the case of reading a play through, or in the hall for dance or drama practices.

During the arti and thal the yuktis take an active part, performing the arti, and taking the food offering to the hall to be mixed with the rest of the food to be distributed as prasad. (45) When the arti and thal is over, everyone goes to the main hall to collect prasad, which is distributed by the men, the yuvuks and balaks, who also partake.

In sum, this is the formal religious nurture which takes place within the classes and sabhas of the A. P. Sanstha. There are four different groups, separated by age and sex. The proceedings in each class or sabha are of two kinds; those items which are standard, taking place each week; and those items which are occasional or extra, taking place in addition to the standard items. The female activities are

(45) See note 34 above.
based on the male activities, and therefore the balak and balika classes are similar, and the same is true of the yuvuk and yukti sabhas. However, the male activities are more highly organized and structured than the female activities.

Formal Religious Nurture Outside the Classes

To turn now to nurture other than that which takes place in the weekly classes or sabhas, it is seen that the young people are involved in almost every aspect of the organization of temple life. This is still within the sphere of formal nurture, because the young people are explicitly expected to be involved in the activities necessary for the successful running of the temple. This involvement is seen as the duty of every responsible Sanstha member. This duty is expressed through the Sanskrit term "seva", translated as "service". The concept of seva is of great importance within the Sanstha, and plays a crucial part in temple life. (46)

The concept of seva within the Sanstha involves more than simply service, it involves selfless service, or service performed with complete detachment, other than the desire to please God and his "choicest devotee". (47) Seva should be

(46) For further discussion consult BAROT, 1981.

entirely unselfish and unmotivated by personal desire or interest; being linked with the concepts of vairagya or detachment and dharma, two of the attributes of Bhagwat Dharma; therefore being an important component of moksha. (48)

Seva connotes an act of worship or devotion; one performs seva to please God and the spiritual head of the Sanstha.

As explained by a member of the temple committee, (49) seva and spiritual discourses or spiritual knowledge are like the two wings of a bird. Both are essential. The product of seva is humility and respect for others. The importance of seva was emphasized by the committee member, by recalling two actual incidents which took place in India, and which have been recounted since throughout the Sanstha to illustrate the importance of seva. One incident was about a young man in the Ahmedabad temple who did much seva, but who left the Sanstha because he was teased by a fellow devotee that he only performed seva to receive prasad. The other incident involved a devotee at another temple in India, who was greatly respected for his spiritual knowledge, but never performed any seva. When he was once requested to clean the toilet as an act of seva, he left the temple and never returned. These incidents are recited within the Sanstha to make clear to satsangis the need for the correct


(49) Personal communication - 27.4.86.
balance of **seva** and spiritual knowledge. **Seva**, without the right attitude, humility and selflessness, is worthless.

The aim is to please Lord Swaminarayan and Pramukh Swami. (50)

The use within the **Sanstha** of **seva** as a concept denoting self surrender is similar to the concept of **seva** within the **bhakti** tradition, (51) where it connotes surrendering oneself to the Supreme Lord in order that the ultimate unity can be achieved; (52) where worship is seen as an act of surrender to a personal god, with stress on the importance of selfless love. (53)

Within the **Sanstha**, the running and organization of the temple is seen in terms of **seva**. Owing to the importance of the concept, everyone is expected to perform as much **seva** as possible, involving themselves in the daily life of the temple. Pramukh Swami and former spiritual leaders are used as examples of great, highly respected people who always offer themselves for **seva**, serving others whenever possible. These examples are particularly prevalent in the examination books. (54) Furthermore, stories circulate within the **Sanstha** concerning incidents in the life of Pramukh Swami and other members of the **guru-parampara**, such as the story of

(50) Very similar to the discussion in the fourth discourse of the **Bhagavad Gita**, concerning the disciplines of Action and Knowledge.

(51) **Bhagavad Gita**, 3:19, 4:32, 33.

(52) **BAROT**, 1981, 310.

(53) **BROCKINGTON**, 130, 136.

(54) **DAVE, R. M.**, 1984, 36 ff.
the day that Pramukh Swami received the presidency of the Sanstha. A large meal was given in his honour that evening after the ceremony, and Pramukh Swami went to the kitchen after the meal and washed up all the crockery, cutlery and utensils. Such episodes are related to the young people in the temple as examples of the humility of their leaders and examples of true seva. A phrase constantly heard from the young people with reference to Pramukh Swami is, "he practises what he preaches".

A booklet is produced within the temple entitled "Seva Descriptions" (55), which lists all the "departments" or areas of temple life either in which the yuvuks are expected to be involved, or which they are expected to run themselves. Thirty-eight "departments" are listed, making up a comprehensive list of all the jobs needing to be done in order that the temple is run efficiently and the building itself is maintained. When a person joins the Yuvuk Mandal, he is given a seva application form, where he states the department(s) in which he will offer his seva. From the different "departments" and the descriptions of the work involved in each, which can be observed in the booklet, (56) it is obvious that the yuvuks are involved in almost every aspect of the running and organization of the temple.

(55) See Appendix D.

(56) ibid.
The *yuktis* are not involved in this formal system. They perform *seva* in certain areas only, (57) since *yuvuks* and *yuktis* cannot work together. *Yuktis* either volunteer to do *seva* at the time, or they are asked to help in a particular way by a member of the committee. They are always involved in the catering and cleaning "departments", and in other areas when large public *samaiyas* are held. When the women organize their own *samaiyas*, they take over all the work involved in all the "departments" connected with *samaiyas*. (58) However, most of the responsibility and organization of temple life is left to the *yuvuks*, as the *yuktis* do not sign the *seva* application forms and are therefore not part of the formal system. *Seva* for each week or each particular event, for the *mahilas* and *yuktis*, is worked out very much amongst themselves, often at the weekly *sabhas*.

The young people are involved in organizing activities especially for themselves. Two examples are the "departments" described as "sports" and "Satsang Examinations". Many sporting activities are organized for the *yuvuks* and *balaks*, some of which take place in the temple building, such as badminton and pool, and some of which take place elsewhere, such as swimming and football. Events are organized on a regular weekly basis. The *yuktis* are left to organize any sporting activities as they wish. Since many such activities

(57) ibid., numbers 15, 18, 20, 30.

(58) ibid., n. 5, 6, 13, 16, 19, 21, 22, 32.
take place in the temple building, either in the evenings or at weekends, the youngsters are often there at the appropriate times to take part in daily acts of worship such as arti and thal. The youngsters are actively encouraged to participate in daily worship, and if activities are being run, or rehearsals for a drama are taking place, all in the temple will congregate in the main shrine room at the appropriate times.

Two yuvuks run the Examinations Department. (59) The jobs involve encouraging all satsangis to sit the annual examinations, to set mock papers and to correspond with the headquarters of the Sanstha in India. The examinations play an important part in the formal nurture at the temple. The papers are set in India, and the syllabus is based on the information set out in a series of examination books. These books are kept in the library and can also be bought by individuals. There are first, second, third, fourth and fifth-year examinations, the first four of which can be taken either in English or Gujarati. The fifth-year examination is taken in Gujarati.

There are three first-year examination books, which deal with the basics of how to worship, the lives of the spiritual leaders, and the childhood exploits of Lord Swaminarayan. (60)

(59) ibid., n. 26.

(60) See Appendix E for the 1987 first-year examination paper from the A. P. Sanstha.
The second, third and fourth-year examinations each have four related books. The second-year books deal again with forms of worship, the youthful exploits of Lord Swaminarayan, the life of Shastriji Maharaj, and short life-sketches of sadgurus in the Sanstha. The third-year books cover more information on forms of worship, the adult life of Lord Swaminarayan, the life story of Pragji Bhakta, and short life-sketches of more sadgurus. The fourth-year books again cover further forms of worship, the life of Gunatitanand Swami, short life-sketches of sadgurus and a book explaining the philosophical meaning of Akshar Purushottam. The fifth-year examination deals solely with the sermons of Lord Swaminarayan as set down in the Vachanamritam. The forms of worship expounded upon in the books include arti, thal, dhoon, prathana, pooja, vratas (religious observances, usually denoting fasting) and utsavas (festivals). The meaning of each form of worship is explained, with a description of how to perform it. In a second-year examination book all vratas and utsavas observed within the Sanstha are listed and explained. (61) The children and young people are taught about such dates in their classes and sabhas, and are encouraged to observe them as far as possible. (62)

The examinations are not compulsory, but it is expected that people will take them. Anyone can sit the examinations, and many older members of the Sanstha do so. Usually balaks and

(61) SHASTRI NARAYAN BHAKTA, 48-66.
(62) See p. 136 above.
balikas do not sit the examination, but if they are considered
to be capable of passing, then they will be entered. More
balaks are entered than balikas. Preparation for the
examination is expected to be done in the candidate’s own
time. No formal preparation takes place in the sabhas;
however, as shown, the children become familiar with the
contents of the examination books through their regular use
in the classes.

The papers are marked by sadhus in India. The examinations
are sat simultaneously at temples in India and abroad. All
the papers are sent to Bochasan to be marked, and the marks
are sent back to the temples, where they are displayed on
boards. Certificates for passing examinations are distributed
at a samaiya. The headquarters in Bochasan publishes the
names of those who gained the highest mark in each paper
throughout the Sanstha.

Other activities, apart from examinations, which play an
important part in religious nurture, are the samaiyas. There
is usually at least one samaiya a month at the temple, and
the young people are not only largely responsible for the
organization and smooth running of the samaiyas, but they
take an active part in the proceedings.

There are two samaiya co-ordinators, both yuvuks, (63) whose
job it is to ensure that all arrangements for samaiyas in the

(63) See Appendix D, "Seva Descriptions", n. 21.
temple building, or off the premises, are made. They must also set the samaiya programme time-table. The yuvuks are involved in all aspects of preparation for the samaiyas, and clearing away afterwards. There is a Decoration Department, (64) which ensures the appropriate decoration of the stage and hall, a Carpets Department, (65) responsible for laying the carpet in the hall, a Chairs Department, (66) whilst three yuvuks co-ordinate parking at the samaiyas. (67)

Two yuvuks are responsible for setting up and working the Public Address system during samaiyas. (68) At such functions there is always a stall set up to sell Sanstha publications, run by the Publications Department. (69) The stall also contains audio and video cassettes produced by the Sanstha. The Cleaning Department (70) is responsible for clearing up after samaiyas, and the Serving Department (71) organizes the serving of food in samaiyas, and ensures that the dining hall is cleaned after use.

During the samaiyas, which usually take place on Saturday or Sunday from four to seven o'clock, the yuvuks lead most of the devotional activities from the stage. There is a Music Department (72) and a Drama Department, (73) and the yuvuks provide the music and singing, performing dhyans and kirtans,

(64) ibid., n. 13 (65) ibid., n. 5
(66) ibid., n. 16 (67) ibid., n. 38
(68) ibid., n. 6 (69) ibid., n. 1
(70) ibid., n. 15 (71) ibid., n. 18
(72) ibid., n. 22 (73) ibid., n. 32
as well as performing dramas and dances. The balaks also regularly lead such activities. Sometimes a quiz is organized, with either balaks or yuvuks taking part on the stage. During samaiyas at least three talks are given on topics which have been carefully chosen, being related in some way to the reason for the celebration. For example, at the samaiya to celebrate the birthday of Lord Swaminarayan, one speech was entitled "The Life and Works of Lord Swaminarayan". At least one speech will be given by a yuvuk. There are often extra items included, such as the slide show of the Cultural Festival of India which was shown on April 11th 1987, the celebration of Lord Swaminarayan's birthday. The slide show was presented by the yuvuks.

The yuktis and mahilas perform all the necessary jobs when they hold their own samaiyas. (74) They work out a programme, prepare the hall, take part in the proceedings, and clear away afterwards. They also prepare the meal to be served after the samaiya, which is a job always done by the females. The programme of the samaiya of July 18th 1987 celebrating "Guru Poornima" is a good example of a typical samaiya programme, either mixed or separate. (See fig. 7).

Apart from the standard items, such as dhyan, prathana, speeches, kirtans, pooja, arti and thal, the females, like

(74) The first separate samaiya held by the women was on June 14th, 1986, to celebrate the birthday of Yogiji Maharaj.
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the males, organize extra items such as dances, dramas and a regular quiz. The dramas are usually written by devotees within the temple, although sometimes plays written by the sadhus in India are published in Sanstha publications, and these are performed. An example of the type of drama performed, is one which was written by a yukti for the first separate women's festival at the temple. The story was taken from a true life story of a female devotee in India, as set out in a third-year examination book. The play is about a woman satsangi who marries into a family of unbelievers. The hardships of the woman are portrayed, such as not being able to eat the food prepared because it is not totally vegetarian. The in-laws will not let the woman practise her religion. Eventually she hears the voice of God telling her to jump into the river, because by doing this she will come to him. The woman does this.

The play highlights the situation that many young women in the Sanstha will have to cope with; they will marry out of the Sanstha, and so following their religion may become very difficult. (75) As it was explained by a yukti, the play "shows how hard it can be for a woman to follow her faith. It also shows how important it is that one should do devotion as early in life as possible, and as much as possible, because you never know what will happen later in life and how difficult it will be." (76)

(75) See pp. 147-150 above for the full discussion on this subject.

(76) Personal communication - 14.6.86
The young people, especially the yuvuks, are given much responsibility in the temple. The library is run by five yuvuks in the Library Department. (77) The library is well stocked with Sanstha publications, both in English and Gujarati, including scriptures of the Sanstha. There are also scriptures from mainstream Hinduism, such as the Bhagavad Gita and Ramayana. There are other sections containing books on specific subjects such as Geography, Sociology and Biology and, in addition, a stand with leaflets on many health and social issues, such as alcoholism, smoking, vegetarianism and drug addiction. (78)

The two yuvuks in the Subscriptions Department (79) are responsible for encouraging devotees to subscribe to Sanstha periodicals. Five yuvuks make up the Accounts Department (80) which deals with all the monetary affairs of the temple. There is also the Patrika Distribution Department, (81) with twenty-three members, who ensure the timely printing, writing and distribution of patrikas to those on the membership register. Apart from these, there are many other departments in which the yuvuks are involved.

Other than such activities in which the young people are involved, many inter-temple activities are organized within the Sanstha specifically for them. The most common of these

(77) See Appendix D, "Seva Descriptions", n. 8.
(78) See the five vows of the Sanstha on p. 74 above.
(79) See Appendix D, "Seva Descriptions", n. 28.
is the shibir or youth camp/conference, which was started in India soon after the Youth Organization was established. It involves the young people from different temples within the same area gathering at one temple for a few days to hold what is very much like an extended samaiya. During the shibir all those present sleep and eat in the temple building or with satsangi families nearby. Usually both yuvuks and balaks attend, and groups from each temple will contribute some item to the programme. Spiritual discourses are given by older men, talks on various topics are given by yuvuks and balaks, and kirtans, dramas and dances are performed. The programme is carefully organized beforehand by the host temple, with each guest temple informing them of their proposed items. This ensures that no item is duplicated. The programme is posted to each contributing temple before the shibir, and much time and effort is put into the preparation of items to be performed on such occasions.

Yuvuks and balaks have been holding joint shibirs in England annually since 1977. All temples in the country are invited, the host temples being the largest ones such as London, Leicester and Preston. The yuktis have only recently started organizing shibirs, the first being in 1984, the second in April 1987. The balikas do not attend, but the number of mahilas who attend is equal to that of the yuktis.

(80) ibid., n. 33
(81) ibid., n. 3
two shibirs have been held in London, and the first balika shibir in December 1987 was in London, however it is planned to host the next one in Leicester.

Shibirs are organized for the benefit of the youngsters, and much formal nurture takes place during a shibir. That the nurture is effective on two levels, will be obvious through a brief explanation of the proceedings of the yukti shibir in April 1987, which started on Saturday evening and finished on Monday evening.

The first level on which nurture took place was that temple life carried on as usual. The rituals were performed as they are daily, and the yuktis observed and participated in them. The arti ceremony was performed regularly at the appointed times; the performance of chesta, and singing of the bedtime prayers to the Lord took place every night; and every morning at six-thirty anusthan (82) took place, the waking of the Lord, morning prayers to the Lord, followed by meditation on the Lord. In accordance with the Shikshapatri (vv. 49-54), everyone woke early, between four and five o'clock, and after having a shower and dressing in clean clothes, performed pooja before starting the daily routine at six-thirty.

(82) Chesta and anusthan are not usually witnessed or participated in by the young people, owing to the times that they are performed; ten o'clock at night, and six-thirty in the morning, respectively.
The second level on which nurture took place at this shibir was through the activities and items specially organized both to entertain and instruct the young people present. Representatives from each temple performed at least one kirtan and one dance, but usually more than one. Some performed dramas: that performed by the Leicester temple was written by one of the older male satsangis, and showed the importance of the guru; how it is only one's guru who truly loves one. Furthermore, at least one talk on a specific subject was given by a yukti from each temple.

There were also joint items, such as the "discussion" (83) which was organized. Each temple put forward at least one yukti, to form a panel who sat on the stage with each yukti discussing a separate aspect of a chosen topic. The topic chosen for discussion was "Yogiji Maharaj Once Said, 'Young People Are As Important To Me As My Own Heart'. What Did He Mean By This?". Two quizzes were organized, one between the yuktis (again with representatives from each temple on the stage), on general knowledge of the Sanstha. The second quiz was between the yuktis and mahilas, with the questions based on a talk given earlier in the day by a mahila.

The mahilas gave talks on various topics, such as "The Swami ni Vato", and "Female Devotees During the Lifetime Of Lord Swaminarayan". There were two very respected lay-

(83) It was called a discussion, but it was in fact a series of related talks, all given on a specific topic.
leaders present, who gave extended lectures over the weekend, lasting four or five hours. One such lecture was on "Cosmic Evolution Within the Philosophy of Lord Swaminarayan". The other lecture was on various chapters of the Vachanamritam. The entire proceedings took place in Gujarati, except for two speeches given by yuktis, who apologized for their lack of Gujarati and the fact that they had to speak in English. It can thus be seen that shibirs are an important source of nurture.

Another source of nurture, solely for the yuvuks and balaks to date, is the activity known as adhiveshan. This is very similar to a shibir, except that the items are competitive. Adhiveshans are held regularly in England, as well as in India. In August 1987, the sixth national bal-yuvuk adhiveshan was held in London. (84) The programme lasted over four days, and each temple from the Sanstha in England was represented. The programme and separate categories for competition were organized approximately four months before the event. Each temple started preparing its entries and entrants at least two months in advance, as preliminary selections had to be held locally to provide three candidates for the competition in different categories. In Leicester, the samaiya on August 16th, to celebrate Janmashtami, was used to select the balaks who would compete in the "Swami ni Vato Explanation" category, and "Speech" category. It was

(84) See the rules and marking guidelines for the adhiveshan in Appendix F.
also used to select the yuvuks who would compete in the "Kirtan Kala" categories.

Adhiveshans are given much importance in the temple. The competitive aspect is stressed, and winners receive much praise and glory. In 1987, the Leicester temple won the prizes for the best yuvuk and best balak in England. This is a source of great pride. This particular adhiveshan was given even more importance by the presence at the finals of five sadhus on tour from India. The winners of each category had photographs taken with the sadhus. The photographs including young people from Leicester are now on display in the temple library in Leicester.

The adhiveshan, and all the preparation put into it by the youngsters, helps to consolidate all the information, knowledge and skills gained in the sabhas and classes, and through other activities organized by the temple management. These competitions also bring the young people in the temple together as they prepare for the events. Perhaps most importantly, it encourages the young people to learn about certain aspects of their religion in detail.

To sum up the findings of this chapter, it can be seen that there are many forms of formal religious nurture which take place outside the classes or sabhas. Nurture takes place first through such activities as the annual examinations, samaiyas, shibirs and adhiveshans; and second, through the general involvement of the young people in temple life and
temple affairs, which is linked to the important place given to the concept of seva within the Sanstha. Therefore, nurture occurs in two ways outside the classes: the first is by learning, which takes place through involvement with specific activities organized for the young people, such as examinations and shibirs. The second way in which nurture takes place is more subtle, and it occurs through spending time in the formal temple setting, through being part of "seva departments" and taking part in sports activities.

The foregoing survey of the formal religious nurture within the A. P. Sanstha has clearly indicated the high degree of planning and organization which are involved at all levels and in all aspects. The distinctiveness of this pattern will become clearer once a comparison has been drawn between it and the other system which has been investigated: it is to this that attention is now turned.
Religious nurture at the Sanatan Mandir mainly takes place through the medium of the Shishu-Kunj. A description of the activities of the Shishu-Kunj is given first. This is followed by an examination of other forms of nurture, which take place outside the class.

The Shishu-Kunj

The activity known as Shishu-Kunj takes place in the shrine room at ten forty-five every Sunday morning. There is an average weekly attendance of approximately seventy, composed of members of both sexes, although there is always a majority of females. The age range is broad, from approximately three years to twenty-eight years. Most of those attending regularly are in their early teens or younger.

The youngsters sit facing the main shrine; the boys on the left side, the girls on the right side (facing the shrine), with a passage-way between the two groups. The teacher stands at the front, using a microphone linked to a Personal Address system, which enables her voice to be heard throughout the shrine room, as well as in the main office, where members
of the Management Committee work. There is another microphone which is passed amongst the youngsters, depending upon who is leading the chanting of the Bhagavad Gita, or leading a dhoon or kirtan.

The activity officially starts at ten forty-five, which is when Mrs. C., the teacher, arrives, but most of the children and young people arrive after this time. Many are brought by their parents who come to the temple to have darshan of the murtis, before either sitting down and observing the proceedings, or going home. There are always at least thirty older people who sit on the benches around the outside of the shrine room during the Shishu-Kunj, and join in with the devotional parts, such as kirtans, dhoons, prathanas, arti and thal. Such older people either take part in the ten o'clock arti ceremony, and remain for the Shishu-Kunj; or they are family or relatives of youngsters in the class; or they may be elderly people who live nearby, and regularly attend the temple on Sundays especially to be present for the Shishu-Kunj.

Throughout the proceedings youngsters arrive, pay their respects to each deity, and sit down to take part in the Shishu-Kunj. Throughout the morning there is a constant stream of people who come to the temple for darshan. This involves standing before each shrine and ringing the bell, and either bowing or prostrating. In the case of the main shrine, one usually touches the feet of Ganesha and Hanuman,(1)

(1) See p. 87 above.
then circumambulates the shrine before going before the main murtis. There is therefore, considerable activity in the shrine room during the Shishu-Kunj, which produces much background noise. Hence the need for the microphones, and good concentration on the part of the youngsters.

There are occasions when the Shishu-Kunj takes place upstairs in the wedding hall. This happens on festival days when the shrine room is being used to perform havan or pooja, or when celebrations take the form of kirtan singing, or when many people are expected to visit the temple to have darshan, such as on New Year's Day. On such occasions, a table is converted into a temporary shrine and placed at the front of the hall. Chairs are set out for the youngsters, and the seating arrangements are the same as usual. The Shishu-Kunj continues in much the same way as it does each week, except with Mrs. C. performing the thal and arti in the place of the pujari. During the thal a cloth is placed over the offering of prasad, since there are no curtains to close as there are in the main shrine room.

The accommodation provided for the Shishu-Kunj, is considered both by Mrs. C. and members of the Management Committee, to be inadequate. When the activity is held in the shrine room there are many distractions for the youngsters. When a wedding party is occupying the wedding hall, there are even more people than usual visiting the shrines for darshan. A further problem is that it is impossible to stop parents
and members of the general public from attending the activity when it is held in the shrine room. However, the presence of so many adults is believed to be another cause of distraction; firstly because many chatter amongst themselves, but also because the youngsters feel more self-conscious than they otherwise might do, and hence they do not participate in the activity to the full.

When the Shishu-Kunj is to take place in the wedding hall, this is announced the week before, and many fail to attend. Among the younger children who do attend, there is often a high degree of misbehaviour, owing to the excitement of being in a new environment and out of the formal atmosphere of the shrine room. Approximately three years ago, the Management Committee considered the proposal of moving the Shishu-Kunj to the Sanatan Centre. It was decided against, on the grounds that it would distance the activity, and the youngsters who attend it, from the temple. The move to the Sanatan Centre would effectively have removed much of what is learned via a "hidden curriculum", (2) through being in the temple surroundings. This is what the Management Committee wished to avoid.

A further circumstance, apart from the inadequate accommodation, which makes the successful running of the Shishu-Kunj difficult, is the wide age range of those who attend. One teacher has

(2) See chapter three, note (45)
to attempt to cater for the needs of all those attending.
As the secretary of the temple, as well as Mrs. C. herself,
admit, this is virtually impossible. (3)

Mrs. C. speaks very little English, which means that the
whole activity is conducted in Gujarati. Where it is thought
necessary, a committee member will translate into English
what has just been said. As the secretary explains,

"Most of the youngsters understand Gujarati because
it is spoken at home, but they do not understand
everything that is said in the temple because the
talk can be very heavy............ and there are
technical philosophical terms. Naturally it is
very difficult for them." (4)

There are therefore different levels at which those attending
get bored with the proceedings. Sometimes it is because
the Gujarati is too difficult for most youngsters to under-
stand. On other occasions the young children will get bored
because something is being explained on a level which only
those who are older will understand. On other occasions the
older members of the group will become bored because Mrs. C.
is talking in extremely simple terms for the benefit of the
children. Much of the content of the Shishu-Kunj is repeated
each week, and while the young children generally enjoy this,
those who are older often find it monotonous.

(3) Personal communication with the secretary - 30.6.87.
Personal communication with Mrs. C. - 29.7.87.

(4) Personal communication with the secretary - 30.6.87.
No Gujarati language lessons are provided by the temple, either in the Shishu-Kunj, or in the Sanatan Centre. There are various Gujarati classes run in Leicester by different groups. One such group is the Indian Education Society, which has been providing Gujarati language teaching in Leicester for almost twenty years. The two classes it runs take place on Thursday and Friday evenings from seven to nine o'clock, in two schools in different areas of the city. The classes cater for those of any age over six years. At one school there is an attendance of three hundred, and at the other there is an attendance of one hundred and fifty. Many of those who attend the Shishu-Kunj also attend the Gujarati classes run by the Indian Education Society, or a similar class run by a separate group. Even so, many of the young people at the Sanatan Mandir claim to have difficulty in reading and writing Gujarati, and a few do not read, write or speak Gujarati at all.

The importance of Gujarati is stressed during the Shishu-Kunj by the fact that Mrs. C. conducts the activity solely in that language. She also regularly encourages the youngsters to use Gujarati at home. However, the importance of Gujarati is not stressed to the same extent as it is in the A. P. Sanstha. There are no plans to introduce Gujarati lessons into the Shishu-Kunj or Sanatan Centre programmes, and when the young people organize activities for the Shishu-Kunj themselves, such as discussions or quizzes, these invariably take place in English. There seems little or no pressure to organize
such activities in Gujarati. Furthermore, when the Bhagavad Gita is read every week, it is read from a publication which provides a transliterated Sanskrit text, with an English translation. There is much concern among committee members over what is seen as the lack of Gujarati among the young. However, there is no sense of urgency for providing facilities to teach the language within the temple. Such are the set of problems surrounding the weekly children's class.

To turn now to the content of the Shishu-Kunj, it is Mrs. C. who is responsible for deciding upon the standard aspects of the activity. When she started the class in the temple in 1974, she incorporated all aspects of what she had been teaching to the Gita Class in Nairobi. This includes set prathanas and mantras, as well as extra mantras and prathanas which have been added with the collaboration of committee members and the pujaris at the Sanatan Mandir. What has emerged is a set programme of devotional nature, with room for kirtans as people wish to sing them, and extra activities which may be incorporated each week.

The Shishu-Kunj follows a strict standard pattern. (5) The microphones are set up by a committee member who arrives early. Some of the youngsters arrive before the set time, and they come into the shrine room and sit in the allotted space, as described. When a responsible young person arrives, (5) See Appendix G for the standard items in the Shishu-Kunj.
he or she will fetch the musical instruments from the
committee room: these include a harmonium, tabla and cymbals.
Only a very few of those who attend can play the instruments,
having learnt independently of the temple. If Mrs. C. is
late for any reason, or a number of the older youths arrive
early, including those who play the instruments, then they
will start the activity themselves by singing kirtans of
their choice.

Once Mrs. C. arrives, she leads a series of set prayers and
mantras (6) in Sanskrit, Gujarati and Avadhi, the dialect
in which Tulsidas wrote his Ramayana. The prayers are
directed towards the aumkara, Mataji, Rama, Ganesha, Hanuman
and the guru, who is hailed as Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva.
Next, Mrs. C. leads the recitation of the Gita Dhyanam in
Sanskrit. Sometimes a dhoon is sung before this recitation,
while one of the children distributes the copies of the
Bhagavad Gita (7) to all present. Mrs. C. and one of the
young people lead the recitation, but all follow simultaneously.

The same process continues for the recitation of the twelfth
and and fifteenth chapters of the Bhagavad Gita, which again,
are recited each week. (8) The importance and reason for
the weekly recitation of the twelfth chapter, is that it

(6) ibid

(7) See p. 118 for further information on the copies of the
Bhagavad Gita.

(8) See the transcriptions of the tape recordings of three
classes, in Appendix G.
describes the path of devotion and the ideal devotee. Since one of the aims of the Shishu-Kunj is to foster faith within the youngsters, (9) this chapter is considered to be very important for the young people to know by rote. Chapter fifteen is believed to be important because it describes the qualities of the ideal person or the Supreme Being. (10)

After the twelfth and fifteenth chapters, four or five verses of the Bhagavad Gita are recited and explained; the whole scripture being systematically recited during the activity, over a period of time. Mrs. C. recites a verse in Sanskrit, and the youngsters recite it after her, led by one youth. This youth then reads out the English translation, and the rest of the youngsters repeat it. Mrs. C. then translates the verse into Gujarati, giving further explanation in that language if necessary. Occasionally, the Gita Mahatmya, at the beginning of the sacred scripture is turned to, and one or two more verses are recited and explained. (11) In such a way, when the whole Bhagavad Gita has been read through and recited, the first chapter will be returned to.

Once the Gita lesson is over, a standard kirtan is sung, usually followed by a standard dhoon, before the thal at

(9) Personal communication with Mrs. C. - 29.7.87.

(10) Personal communication with a former committee member - 20.7.86.

(11) See Appendix G, Shishu-Kunj - 8.3.87.
twelve noon. (12) The thal is sung while the pujari offers food to the deities. After the thal there is usually another standard dhoon. Other standard features include the singing of various kirtans, calling to the front those who have had a birthday in the preceding week, and the performance of arti, followed by several prayers or prathanas.

Between the standard items, and other "occasional items" which may have been organized, any youngster is welcome to sing a kirtan or dhoon of their choice. In practice, it is usually the same few people who sing every week, and these are usually the older boys and girls. Mrs. C. calls to the front anyone who has had a birthday; a few words are said to them, and Mrs. C. recites four shlokas; three in Sanskrit and one in Gujarati. (13) This is followed by the pujari saying a few words and giving a small gift of prasad to each, and sometimes another present, such as a copy of the Bhagavad Gita or a box of coloured pencils, or an exercise book. These youngsters are then allowed to ring the bells at the shrines during arti.

Before the arti ceremony, two Sanskrit prayers and one Gujarati prayer are sung. (14) This is sometimes followed by a standard dhoon repeating the names of Krishna. The arti

(12) See the standard items in Appendix G.

(13) ibid.

(14) ibid.
which is usually sung is the arti dedicated to Lord Rama, although occasionally the artis for the other deities are sung. (15) The reason that this arti is preferred by Mrs. C., is that firstly, it was written by Ram Bhakta, (16) and secondly Rama is seen as the embodiment of duty and respect, so it is hoped that the children and young people will be inspired by his great attributes. (17) After the arti, three Sanskrit prayers are sung. The Shishu-Kunj ends with the singing of the last prayer, also written by Ram Bhakta, during which prasad is distributed to all present, by some of the young men. Such is the standard pattern of the Shishu-Kunj. There are however, occasional or extra items which take place each week; these will be considered now.

There are usually extra items, apart from the standard ones, arranged for each Shishu-Kunj, but if none have been organized, then the time is filled by singing more kirtans, or playing a game called "Raja Ram". This game is greatly enjoyed by youngsters of all ages, who stand up, and have to strike a certain posture upon hearing the word "Raja", and a different posture when the word "Ram" is called out. Whoever stands in the wrong posture, is out, and must sit down. The game is over when only one person is left standing.

(15) In all other arti ceremonies of the week, all the artis dedicated to the main deities represented in the temple are sung.

(16) See pp. 65, 68 above, for more information on Ram Bhakta.

(17) Personal communication with Mrs. C. - 29.7.87.
Extra activities for the Shishu-Kunj are organized either by Mrs. C., committee members, or by the young people themselves. All proposed items have to be accepted either by Mrs. C. or by the Shishu-Kunj Sub-Committee. An activity which is organized by the young people is the quiz, which is based on specific chapters of the Bhagavad Gita. This was originally the idea of two young men, who decided that the quiz would be both enjoyable and entertaining, as well as educational.

The quiz was started in January 1987. A different chapter to be questioned on is chosen each week, and a different age group participates. (18) Writing the questions is shared between four of the young people. The age group and relevant chapters are chosen one week in advance, at the Shishu-Kunj, and eight youngsters are asked to volunteer to take part; four boys and four girls. They then have one week to read the relevant chapter and prepare. The whole activity takes place in English. The person who writes the questions controls the quiz, asking the questions, of which there are always twenty. The contestants sit at two separate tables which are set up at the front of the shrine room, facing the "audience". The competition is between the males and the females.

To start with, the quiz was held almost weekly; but after some three months it became an occasional rather than a regular item. It is enjoyed by the youngsters, but it is

(18) See Appendix G, Shishu-Kunj - 15.2.87., 22.2.87., 8.3.87.
often difficult to encourage people to volunteer to take part, especially among the younger age groups. Many of those in their early teens or younger find the questions difficult. The quiz is still held occasionally, and continues to generate excitement, mostly amongst the "audience".

A second activity sometimes organized by the young people, apart from the quiz, is an open discussion. One week the topic of the discussion was "Education" (19) and another week it was "Music". (20) These discussions usually last for twenty minutes, and they consistently take place in English. The youngsters are divided into five groups; the under sevens, those seven to ten, those ten to thirteen, the thirteen to fifteens, and the over fifteen year olds. Each group has at least one of the older youths with them, who facilitates the discussion. Each group moves to a separate part of the temple, the under sevens being taken to the wedding hall, where they play games.

During the discussion on "Education", (21) the facilitator of the thirteen to fifteen years group was a London University student, who returns to Leicester every weekend and attends the Shishu-Kunj. The young man suggested that attending the Shishu-Kunj was a form of education, because everyone attended

(19) Shishu-Kunj - 29.3.87.
(20) Shishu-Kunj - 5.4.87.
(21) Shishu-Kunj - 29.3.87.
with the expectation of learning something. He asked how many of them found Gujarati easier to speak and understand than English. Two youngsters put up their hands. When he asked how many found English easier, everyone else, including himself, put up their hands. When the young facilitator asked how many attended the Shishu-Kunj expressly because they wanted to, all except two, put up their hands. These discussions are very popular with the oldest two age groups, although many of the females admit that they often feel intimidated by speaking out in a mixed group.

The young people will sometimes organize a special activity to take place at one particular Shishu-Kunj. One such activity took place in August 1987. Two sisters in their early twenties, who attend the Shishu-Kunj, also teach Gujarati at one of the evening Gujarati classes in Leicester. Many of their pupils also attend the Shishu-Kunj. The two sisters organized and produced a puppet show depicting the story of the Ramayana. The sisters made the puppets and the set, and wrote the script, and they were given permission to enact the show during a Shishu-Kunj. (22)

One of the sisters narrated, and the other sister, with the help of several children from the Gujarati class, (some of whom also attended the Shishu-Kunj) worked the puppets. Tape (22) Shishu-Kunj - 23.8.87.

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recorded Indian music accompanied the show, which started with a Sanskrit prayer, and ended with a prayer to Rama, asking him to "bring light over darkness, o Ram". As it was explained at the start of the show, the narration was in English "so the children can all understand". (23) The puppet show told the story of the Ramayana in very simple terms, and it was greatly enjoyed.

Extra items will sometimes be organized for the Shishu-Kunj by Mrs. C. On April 12th, five days after the celebration of Ramanavami, Mrs. C. started reciting verses from the Ramayana at the Shishu-Kunj. As she explained to the youngsters on May 17th,

"In the beginning of the Ramayana Tulsidas has written some verses of invocation and benediction. We have recited the first four verses. Today we will recite the fifth." (24)

The verses were recited in Sanskrit, followed by Mrs. C. giving a Gujarati translation.

In addition to organizing or adding extra items to the Shishu-Kunj programme, Mrs. C. will also give further explanations to statements made during the weekly programme, or she will explain the meaning behind festivals which are

(23) ibid.

(24) Shishu-Kunj - 17.5.87.
to be celebrated in the temple. During the Shishu-Kunj on
March 15th, Mrs. C. reminded all present of the Hatashani
Mahotsav being held that evening to celebrate Holi. She
encouraged all the youngsters to ask their parents to take
them. She then continued with an explanation of why Hatashani
or Holi is celebrated, telling the story of Prahlad as
related in the Vishnu Purana and the Bhagavata Purana. The
significance of the story was explained as good triumphing
over evil.

During the Shishu-Kunj prior to Shivratri, (25) Mrs. C.
reminded those present that on the evening of Maha Shivratri,
a Shiv Pooja and celebration would be held in the temple.
She followed this with a brief description of what Shivratri
is, and how it would be celebrated.

If it is clear that the class either does not understand, or
is ignorant about a particular topic, then Mrs. C. will
elucidate. This was the case one week during the quiz (26)
when the contestants were shown two pictures, being asked to
identify the relevant characters. The contestants, aged
between nine and eleven, could not answer the question. When
the quiz was over, Mrs. C. exhibited the pictures, explaining
that they contained the images of Krishna, Balaram and Guru
Datt, and giving further explanation as to the identity of
Guru Datt.

(26) ibid., 8.3.87.
Apart from Mrs. C. and the young people themselves, committee members, particularly the secretary, will on occasion, arrange extra activities for the Shishu-Kunj. Such special activities often take the form of talks. (27) The speakers are usually sadhus from India, or strict devotees of sadhus in India, who are in England on lecture tours, sponsored by groups such as the National Council of Hindu Temples (U.K.) (28). They give spiritual discourses and lead discussions and satsang meetings in temples, halls and private homes around the country. The Management Committee usually tries to arrange for such persons to give a talk at the Shishu-Kunj while they are in Leicester. The talks are mostly in Gujarati or Hindi, but sometimes they are in English, depending upon the speaker.

On the days when such talks are given, the shrine room is full, with many older people attending specially. The speaker is seated at the front on the vyaspith and is welcomed by the pujari, who says a Sanskrit shloka, and places the auspicious kumkum mark, or har, on the forehead of the visitor. Sometimes this is followed by Mrs. C. and the youngsters singing one of the Sanskrit shlokas which is usually sung at the start of the Shishu-Kunj;

(27) Shishu-Kunj - 17.5.87., 22.3.87. See Appendix G, Shishu-Kunj - 15.2.87., 8.3.87.

(28) See pp. 55-56 above, for more information on the National Council of Hindu Temples (U.K.).
"Guru is Lord Brahma, Lord Vishnu and Lord Shiva. Nay, Guru is the incarnation of the Supreme Being. Salutations to such a guru again and again." (29)

The speakers are often requested by the secretary to speak specifically on the topic of the Bhagavad Gita. Some speak only about the holy scripture, but others incorporate other aspects of Hinduism. However, all encourage the youngsters to learn as much as possible about their religion. (30)

One week, (31) a committee member introduced a young man to those present at the Shishu-Kunj, explaining how they had met and what the young man was doing. The man had been in prison for six months, having committed a petty crime, but he had spent his time in prison studying the scriptures, specifically the Ramayana. He then gave a nine-day recitation of the holy book while still in prison. Once out of prison, the young man started to compile an English translation of the Ramayana. The visitor was welcomed by Mrs. C., and gave a short talk to the youngsters about his work. It was hoped that this young man, who had not wasted his time while in prison, would be an inspiration to the young people present.

In October 1987, a professional travelling puppet show from India, was in Leicester, which performed a version of the story of the Ramayana, with a Gujarati narration. The

(29) Shishu-Kunj - 17.5.87 (31) ibid., 8.3.87.
(30) See Appendix G, Shishu-Kunj - 15.2.87.
Management Committee invited them to perform their show at the Shishu-Kunj at the beginning of October, since Divali was later that month. Once again, the puppet show was very popular.

These then, are the elements which make up the Shishu-Kunj. Large parts of the proceedings are repeated each week; this, while ensuring that the youngsters learn certain prayers, shlokas, dhoons and chapters of the Gita by rote, can often lead to boredom, especially among the older participants, who may have been attending the activity for many years. The youngsters take part in the devotional aspects of the Shishu-Kunj, but the only standard teaching element is the reading and explanation of the Bhagavad Gita. The only other organized teaching element is when a visiting speaker gives a talk, or when Mrs. C. expounds upon a particular topic, such as the story behind a particular festival. Concepts such as dharma, maya and karma are implicit without necessarily being named. The youngsters read about such concepts during the Gita class, but they are never specifically taught about them, and such concepts are never discussed separately from the Gita class.

Within the framework of the Shishu-Kunj the youngsters are presented with a unitary view of Hinduism, which would not be gained less formally, in the home and in small interest groups. The view of Hinduism presented is similar to the view expressed in the booklet "Hinduism" published by the
National Council of Hindu Temples (U.K.). (32) An example is that the only scripture which is regularly studied is the Bhagavad Gita, which is given paramount importance in terms of the religious education of the youngsters. It is described as unique, containing "the gist of the Vedas", and teaching "how to live, why to live and what is the final goal of humans". It is also described as "our Bible; the Bible to Hindus". (33)

Those attending the Shishu-Kunj are urged to read the Bhagavad Gita regularly, because, "there is no doubt it is the form of Brahman", (34) and,

"the Lord says 'I live and take refuge in the Gita'.... Even Mahatma Gandhi whenever he faced difficulties in life, he used to take resort in the refuge of the Gita .... The Gita is a divine script (sic); as divine as the fire of the yagna, which kills all impurities." (35)

Also, "the recitation of one chapter, with devotion, daily, will attain (sic) the abode of Lord Shiva". (36)

Speakers who are invited to give a talk at the Shishu-Kunj are usually requested to talk on some aspect of the Bhagavad Gita. As it states in the booklet "Hinduism", the class is taught that,

(32) The booklet is discussed in detail in chapter one, pp. 56-58 where it is described as an example of "institutional self-awareness", as well as the process of standardization.

(33) Personal communication with the secretary - 30.6.87.

(34) See Appendix G; Mrs. C. speaking during the Shishu-Kunj of 8.3.87.
"the Gita is accepted by all Hindus as the highest expression of Vedic religious understanding and has been revered by great thinkers the world over". (37)

The youngsters gain a more unitary view of Hinduism than they would do otherwise because of the mainly pan-Indian programme of religious events celebrated in the temple throughout the year. The festivals are witnessed by the young people, and only these festivals will be elucidated by Mrs. C., therefore they will learn mainly of pan-Indian festivals, and know little or nothing of any others.

Of course, ethnicity is implicit within the temple itself; in the language and dress, and the celebration of certain festivals with Gujarati raas and garba, and through the presence of statues such as that of Jalaram Bapu. However, this is implicit rather than explicit, and the ideals manifested in the term "sanatan dharma", which is hailed during the Shishu-Kunj with the words "sanatan dharma ki jay" (Victory be to sanatan dharma), are stressed. (38)

For three years, up until 1985, the Shishu-Kunj was run quite differently; at the instigation of a young man who was a member of the Management Committee, and head convenor

(35) Mrs. C. speaking during the Shishu-Kunj of 8.2.87.
(36) Mrs. C. speaking during the Shishu-Kunj of 22.3.87.
(38) See chapter one, pp. 47 ff. for the discussion of the term "sanatan dharma".
of the Shishu-Kunj Sub-Committee. The area where the class takes place was cordoned off from the rest of the shrine room by ropes which were attached to the surrounding pillars. Mrs. C. continued to give the Gita class, and she led the prayers. However, many of the prayers, both in Sanskrit and Gujarati, were printed on sheets in roman capitals, followed by an English translation. These sheets were distributed to the class, along with a folder containing approximately twenty kirtans, in transliterated form.

After the Gita class, the youngsters were divided into three mixed classes according to age, consisting of those aged five to eight, nine to fourteen, and those over fourteen. One group remained in the main shrine room, another went to the wedding hall, while the last group went to the committee room. Each group had at least two teachers, most of whom were sixth-form students. The proceedings of all groups took place in English, and each group followed a different pattern. Amongst the older groups many discussions were held, and in the children's group, stories from Hindu scriptures were told in simple terms, being followed by questions on the preceding story.

The form and content of the Shishu-Kunj reverted to what it had originally been, (and how it is now) when the young man who had initiated the changes left the Management Committee. The young man concerned refused to be nominated for a committee post again, since there had been considerable opposition
within the committee to his reorganization of the Shishu-Kunj, and his policy of the involvement of young people in the organization of the temple, specifically in the area of the Shishu-Kunj. (39) Many committee members believed that the young people were being given too much responsibility, and the first change implemented by the newly elected committee was to revert to having the Shishu-Kunj in the shrine room without splitting into smaller groups.

The young volunteers who had worked for three years to make the Shishu-Kunj interesting for those attending, as well as more educative, were greatly disappointed. As one young man put his feelings:

"There is a lack of understanding between the young and the old; between the young people who used to run the activities, and the older people who are in positions of authority. To them the needs of the youngsters in the class are purely theoretical. To us, the workers, they are quite practical. We know the importance, necessity and urgency of every need. To them there is no sense of urgency. The older people do see the need theoretically, but they do not want to commit themselves to it practically." (40)

The result of the rift that occurred was the formation of the Shree Ram Mandir Seva Trust on December 11th 1985, the founder members of which were mainly those young volunteers from the seva dal group (41) at the Sanatan Mandir, many of

(39) See p. 79 above, where this issue is discussed as an example of the type of disagreement which can occur amongst locally elected committee members.

(40) Personal communication - 13.11.86.

(41) This group is discussed on pp. 81-82 above.
whom had been actively involved in running the Shishu-Kunj.
The Trust is a registered charity, holding fund raising events,
and sponsoring selected religious and cultural activities.
An example of such activities is the talk which was given at
the Hindu Temple one evening, by Shastri Kanubhai, a raj-guru
from India who was on a lecture tour of England. This talk
was arranged jointly by the Hindu Temple and the Trust,
specifically for the benefit of young people.

The Trust produces the bi-annual publication entitled "Seva
Journal", which is mostly typed in English, but also has
some hand-written parts in Gujarati. The journal announces
forthcoming activities, and publishes poems, jokes and quizzes,
as well as articles on such topics as "Utsavas" (Festivals),
"Deewali and the New Year", and "Love and Sacrifice". The
journal is distributed free of charge to all members.

The Trust has a sports wing, and the sports facilities of a
local community college are used for three hours every
Saturday evening, a variety of sports being played. This is
organized each week by two members of the Trust on a
voluntary basis. The activities are open to members of both
sexes, and many of those who attend the Shishu-Kunj also
attend these sports activities.

Most of those involved with the Trust continue to attend the
Shishu-Kunj. Many of the older male youths arrive an hour
or more late and sit at the back, but they do still attend.
The link with the temple is not broken. If they are asked
by the committee to help with a forthcoming activity, such as the outdoor *yagna* held in Abbey Park in May 1987, they gladly do so. However, most of their time and energy is put into the Trust.

The Trust is particularly interested in catering for the needs of those over fourteen years of age. A few examples of how this awareness of the needs of the young people manifests itself, will serve as a comparison with the awareness of the Management Committee of the *Sanatan Mandir*, and the forms of nurture provided by the temple other than through the medium of the *Shishu-Kunj*.

Firstly, in April 1987, one of the Trust committee members went to see a young woman from India, who was on a lecture tour of England. The young man had heard the woman, Wageshwari Devi, (who has renounced her own career in order to be able to tour the world giving spiritual discourses) give several talks in Leicester, and he asked if she would recite and expound upon the Bhagavad Gita, in English, while being videoed. He explained that the Trust committee wanted to encourage young people to read the Bhagavad Gita but many do not enjoy reading, and those who do, often find the scripture difficult to understand. However, if the youngsters could watch a video, they would be more enthusiastic, and they would definitely benefit from an English explanation. He further explained that although the *Shree Ram Mandir Seva Trust* would pay for the series of video recordings to
be made, they would in fact be kept in the Sanatan Mandir, to be available for loan. In effect, the temple would acquire a video cassette library of the recitation and explanation of the Bhagavad Gita. The young man explained that young people would be more likely to watch a video cassette than read a book, since most households have a video recorder, so that youngsters are used to the medium. The woman declined the proposal, but it is still a popular idea among the Trust committee members.

A second incident which highlights the difference in attitude towards the needs of the young people between Trust committee members and the temple committee, took place in 1987. In May, Swami Akhandanand Sagarji visited England, and was based in Leicester. While he was in England, one of the concerns the sadhu often voiced was on the subject of the religious education of the young. The sadhu suggested that a shibir be arranged so that young Hindus from around the country could gather together in one place for a few days to learn about different aspects of their religion.

In response, the group in Blackburn known as Swadhaya Parivar organized a mixed shibir for August 1987. They sent invitations to many temples, including the Sanatan Mandir, but the Management Committee decided against officially supporting the activity. However, the Trust committee decided that it would benefit those who attended the Shishu-Kunj, and they started a three month campaign of visiting the homes of every youngster who was known to attend the Shishu-Kunj.
During these home visits, which were made by two of the Trust committee members, the parents of the youngster concerned were told of the forthcoming shibir and the benefits of it as perceived by the Trust. Four houses were visited each evening if possible, and approximately half an hour was spent in each house. The outcome was that a group of fifteen youngsters attended the shibir, in transport provided by the Trust.

Formal Religious Nurture Outside the Shishu-Kunj

There are few activities organized by the Sanatan Mandir which form part of the formal religious nurture, apart from the Shishu-Kunj. Perhaps this is an additional reason for the establishment and success of the Shree Ram Mandir Seva Trust; the young people involved in the Trust realize that many of those who attend the Shishu-Kunj would like to have further opportunities to learn more about their religion and culture.

One vehicle for formal nurture outside the Shishu-Kunj is the monthly magazine entitled "Sanatan Sandesh", published by the temple. This is almost entirely in Gujarati except for occasional articles or advertisements in English, and the "Children's Section", which is on the last page. The "Children's Section" is a regular feature, but it is quite short, and is usually aimed at the children rather than at the young people. However, occasionally articles are published
on topics such as "Divali" or "Did You Know About The Temple?"
Every month there is a competition, sometimes in the form of a crossword, and essay titles are often given, where the readers are invited to write short essays of no more than eight lines. The best answer is published in the next edition. Titles already published include, "Mahatma Gandhiji", "The Importance of Gita", "Your Favourite Festival" and "Goddess Amba".

There is usually a poor response from the youngsters with regard to sending in answers to the competitions. Although every edition contains at least one correct answer, or one essay, it is the same small group of youngsters whose answers appear in the magazine each month. One such answer was written under the title of "My Favourite Festival", and appeared in the October edition in 1986. It was written by an eleven year old.

"My favourite festival is Diwali. Diwali takes place for five days during October/November and it marks the Hindu New Year. Diwali is a special time for children. Many give and receive presents. Best clothes are worn by the children and fireworks are lit in the park. We go to see the beautiful lights on Belgrave Road. At school children enter rangoli competitions and prizes are awarded to the winners. Diwas are lit in all houses to welcome God to visit their homes. Sometimes a Diwali play is performed at school. This usually involves the story of Rama and Sita. Everyone has a wonderful time and we all go to the temple to pray and wish for a pleasant coming year." (42)

A second vehicle for nurture outside the Shishu-Kunj, which has been organized by the Sanatan Mandir, is the annual "Gita Exam". It was a visiting sadhu from India called Swami Vishnupuri who suggested that an annual examination on the Bhagavad Gita should be instituted at all temples belonging to the National Council of Hindu Temples (U.K.). He believed that it would be one way of encouraging youngsters to read the scripture. The sadhu, who was on a lecture tour, brought hundreds of copies of the Bhagavad Gita, in Sanskrit, with an English translation, and distributed them free of charge to children and young people at every temple he visited. The proposal was accepted by the National Council of Hindu Temples (U.K.), and the first examination was prepared in 1986.

Swami Vishnupuri wrote out a model examination paper, (43) and the Council appointed a capable person to set the examination paper each year, using the model paper. The paper is sent to each participating temple, and a common date is arranged for the examination to take place. The examination paper has five sections; the first is on general knowledge of the Bhagavad Gita, and the last four sections contain questions on the first four chapters or discourses of the holy scripture. Copies of the scripture may be taken into the examination and consulted. The questions require short answers only, and the candidates can sit the paper in either Hindi, English or Gujarati.

(43) See Appendix H.
The examination is open to all age groups, being two hours long, and in the Sanatan Mandir it takes place in the wedding hall. Although all are encouraged to sit the examination, it is the youngsters who are specifically encouraged to do so. The papers are marked at the individual temples by various committee members, although Council representatives make random checks on temples to ensure that marking is fair. The examination is given much publicity in the Sanatan Mandir, being announced in the Shishu-Kunj as well as in "Sanatan Sandesh". In 1986 forty-three people sat the examination, although only approximately half of that number were youngsters. Unfortunately, the examination did not take place in 1987, owing to a sudden serious illness which befell the person appointed to set the paper each year. However, it is hoped that the examination will be reinstituted in 1988.

To turn now to the Sanatan Centre (44) as a potential area for religious nurture, we see that when the Centre was established by the temple in 1982, the hope was that it would provide "somewhere for the youth (sic) to meet and learn about their culture". (45) Whereas the young people usually only visit the temple on Sundays for the Shishu-Kunj, and on festival days with their family, it was hoped that by having a building with various sports, cultural and social

(44) See p. 66 above, for information on the establishment of the Sanatan Centre.

(45) Personal communication with a former committee member - 13.11.86.
facilities, which ran classes and clubs, the youngsters would have somewhere to meet and socialize, thereby coming to feel more a part of the temple. It was planned to have strong links between the Centre and the temple, so by becoming involved with the Centre, one would automatically become involved with the temple.

Unfortunately, the Sanatan Centre has never fulfilled the desires of its initiators. The official aims of the Centre, as displayed during an open day, are to

"provide a focal point for the immediate community and the Hindu community in general. To provide opportunities for educational, cultural, religious and recreational functions and activities. To encourage participation of (sic) recreational and social harmony of youths, women and elderly." (46)

The first and third aims are being fulfilled to some extent. However, although the Centre provides educational and recreational activities, there are few cultural activities or functions, and no religious activities.

The Centre has a youth club, which provides various sports facilities, such as weight training in the multi-gym, badminton, basketball and table-tennis. Sports activities are also organized at other venues, and most are well-attended. There is also a special Ladies' Night, and various

(46) Displayed in the Sanatan Centre on 8.11.86.
activities for women only. What can be termed cultural activities, include harmonium and singing workshops, Kathak classes for women, and tabla classes. These are not as well-attended as other activities, with Kathak and tabla classes only recently introduced, because until recently there was little interest for either class from the public.

In November 1986 the Centre hosted an open day. Traditional food was provided, displays exhibited the Centre's activities, and at the end of the day a cultural display was put on. Various local Asian groups performed traditional dances and music, followed by a display of classical Indian dance by a professional teacher. The whole event was organized by the Centre staff, and it was very successful. It was the first event of its kind and has not yet been repeated.

The Centre, although it is a potential area for religious nurture, is in fact more a youth or community centre than a cultural centre; it has few links with the temple except through the Management Committee and the relevant sub-committee, and the fact that it advertises its activities in "Sanatan Sandesh". Some of those who attend the Shishu-Kunj also attend the youth club or various sports activities or classes. However, many who use the facilities of the Centre do not attend the Shishu-Kunj. The multi-gym is popular with young men, and it is used by members of the Shree Ram Mandir Seva Trust, who prefer to be involved in all other respects, with the Trust.
As a youth centre or neighbourhood centre attached to the temple, the Sanatan Centre is effective, although it does not draw those who use its facilities into temple life. The workers at the Centre are entirely separate from those in positions of authority in the temple. There are few links between the two institutions, and as a tool for formal religious nurture, the Sanatan Centre is not effective.

Having discussed the publication "Sanatan Sandesh", the "Gita Exam", and the Sanatan Centre, in terms of religious nurture, the area of festivals will now be considered. Festivals, although serving an important educational function in the Sanatan Mandir, do not fulfil the same role in the process of formal nurture as they do in the A. P. Sanstha. In the Sanatan Mandir, the educational benefits of the festivals are, for the most part, that the youngsters learn through observation rather than through participation. During the celebration of the main annual festivals, of which there are six; Shivratri, Holi, Ramanavami, Janmashtami, Navratri and Divali, there is an extremely large attendance. (47) True to the tradition of Hinduism, children and young people accompany their parents to such celebrations. (48)

(47) BOWEN, (1981, 45) states that at festival times at the Hindu Cultural Society of Bradford, "the premises are likely to be crowded beyond capacity, with all the available rooms fully occupied and would-be attenders outside having difficulty getting in".

(48) JACKSON, 1985, 69.
HOLM, 118.
NESBITT, 1987, 14, 15.
KILLINGLEY, 150.
If an individual *havan* is being performed, a particular family will have paid to take part. In this case, the youngsters in the family may join in. If a *havan* is performed on a large scale in the temple, as it is on *Durga Asthmi*, then again, the youngsters in the families taking part may join in. If they are considered old enough for it to be safe, and there is enough room, then they will definitely join in; otherwise, they will usually sit in the temple with relatives or friends, and observe the proceedings.

During certain celebrations such as *Navratri* and *Sharad Punam*, the youngsters will take a very active role, in the form of dancing, both *raas* and *garba* being performed. Although during *Navratri*, individual groups such as caste associations will hire halls, and Granby Halls is hired by the *Navratri* Committee for use by all Hindus, a special effort is made to visit the temple on at least one of the nine nights to take part in the festivities there. Over the weekend during *Navratri*, families try to ensure that they visit the temple to have *darshan* of the mother goddess. The youngsters, especially the young female teenagers, particularly enjoy *Navratri*, since it means dressing in beautiful traditional clothes and jewellery, and in many cases, attending functions where they take part in the dancing on all evenings of the festival.

*Sharad Punam*, in October, is celebrated in the temple by women only, with an evening of *raas* and *garba*. The focus is
particularly on the young women. A shrine to Krishna is erected in the centre of the shrine room, and the women, dressed in white saris, dance around the shrine. The evening symbolizes and celebrates Krishna dancing with the gopis in the moonlight. A great number of people attend, and during the evening arti is performed, with one hundred and eight women taking part.

Festivals usually involve observation rather than participation, but there are occasions; as can be seen above, when the youngsters do take an active part, and these are the occasions that they enjoy most. For example on the evening of Dussehra, the Navratri Committee organized an activity on a park near the Sanatan Mandir, which involved the burning of an effigy of the wicked King Ravana, a character from the Ramayana, on a bonfire. Owing to the links between the Navratri Committee and the Sanatan Mandir, three children from the temple were chosen to take part. They were dressed as Rama, Sita and Lakshman, and after walking towards the effigy, the bonfire was lit as "Rama" fired his "arrow" towards Ravana. This brought the story of the Ramayana to life for the children and their friends who were watching.

The festivals witnessed by the youngsters are often briefly explained by Mrs. C. during the Shishu-Kunj, which reinforces what is observed. However, there is inadequate explanation and teaching to ensure that what is witnessed during festivals, and in the temple generally, is understood, much less to
enable the young people to build up

"an adequate conceptual framework within which to set their practical knowledge and experience in such a way that they can make sense of Hinduism both to themselves and to outsiders." (49)

Attention will now be drawn to the extent to which young people are involved in temple life at the Sanatan Mandir. It is, in fact, very obvious that they do not take an active or responsible part in temple life. The energies of those who would be inclined to be involved, are now directed towards the activities of the Shree Ram Mandir Seva Trust. Other than coming to the temple on Sunday in order to attend the Shishu-Kunj, the youngsters may only visit the temple on other occasions to celebrate a festival with their family. If they attend a class or activity during the week at the Sanatan Centre, they will not necessarily take the opportunity to visit the temple at the same time.

It is very rare to see more than a couple of young people at the evening arti ceremony, which is performed every evening in the temple at seven o'clock. There are usually approximately twenty people present, but almost all are adults. However, if a father, or even both parents, attend the temple one evening a week to take part in the arti, they will usually be accompanied by their young children.

(49) JACKSON, 1985, 71.
To sum up, such are the activities which provide formal religious nurture for the young people at the Sanatan Mandir. Apart from the Shishu-Kunj there are few effective sources of nurture. Those that there are include the "Sanatan Sandesh", the "Gita Exam" and the celebration of festivals. Those in positions of authority in the Sanatan Mandir are aware that the needs of the youngsters are not being met. There is general agreement that changes must be made, and the specific area under consideration for change is the Shishu-Kunj. In the words of Mrs. C.,

"The activities that are being run presently are not sufficient. It needs to expand: more teachers and more classes. The Bhagavad Gita is one aspect, but various aspects also need to be covered from the religious point of view; like the teaching of the Ramayana and various other scriptures; discussing various festivals, worship and things like that." (50)

The Management Committee is deciding upon changes to be made in the near future. As the secretary says,

"If you go to the Swaminarayan Temple, or the Sai Centre .... they are teaching properly; they are doing very well. Here, the children come, and it is like a nursery school .... It is not working (sic) right." (51)

The plans are to move the Shishu-Kunj out of the shrine room and into the wedding hall on a permanent basis. The wedding

(50) Personal communication - 29.7.87.

(51) Personal communication - 30.6.87.
hall is being redecorated, with plans that partitions will be constructed enabling the hall to be divided into several small rooms. One such room will become a permanent library or resource centre, open to members of the temple and non-members alike. These are the plans to date. It has been decided that changes definitely need to be made, in the hope that the facilities of the Shishu-Kunj will be improved, and the needs of the youngsters will come closer to being met. In the next chapter, comparisons will be drawn between the nurture programmes of the two temples under discussion.
CHAPTER SIX

THE CONCLUSION

The previous two chapters contain a detailed description of the formal religious nurture which takes place within the A. P. Sanstha and the Sanatan Mandir. It is apparent that there are many differences in terms of nurture, between the two institutions. The present chapter contains a summary of the major differences, and attempts to account for them with reference to the distinct traditions of both organizations as discussed earlier in the thesis. (1) The classes, being the most influential and conspicuous forums for nurture within the temple setting, will be discussed first, before nurture which takes place through various other media of temple life.

Firstly, the most obvious difference between the classes in the two institutions is their size and constituency. In the A. P. Sanstha there are four separate classes, divided according to sex and age. This means that each class is relatively small, and each has a specifically assigned teacher. The Sanatan Mandir has one large class, mixed in terms of both age and sex; there is one teacher assigned to the whole group. Having smaller classes at the A. P. Sanstha means that the teachers have more control over their pupils,

(1) See chapter one.
enabling them to direct appropriate information and material to a specific age group. With the larger class at the Sanatan Mandir, the teacher has a difficult task trying to present information in a way that will be intelligible and interesting to both seven and seventeen year olds. The factors of age range and separation or mixing of the sexes, are major points of interest, as they have a direct effect on the character of the classes and the degree to which the youngsters are successfully able to acquire knowledge.

The temples differ secondly, in the way in which the classes are run. At the A. P. Sanstha, the classes, particularly for the males, are extremely well-organized. As has been shown, the young people and their well-being and religious education is one of the most significant aspects of temple life. The Management Committee conscientiously fulfils its function as stated in the constitution, "to provide religious and recreational youth activities" and to "promote a Youth Organization which shall ...... run educational and language classes for its members". (2)

The balaks are divided into four classes, each with an appointed teacher. There are also specific teachers for the Gujarati lessons which take place during class time. The atmosphere in these classes is formal, and the teachers follow a strict curriculum as set out in syllabus books

(2) Constitution of the A. P. Sanstha, 27, 30.
prepared in London and India. The balak teachers or sanchalaks have regular meetings to discuss progress and future plans. They also make regular visits to the homes of their pupils. There is thus much follow-up work undertaken by the sanchalaks, and close communication between pupils, parents and teachers.

The yuvuk sabha is less formal, but still well-planned, with one member of the Youth Organization with the responsibility for the organization of the sabha. By the time the boys become yuvuke, they are given much responsibility for coordinating their own activities. The yuvuks themselves in effect, run their own sabha, although members of the Management Committee are present each week, and strict guidelines for standard items, are set by the headquarters in India.

The organization of the female classes is left largely to the females themselves. This occurs not only because the concept of formal nurture for the females within the Sanstha is relatively new, but also because of the strict segregation of the sexes. The balika class has one teacher, who follows the syllabus books prepared for the Bal Mandal. The yuktis, guided by a learned member of the Mahila Mandal, have constructed a standard weekly agenda for their sabha, based mainly on the yuvuk sabha. Group discussion plays an important part in the yukti sabha, which is the least formal class run by the temple.
The way in which the classes are run at the two temples is striking in its contrast. In the Sanatan Mandir there is less emphasis on the importance of the religious education of the young. This is reflected in the constitution, which although it states as one of the aims, "the advancement of the Hindu religion and faith through religious education", and one of its functions, "to arrange ..... preaching and teaching of the principles and practices of Hinduism", (3) makes no specific mention of young people or children.

The Shishu-Kunj Sub-committee is officially responsible for organizing the activities of the Shishu-Kunj. It is also members of the Sub-committee, all of whom are members of the Management Committee, who decide whether a particular speaker will be an appropriate person to give a talk to the youngsters during a Shishu-Kunj. Having decided upon a speaker, the sub-committee then arranges the visit, after consultation with the teacher.

Apart from arranging such special activities, the week-to-week programme of the class is left to the discretion of the teacher. This is undoubtedly because the teacher was originally invited to start an activity at the temple which she had been running for many years, namely the Gita Class, and she has now been running it at the temple for fourteen years. The Gita class is the core element of the Shishu-Kunj, and

(3) Constitution of the Sanatan Mandir, 1, 4.
any other activities are fitted around this standard item. The youngsters have little involvement with the organization of the class. However, occasionally, older members of the class suggest a new activity, such as the quiz or discussion groups. If these suggestions are acceptable to the teacher and the Shishu-Kunj Sub-committee, then the young people organize them.

The Shishu-Kunj is formal in nature by virtue of the fact that the teacher stands at the front of the shrine room, the youngsters sit in front of her, and she leads the class, with the young people participating only when directed to do so. Participation involves reciting chapters or verses of the Bhagavad Gita, and taking part in devotional worship in its various forms. However, the activity is informal compared to a controlled class-room environment, since it takes place in the shrine room with all the activity that this involves, with parents and other devotees often taking the opportunity to observe the class.

To sum up, in the A. P. Sanstha the classes are smaller and more manageable for the teachers; there is good communication between the teachers and the youngsters; the classes are in a controlled environment; there is much pupil participation, and the teachers are receptive to the needs of their pupils. In the case of the yuvuks and yuktis specifically, they are extremely involved in the organization
of their own classes. (4) In the Sanatan Mandir, because of the large amorphous nature of the class, there is little communication between the teacher and the youngsters, and therefore there is little receptivity to any special needs. The environment and the level of teaching make concentration difficult, and the young people are not involved in the organization of the class in any responsible way. Therefore there is not the level of commitment or enthusiasm for the class in the Sanatan Mandir that is found amongst the young people in the A. P. Sanstha.

So far, two differences between the temples have been noted, the size and constituency of the classes, and the way in which the classes are run. The third area of difference between the two institutions involves what is actually taught in the classes, the activities that take place. Considering the A. P. Sanstha first, the defined aim of the various classes is to teach the young people about

"the Hindu religion .... with particular reference to the teachings and principles of Lord Swaminarayan and Gunatitanand Swami, as propounded by Bochasanwasi Shri Akshar Purushottam Sanstha." (5)

Explicit teaching is an important element of the classes, especially for the balaks and balikas. The children are


explicitly taught about the history, sacred scriptures and beliefs of the Sanstha. By the time the children become yuvuks and yuktis, they are expected to be conversant with such topics. They are, in addition, expected to have learnt certain basic devotional elements which are included in the classes, such as dhoons, prathanas, dhyan and kirtans, arti and thal.

An important aspect of the balak and balika classes is that Gujarati is taught, in addition to being used in the class situation during discussion and explanation. The hope is that the young people will become conversant with religious ritual and belief in Gujarati, making Sanstha scriptures and religious concepts intelligible to them in their original language, so reducing the risks of misinterpretation which can come through the translation of concepts which may be difficult enough to conceive of in any circumstances. Since the female classes were started comparatively recently, the standard of Gujarati (in terms of articulating religious concepts and understanding explanations of the scriptures), particularly written Gujarati, is considerably lower in the yukti sabha that it is in the yuvuk sabha. However, now that there is a balika class, in which Gujarati is taught, perhaps this situation will change.

In the yuvuk and yukti sabhas there is still a high degree of teaching. This is particularly true of the yuvuk sabha. The young people are constantly expected to demonstrate the
knowledge acquired as balaks and balikas, and this knowledge is built upon. With the yuvuks this is more formal, with oral tests, question-and-answer sessions, or more generally, throughout each sabha by questions which are directed in a random way, either to the sabha as a whole or to individuals. Scriptures are read, followed by explanation and discussion as necessary, and Sanstha periodicals are read weekly and discussed. Talks are frequently given, either by the yuvuks themselves or by older devotees.

Most of the yuktis have not benefited from the balika sabha, although many have built up basic knowledge equivalent to that gained by balikas, through taking the series of annual examinations. The main element of teaching in the yukti sabha is the reading of the Vachanamritam by Mrs. M., followed by her explanation. The yuktis prepare their own quizzes, talks and readings, and Mrs. M. is always present to comment, explain and facilitate discussion.

In the Sanatan Mandir there is no defined aim for the Shishu-Kunj. It was started because of the concern by parents over their children's lack of understanding of their own religion, and because it was known by members of the Management Committee that Mrs. C. ran an activity called the Gita Class; and "it was thought that it would be beneficial to have the Gita Class in the temple". (6)

(6) Personal communication with the secretary - 30.6.87.
During the Shishu-Kunj, those who attend regularly do learn through participation; they learn kirtans, prayers, dhoons, thal and arti. However, there is a very small element of actual teaching. The Gita class plays the largest role in teaching, with selected chapters being learnt by rote, through repetition, as with the various devotional elements. The commentary on the Bhagavad Gita, given by Mrs. C. is very basic, simply explaining what has been read, in more colloquial terms. Philosophical concepts, such as dharma and maya are never explicitly explained, and the underlying philosophy of the holy scripture is never discussed. The explanations given, go only so far as to put any dialogue or action into the context of the story of the Mahabharata, or to make clear the difficult language of the Bhagavad Gita. Acceptance of philosophical concepts and tenets of Hinduism are implicit, but the young people are never taught directly about them.

Other teaching takes place when Mrs. C. explains the meaning behind a forthcoming festival, or when visiting speakers give talks. Furthermore, the quiz encourages the youngsters to learn more about the Bhagavad Gita. During the weekly Gita class it is easy to lose concentration, but the quiz makes the participants learn, as well as the audience.

The Sanatan Mandir does not provide Gujarati classes, although most of the items in the Shishu-Kunj take place in Gujarati. However, it is significant that in any item organized by the
young people, English will be used. Many of those who attend the Shishu-Kunj also attend Gujarati classes separately, but this does not necessarily make it easy for them to understand the meaning of religious terms; neither does it help them to be conversant with religious ritual and belief in Gujarati, as might be the case if Gujarati lessons took place in the temple environment, using the type of vocabulary used in the Shishu-Kunj.

To sum up, the classes at the A. P. Sanstha do involve the direct teaching of religious beliefs, philosophy and ritual of the Sanstha. This takes slightly different forms in each class. The children are taught Gujarati during the classes, which helps to acquaint them with the religious concepts in their full meaning. The young people are given a clear and explicit view of the beliefs of the Sanstha. The class in the Sanatan Mandir does not involve the direct teaching of religious beliefs, philosophy or ritual in an explicit way. Much of what is learnt in the class is through the medium of observation and repetition. The youngsters are not given a clear view of Hinduism; this is implicit rather than explicit. Whether the fact that no Gujarati classes are held as part of the activities makes a great deal of difference, is not clear, as there is so little teaching anyway. However, it is certainly the case that a number of the youngsters miss much that the teacher says through a lack of Gujarati. As a whole, those who attend the Shishu-Kunj are much less informed and articulate about their tradition than their counterparts in the A. P. Sanstha.
Having discussed the different levels of formal nurture as presented in the classes, there now follows a summary of the apparent differences in nurture which take place through other media of temple life, apart from the classes. The media in question comprise two categories; the first includes what will be termed forms of direct nurture, and the second includes what will be termed forms of indirect nurture. Forms of direct nurture are those activities which are specifically organized for the benefit of young people, or which are organized in such a way as directly to include them and benefit them in terms of religious nurture. Forms of indirect nurture are those activities which indirectly benefit the young people in terms of religious nurture.

Focusing first on forms of direct nurture, it is apparent that the A. P. Sanstha provides many activities specifically aimed at the furthering of the religious education of its young people. Within this category are included the annual examinations, (7) Shibirs, (8) adhiveshans, (9) and festivals or samaiyas, (10) all of which will be briefly discussed. The importance of taking the examinations is stressed throughout the year in the temple. The examinations are held every July, and the results are known and publicized in September or October. Relevant prizes and congratulations


(8) See pp. 192-195 above.

(9) See pp. 195-196 above.
are given at a samaiya within the next three months. In February, examination registration forms to be filled out by prospective candidates for the forthcoming July, arrive from Bochasan. People have one month to register, before the completed forms are returned to Bochasan. The temple committee keeps a record of those who have registered, and the headquarters in Bochasan also has a record of the exact number of candidates preparing for each grade of examination in each temple of the Sanstha in India and abroad.

While the registration forms are in the temple, the importance of the examinations is particularly stressed. The young people are reminded that "it is Bapa's wish" that as many people as possible sit for the examinations. If people have 'O' Levels or 'A' Levels to sit in the summer, then they are excused from the Sanstha examinations. Although all studying for the examinations is expected to be done privately, those who have registered, especially for the higher grades, are excused from all temple duties in the couple of months prior to the appointed date. However, all are still expected to attend their weekly sabha. Mock examinations are held in June, the papers being prepared and marked by committee members in the temple, and the results are made public the next week.

The fifth-grade examination is the most difficult, being in Gujarati, and based on the Vachanamritam. Often those young people who do not feel capable of sitting for the fifth-grade, will take the examinations over again, starting once more with the first-grade. (11)
The annual examinations in the A. P. Sanstha are the main source of direct nurture, apart from the weekly sabhas. The syllabus for each grade reinforces the teaching which takes place in the sabhas, with a high level of explicit teaching about the rituals, beliefs and history of the Sanstha. This is made effective by the great importance given to the taking and passing of the examinations, which are a constant feature of temple life throughout the year. Rewards for passing and gaining high marks are plentiful in terms of public praise. The benefits of the system for the youngsters are great, in that they acquire a high degree of explicit information about their religious tradition.

A second form of direct nurture is the activity known as shibir. The shibirs held in the A. P. Sanstha are inter­temple activities, drawing together the youngsters from different temples in England, to produce joint programmes. The shibirs are organized for and largely by, the young people, (12) and much nurture takes place, through participation in the devotional worship, the preparation of items for the programme, and in listening to items which have been prepared by others.

The activity known as adhiveshan is a third form of direct nurture. (13) The preparation for an adhiveshan starts

(11) See Appendix E, for the 1987 first-year examination paper.

(12) See note 8 above.

(13) See Appendix F, for the Rules and Marking Guidelines for the Sixth National Adhiveshan Competition.
months in advance, involving the young people in consolidating different aspects of knowledge acquired in the weekly sabhas, for competition. Committee members, the sanchalaks, as well as the candidates themselves, spend much time and effort in preparation. One yuvuk memorized two hundred kirtans in Gujarati for the Mukhpath category in the Kirtan section, (14) although the minimum number to be memorized was only ten, and ten to twenty-five per cent of the total number memorized, would be tested by the judges. The contestants not only had to recite the kirtans, they were also required to explain the meaning. As with the shibir, the adhiveshan not only involves the youngsters in learning about aspects of their religion, but it also teaches them to be articulate and conversant with their belief and knowledge. In the adhiveshan of 1987, marks were awarded for presentation as well as for other aspects of performance.

In the A. P. Sanstha, festivals or samaiyas are incorporated into the category of direct nurture. This is because, in this temple specifically, samaiyas, although not organized especially for the young people, are in fact organized not only in such a way as directly to include and benefit them, but they are also largely organized by the young people themselves. (15)

(14) ibid.

(15) See Appendix D, "Seva Descriptions".
Many youngsters attend the samaiyas, and this is the case mainly because of two factors. Firstly, the nature of the samaiyas, as forms of congregational worship, in which those present can directly participate, by singing, praying, listening to and giving speeches and performing pooja and arti, makes it more attractive to young people than a more traditional ritualistic festival, which is led by a pujari, where there is little chance for the type of participation mentioned above. Secondly, by virtue of the fact that the young people are so involved in the general organization of the samaiyas, and take part in them; leading kirtans, dhoons and prathanas; performing dramas, dances and giving speeches, ensures that a certain number of youngsters attend. Usually all those who attend the classes also attend the samaiyas. Nurture takes place through involvement in the devotional worship, in addition to listening to the speeches and scriptural explanations, and by being asked to research a particular topic to present as a talk at a samaiya.

Forms of indirect nurture at the A. P. Sanstha are interconnected with the forms of direct nurture discussed above. There is in fact, only one main area of indirect nurture, and this is the explicit involvement of the young people in the general running and organization of the temple. This is linked to the concept of seva, (16) which plays such a vital role in the ideology of the Sanstha, and consequently in temple life, with the daily organization necessary within the

(16) See pp. 179-182 above, for the discussion of the concept of seva.
temple, being seen in terms of seva, or selfless service. For the yuvuks this system is more formalized than for the yuktis, although it does also exist for them.

By filling out a seva application form, and working in a seva "department", (17) the yuvuks become involved in temple life. This can be viewed as indirect nurture in two specific ways. Firstly, such seva involvement gives the yuvuks responsibility in different aspects of temple affairs, and this, in turn, not only encourages them to come to the temple, but it also gives them a sense of commitment to the institution. Secondly, because of the work which must be done in each seva department the yuvuks must spend a certain amount of time in the temple building itself, fulfilling their obligation. Much of this time is in the evenings or at weekends, depending upon which seva department each yuvuk works in. This means that yuvuks will necessarily spend time together, making friends with other yuvuks, so building strong bonds within the Sanstha.

The yuvuks do, in fact, seem to spend much of their free time together, and to organize and take part in activities as a group. For example, a group of yuvuks go swimming together one night a week at a local swimming pool; the same being true of the yuktis. The temple authorities actively encourage this, by helping to arrange annual outings or holidays for

(17) See Appendix D.
the yuvuks and yuktis. In 1986, a group of ten yuktis rented a house in Devon for one week. In 1985 a group of yuvuks hired a minibus for a week and drove up to Scotland during the school holidays.

Not only will the young people form friendships within the Sanstha as a consequence of spending time in the temple building, but they will also be in the building to take part in the various forms of daily worship, such as the evening arti ceremony, which takes place at six o’ clock, and samaiyas, usually held at the weekend. Hence, the explicit involvement of the young people in the general running and organization of the temple plays an important part in the indirect nurture of the young people in the A. P. Sanstha.

Considering the Sanatan Mandir, the activities other than Shishu-Kunj which contribute to the religious nurture of the young, either in a direct or indirect way, are comparatively few. Examining forms of direct nurture first, the most significant item in this category is the newly-established annual Gita Examination. (18) The aim of the examination is that by revising for it, the candidates will study the Bhagavad Gita and consolidate the knowledge gained every week in the Gita class held during the Shishu-Kunj. It is hoped that by sitting for the examination, the candidates will at least read the Bhagavad Gita, and perhaps even come to a deeper understanding of the scripture.

(18) See pp. 226-227, and Appendix H.
The first, and to date the only, Gita Examination was held in November 1986. It was announced in the Shishu-Kunj every week for approximately four weeks before the set date, and was advertised by the National Council of Hindu Temples (U.K.) in the October edition of "Sanatan Sandesh", in English, giving information regarding the syllabus and eligibility. In the "Children's Section" there was the request, "Do make an attempt to sit for Gita Examination which will be held on Sunday, 23rd November 1986 at Sanatan Mandir". (19)

No mock examination was held, and no formal registration was required. Those who wanted to take the examination simply arrived on the day. It took place on a Sunday afternoon, in the wedding hall. Once the papers were marked, the names of those who had passed were published in "Sanatan Sandesh", and put on the main noticeboard, along with their marks. All those youngsters who passed were presented with a certificate during a Shishu-Kunj.

It is noticeable that there is much less emphasis put on the annual examinations in the Sanatan Mandir than there is at the A. P. Sanstha. Although the youngsters are encouraged to sit the examination in the Sanatan Mandir, there is as much emphasis on the older membership taking part as on the young people. Furthermore, the lack of formal registration means that those who thought they would take the examination,

but are discouraged by the amount of learning once the date
approaches, can simply decide against sitting the examination
at any stage.

In terms of nurture, the examination fulfils much the same
role as the Gita class, and it would be a more effective
form of nurture if more young people could be persuaded to
take part. However, as with the Gita class, the questions
and the answers expected are very basic, only dealing with
philosophical terms and concepts in an implicit way, not
asking for such terms or concepts to be explained. This is
perhaps due to the fact that the examination is open to all
ages, and there is not a series of graded examinations where
the level of understanding of the candidates would be
expected to differ, and such differences could be catered
for.

The second form of direct nurture, apart from the Gita
Examination, is the "Children's Section" included within the
monthly temple publication, "Sanatan Sandesh". (20) It is
an important attempt at what is here termed direct nurture,
because it is aimed specifically at the young membership of
the temple, and it provides short articles on different
aspects of the Hindu religion, as well as competitions and
and crosswords, all related to religious topics. However, as
was explained, (21) it does have its limitations, as it

(20) See pp. 224-225 above.
(21) ibid.
is generally aimed at a very young readership, although whenever the publication is handed out in the Shishu-Kunj, most of the young people do turn to the "Children's Section" at the back and give it at least a quick perusal before taking it home.

To turn to forms of indirect nurture within the Sanatan Mandir, in this temple, festivals are included within this category rather than within the category of direct nurture, as in the A. P. Sanstha. This is because in the Sanatan Mandir, festivals are not organized in such a way as directly to include or benefit the young people. Rather, it is a form of activity which indirectly involves the youngsters in temple life, because as is traditional in Hinduism, the whole family will attend the celebrations at the temple if possible. (22) It is usually only the pujari, one family, or a group of families, who are involved in the actual ritual, so the young people for the most part, will observe rather than participate; therefore nurture takes place through this medium rather than any other. It is definitely nurture, since the young people do come to the temple, and they do learn a certain amount through observation. It is indirect nurture because no effort is made specifically to encourage the youngsters to attend, or to involve them in the proceedings, or to teach them something through or about the proceedings.

(22) See chapter five, note 48.
Festival activities are the only successful form of indirect nurture at the Sanatan Mandir. An attempt was, and is, being made at indirect nurture through the Sanatan Centre. (23) It was the hope of the temple committee that there would be stronger links between the Centre and the temple; that not only would the Centre be somewhere for the young people to meet and take part in recreational activities, but that they would also learn about their culture and become more involved in temple activities.

Whereas the A. P. Sanstha has been successful in this form of indirect nurture, in involving the young people in the day-to-day running and activities of the temple, the Sanatan Mandir has not. This is because the medium through which they sought and seek to involve the youngsters, namely the Sanatan Centre, has few links with the temple, and has evolved into a recreational and youth club, with little interests except these, almost totally divorced from the temple. Those young people who attend the Centre, even on a regular basis, will not necessarily have any more contact with the Sanatan Mandir than those who do not attend the Centre at all.

To sum up all that has been discussed regarding the different levels of formal nurture provided by the temples outside the classes, it is noticeable that the A. P. Sanstha provides more activities in both the categories of indirect and direct

(23) See pp. 227-230 above.
nurture. Even where similar forms of nurture are shared, such as the annual examinations which the two temples provide, the A. P. Sanstha is more effective both in terms of promotion and execution. This is also true of the way in which each temple attempts to involve the young membership in the activities of the temple, or simply tries to encourage the youngsters to attend other than just for their weekly classes. There is obviously a much greater belief that this is necessary in the A. P. Sanstha, and they are very successful in fulfilling their aim, largely through the seva "department" system, and the consequences of this, as discussed above.

The Sanatan Mandir does not give the same importance to the younger membership, although it does nevertheless want to encourage the youngsters to have an interest in the temple and its affairs. Hence the original aim of the Sanatan Centre, and the articulated thoughts of more than one committee member, that it would be pleasing to see young people at the temple in reasonable numbers at times other than the Shishu-Kunj. However, the Sanatan Mandir is certainly not as successful as the A. P. Sanstha in bringing about such a state of affairs.

Having concluded the summary of the differences between the nurture programmes instituted for the benefit of the young people by the two temples, it has become obvious that one temple is more successful in terms of formal religious nurture than the other. However, before such a statement is acceptable,
it is necessary to define what success in such terms means. Success involves fulfilling three main criteria. The first is the most basic, but none-the-less of extreme importance, in that the young people must be encouraged to attend the temple, to be in the environment in which formal nurture takes place. The first criterion may then be crudely stated as the need to get young people into the temple environment, to be in contact with the various activities that provide nurture, such as festivals, daily worship, and most importantly, the classes.

The second criterion involves invoking a certain amount of commitment from those who attend, so that once they have attended, they will continue to do so. This means ensuring that the young people want to attend the activities; that they enjoy them in some way, or feel that they benefit from them. This is the vital aspect of commitment, but it can go even further, in that the young people may not only want to attend the activities, but also want to become more involved, actively to contribute to the proceedings in a way which gives them responsibility and a feeling of "positive identity and self esteem". (24)

The third criterion for evaluating the success of formal religious nurture, is the extent to which the young people both are brought to a reasonable level of understanding of

(24) CRONIN, (256) lists the fostering of these qualities as one of the major aims of supplementary schools.
their own religious tradition, and are able to be conversant with their religious ritual and belief. Religious nurture should give the young people a sense of religious, and therefore group identity, and enable them to be conversant to such an extent that they can make sense of their religion both to themselves, and to those who do not share the same religion.

To see how far the two temples are successful in such terms, it is necessary to note the extent to which each fulfils the three criteria defined above. Considering the A. P. Sanstha first, it is obvious that they successfully fulfil the first criterion; young people do attend the temple in large numbers. There are some sixty boys who regularly attend the balak classes, fifteen girls who attend the balika class, forty who attend the yuvuk sabha, and twenty-five who attend the yukti sabha. Apart from the classes, on festival occasions, many more youngsters attend, who do not necessarily go to the weekly classes. Furthermore, most yuvuks and yuktis usually take part in daily worship by attending the evening arti ceremony at least once a week, and sometimes more frequently.

The Sanatan Mandir also fulfils the first criterion, but to a lesser extent. Some seventy youngsters attend the Shishu-Kunj each week, and many more attend festivals with their families. However, few of those who attend the Shishu-Kunj visit the temple at any other time during the week, although
some may take part in the evening arti service once a week or less regularly, if their parents do so.

The second criterion involves eliciting a degree of commitment from the young people, so that they enjoy the activities or feel that they benefit from them, and they attend for these reasons. It is obvious that the A. P. Sanstha fulfils this criterion. With regard to the classes, there is great commitment towards them; all those who responded to the questionnaire claimed to attend every week. The answers of yuvuks and yuktis to the question regarding the reason for their attendance at the sabhas, exhibit their feelings of commitment eloquently. (25) A sample of such answers is given below:

"I feel a sense of belonging". (yuvuk, aged twenty-one).

"Pramukh Swami asked me to". (yuvuk, aged thirty).

"Because I enjoy it". (yuvuk, aged twenty-two).

"Because first of all it is our Guru's agna that one should attend. Secondly, it is very interesting and a lot of spiritual knowledge is to be learnt". (yuvuk, aged nineteen).

"I have been born into the satsang, so I attended it and now I enjoy attending it myself". (yukti, aged nineteen).

"I find it very educative and interesting". (yukti, aged twenty-eight).

"I find it interesting and very enjoyable". (yukti aged seventeen).

(25) See Appendix I, question 4.
"Everybody has to eat and drink every day. Like that I cannot do without sabha. It is food for my soul. At the same time I fulfil my guru's agna". (yukti, aged twenty-five).

Not only do the young people enjoy the classes, they are led to a deeper commitment to attend because Pramukh Swami has let it be known that he wishes all young people in the Sanstha to attend the weekly classes. Therefore, by going to the sabhas, one is fulfilling the agna of Pramukh Swami. The youngsters have very few criticisms of the sabhas they attend, most being quite satisfied, and some even pointing out, as one twenty-seven year old yukti, that

"the class is run according to the instructions of our guru Pramukh Swami, so changes are implemented only by his wish, and agna is the most important aspect of our worship." (26)

Those who do have comments to make on means of improving the sabhas, concentrate on the point that more young people within the classes should be encouraged to take an active part, by singing kirtans, providing musical accompaniment, giving or participating in discourses, and by holding more group discussions and debates.

The A. P. Sanstha does much to encourage the young people to become involved in activities other than the classes; to make them feel that the temple is somewhere that they not only attend to learn things, but where they also enjoy

(26) ibid.
themselves. As soon as a youngster starts attending one of the classes, she/he is immediately invited to attend and become involved in other aspects of temple life, such as sports activities, the newly-formed computer class, the shibirs, samaiyas, annual examinations and the seva "departments". This builds up the feeling of commitment, so that the youngsters actively want to come to the temple. The rate of commitment is therefore high, as well as the level of commitment, in that those who attend a class once, will usually start attending on a regular basis, for many years.

In the Sanatan Mandir, there is a degree of commitment amongst the young people; most of those who attend regularly have been attending for some years, but only about one quarter of the class are over fourteen years of age. (27) Moreover, there are a large number of youngsters who do not attend every week, but who have attended erratically over many years. Therefore, from one week to the next, the number of young people in the Shishu-Kunj can jump from approximately seventy to one hundred and twenty. The fact that there is such a relatively small number of attenders in their late teens and early twenties, seems to point to the conclusion that at a certain age, approximately fifteen, the young people stop coming to the Shishu-Kunj. The reason for this

(27) JACKSON, (1985,73) in outlining trends in the pattern of education provided by supplementary schools in his survey of Hindu organizations, states that "young people aged between five and nineteen attend the schools, with the largest age-band attending being eight to twelve years (65%), and the second largest thirteen to fifteen (59%)."
is explained by those in the same age group who have continued to attend; the Shishu-Kunj gets boring after a while, because its format does not change from one year to the next. The fact that these young people have continued to attend, some for over ten years, points to the fact that there is commitment towards the class. This is expressed in the answers shown below, regarding the reason for their attendance at the Shishu-Kunj, in reply to the questionnaire;

(28)

"I go now because I can learn to sing more bhajans and learn more about the readings of the Gita". (female, aged fifteen).

"Mainly because it has become a part of my life. But also because I enjoy learning and knowing something more about my religion". (female, aged twenty-four).

"Partly because it has become a routine, yet also because I feel I want to go. It is a chance for the youngsters to get together to learn and participate in the worship". (female, aged seventeen).

"I like it". (male, aged fifteen).

"It has almost become habitual". (male, aged twenty-two).

In spite of the fact that many of those at the Sanatan Mandir who filled out the questionnaire had criticisms of the way in which the class was run, all stated that they tried to attend every week. One seventeen year old female summed up the general criticisms, and suggested improvements, as formulated by many of the other respondents, in answer to the question of, "Do you think there is any way in which

(28) See Appendix I, question 4.
the class could be improved?" (29) She states,

"Firstly, the youngsters should be kept in charge of Shishu-Kunj, and be given a place of their own. Interested and capable determined leaders should be elected. There should be a clear Shishu-Kunj format which is followed orderly. Leaders should encourage other children to take part in singing, playing instruments and taking charge. New activities should be introduced, like telling short stories about Krishna, or giving simple talks on a certain festival such as Holi and thereafter answering any questions which other children may want to ask. From time-to-time Shishu-Kunj outings should be organized, when we could go to visit other temples. Plays should be performed .... either on a festival day or any weekend. Most of all, keep the enjoyment and laughter atmosphere .... but discipline it." (30)

Having attended the Sunday activity for many years, most of the young people have clear ideas of improvements which could be made. There is a feeling of frustration which is noticeable not only through conversations held with young people, but also made obvious through questionnaire responses, that the young people would like to be able to put their experience and enthusiasm to use, and be more involved in the organizational side of the Shishu-Kunj, and youth activities in general. As one eighteen year old female states, the young people want to be "given a chance to step forward and carry out their own plans without interference from the temple committee". (31) This shows that although the rate of commitment of those young people over fourteen is relatively low, in that they gradually drop out of regular attendance of

(29) ibid., question 9.
(30) The answer of a seventeen year old female.
(31) See Appendix I; in answer to question 17.
the Shishu-Kunj for the reasons mentioned above, the level of commitment amongst those who do stay is extremely high; they want to be more involved and to be given responsibility, and although this is consistently denied them, they continue to attend.

To turn attention to the third criterion, which involves the success rate in bringing the young people to a reasonable level of understanding of their religious tradition, the A. P. Sanstha is discussed first. In this temple, the classes or sabhas are geared towards explicitly teaching the young people about all aspects of their religious tradition so that they will be articulate on the subject. It also aims to teach them in such a way which takes account of the situation in which they find themselves, being brought up outside India, in a society which does not share the traditional values of the Sanstha. It has this wider aim of relating religious issues to the broader context of moral issues, and life in the world around, so aiding the young people to put their religious beliefs into practice in the context of everyday life. All other activities apart from the classes, are geared to furthering the understanding of what is learnt in the classes.

The A. P. Sanstha does successfully fulfil the third criterion. Owing to the methods and standard of teaching and religious nurture in its various forms, as explained throughout the thesis, there are few yuvuks and yuktis who have been attending
for any length of time, who do not have at least a basic knowledge and understanding of the history, teachings and beliefs of the Sanstha. This knowledge is constantly being tested and added to and reinforced through the various activities, both within the classes and outside them through examinations, samaiyas, shibirs, adhiveshans, and simply through being in the temple environment.

The answers to questions five and twenty of the questionnaire (32), asking what is learnt during the sabhas, and what is thought to be the most important aspect of the religion, were remarkably similar among both yuvuks and yuktis. The same points were made by almost all respondents, and many of the same terms were used. In answering question five, various answers show only slight variations;

"We learn about God, religion and the simple life that a human being should live".

"Religion and culture - how to be a good citizen".

"Everything regarding religion and culture".

"Everything about our religion, our culture as well as about other religions".

"Our own faith and others. Relate scientific work to religion".

"Religious knowledge".

"Religion, Swaminarayan sampradaya and behaviour".

"Religion, culture and the importance of Upasana (belief in Akshar and Purushottam).

(32) See Appendix I.
Again, with regard to question twenty, being asked to explain "the most important aspect of your religion", (33) the various answers were very similar, with slight variations. Most stated that belief in Akshar and Purushottam, and the guru-parampara, the reality of having a "Brahmanised" or "God-Realized" saint as a guru, was the most important aspect, but among other important aspects;

"Philosophy and service".
"Seva and bhakti".
"Seeing and hearing Guru Pragat Pramukh Swami and his agna".
"Realizing that I am soul".
"Seva and jnan" (knowledge).

These snippets are taken from various answers, many quite long and detailed. They are not meant to be proof of the range and depth of teaching, or the understanding of the young people concerned, but they are an example of this; they give an indication of the level of articulation which the youngsters have reached concerning their religious tradition, as the answers themselves reflect precise theological points within the Sanstha.

It is the third criterion which is not fulfilled at the Sanatan Mandir. The young people at this temple are not brought to an adequate understanding of their religious tradition through the activities officially organized for them.

(33) Ibid.
The **Shishu-Kunj** is geared towards introducing youngsters to the Bhagavad Gita as a sacred scripture, instructing them on its nature and how to recite it. The activity also introduces the youngsters into the temple environment, and to various aspects of devotional worship. However, it does not aid the young people to build up an adequate conceptual framework of the major tenets or even the rudiments of their religion by which they might make sense of the various aspects of Hinduism they experience.

The young people at the **Sanatan Mandir**, although having a strong feeling of being Hindu, seem largely lost in the amorphous nature of Hinduism. They are told during the **Shishu-Kunj** that it is important to read the Bhagavad Gita, as it contains the gist of the Vedas, and innumerable benefits will result from the reading of such a scripture. They are also told stories of various deities or mythological characters in connection with forthcoming festivals to be celebrated in the temple. However, the youngsters do not have any conceptualized system of belief, teaching or philosophy into which to fit these varied aspects as presented to them in the **Shishu-Kunj**, and during the celebration of festivals as witnessed.

The level of explicit teaching in the **Shishu-Kunj** leaves its older members largely dissatisfied, since many appear to have a definite desire to learn about their religion. They want to be able to make sense of what they variously term "our
religion", "our culture" or "our tradition", as the three seem to be inter-changeable or synonymous in the minds of many. From assorted comments made while responding to the questionnaire, it can be seen that the young people attach the same degree of importance to the learning of their religious tradition, as do the older generation, as verbalized by the temple authorities.

A fifteen year old male states that his religion is important to him because "it gives me a sense of identity". Answers to the same question include,

"I am a Hindu so I think I should believe in my religion" (male, aged fourteen).

".... because of the fact that when you grow older you have to know more about God, yet I hardly know anything". (female, aged fourteen).

"I think my religion is very important to me because I should learn the 'way of life' and get to understand God and it is very important for Hindus to do that, and if I know I could some day explain it to my children without difficulties". (female, aged fifteen).

"It is very important for an Asian (sic) origin to know about their religion .... because when our kids will ask us anything about our religion, we would (sic) have to answer it to keep the religion". (female, aged twenty). (34)

(34) The ages of respondents from the Sanatan Mandir are considerably lower than the ages of respondents from the A. P. Sanstha (see pp. 260-261 above). This is because there are very few who attend the Shishu-Kunj who are over the age of twenty-one, and yet there are many over this age who attend the sabhas at the A. P. Sanstha.
It appears that the same anxieties are shared by the younger and older generations alike, with regard to being a religious and ethnic minority in Britain, with the need to keep one's religious tradition alive by means of passing the tradition on from one generation to the next.

Although the Shishu-Kunj is a means for the youngsters to come into contact with certain aspects of their religious tradition, and it takes the form of a focus for cultural and religious contact, giving those present a sense of religious or even ethnic identity, it does not fulfil the desire which many have to learn "about Hinduism". In answer to question five in the questionnaire (35), asking what is learnt at the Shishu-Kunj, once again, the answers were similar;

"Gita, Ramayana".

"... to read the Gita, and the Ramayana and also some important shlokas and prayers".

"I learn the Gita's true meaning and often I learn new things from speakers who attend".

"Well, you learn about the Gita, and bhajans and dhoons, and you also pray".

"Gita, Gujarati, Ramayana and about festivals".

There were however, two completely different answers, both from males, one aged fifteen, and one aged twenty-two;

"Honest answer? Not much. Maybe due to my own ignorance, and also partly teaching method".

"I'm not really sure. (About my religion I suppose)."

(35) See Appendix I.
The answers to the question of what is considered to be the most important aspect of Hinduism, (36) were very varied, and some were extremely vague, in contrast with the answers given to the same question by members of the A. P. Sanstha. (37) An example of the vagueness of many answers is given by the following two responses:

"Understanding God. The most important thing is to have faith in our religion, to understand it". (female, aged twenty).

"It is an overall aspect of an individual's way of life, regardless of who they are". (male, aged twenty-six).

Other responses (38) show the variety of answers, and the lack of any cohesive understanding;

"The three principles of Hinduism; understanding, equality and knowledge".

"I think it teaches us to respect, be humble, obey and follow a road of truths (sic) and in the goodness of man".

"Respect for all living things".

"Gujarati. I think it is a very important thing to learn in your life. My mum and dad never taught me".

"Our religion has no set rules that one must follow. Hinduism is not a religion, it is a way of life. Lead a good truthful life and you have followed Hinduism".

"Parents as God".

(36) ibid., question 20.

(37) See p. 267 above.

(38) See Appendix I, question 20.
"If one keeps respect and is prepared to listen to others, to have an understanding and tolerating, patient and loving nature, he shall surely live up to his religion".

The young people in general at the Sanatan Mandir want to learn about their religious tradition, but the activities which provide religious nurture do little to consolidate or build upon any practical knowledge or experience of Hinduism which has already been gained. They are definitely not as articulate or informed about their religious tradition as their counterparts in the A. P. Sanstha.

Having examined the level to which each temple fulfils the necessary criteria, the statement can authoritatively be made that the A. P. Sanstha is more successful in the formal religious nurture of its young people than is the Sanatan Mandir. The A. P. Sanstha fulfils all three criteria, which includes encouraging youngsters to attend the temple; invoking a certain amount of commitment so that they want to continue to attend, and thirdly, bringing the youngsters to a reasonable level of understanding of their religious tradition. The Sanatan Mandir only partially fulfils the first and second criteria, as described, but it does not fulfil the third, which is the most important, since it is the ground of the other two.

The question arises as to the reason for the greater success of the A. P. Sanstha. This can be answered by drawing on material already discussed in the thesis. It must be
remembered that the temple in Leicester is part of a movement which we have identified as being "a sect", (39) and as such, it never acts independently from the central authority. The fact that the temple is sectarian, would seem to be the major underlying factor responsible for its extremely successful nurture programme.

The differences between the two temples, with regard to their general attitude towards the place of youngsters in the temple, and the ability or desire of those in positions of authority to cater for the needs of the younger membership, can be linked to the tradition to which each temple belongs. In chapter one the Sanatan Mandir was shown to be part of mainstream Hinduism, defined by the term "sanatan dharma". The two categories of "dharma" and "sampradaya" were discussed (40), as relating to the two temples in this study, to make clear the differences between the two institutions - one as mainstream or traditional, and one as sectarian - so clarifying the relationship between them in terms of the Hindu religious tradition.

The A. P. Sanstha fits into the category of sampradaya as defined by Barot, as approximating "what is usually understood as a sect in the English language", (41) and into the category of sects within Hinduism, as defined by Brockington. (42)

(39) See p. 51 above. (41) See chapter one, note 67.  
(40) See pp. 47-59 above. (42) ibid., note 66.
The Sanatan Mandir falls within the category subscribing to the wider precepts of Hindu belief, being part of sanatan dharma.

The distinction between the two traditions is analogous although not identical to the dichotomy between church and sect, as first noted by Weber. (43) Although the discussion on this topic which has since ensued (44) is based on the character of Christian churches and sects, and the categories of dharma and sampradaya are much less exclusive and more flexible than the formal institutional characters of Christian churches and sects, the analogy is still helpful when attempting to make the distinction between sanatan dharma and sampradaya, and when attempting to show how the A. P. Sanstha, within the category of sampradaya, does in fact approximate to what is usually understood as a sect.

It is not within the scope of this thesis to provide a detailed sociological analysis of sects, and the place of the A. P. Sanstha within such an analysis: this is a research topic in its own right. The object is rather briefly to describe how the A. P. Sanstha shares many of the characteristics of sects, as discussed by various sociologists in terms of the church-sect typology (45); and to show how such

(43) WEBER, 1974, 144-154.
(44) Summarized and discussed by HILL.
(45) ibid.
characteristics are responsible for, or form a dominant underlying factor in, the successful nurture programme at the temple.

Certain general characteristics of sects have been isolated and described, and the A. P. Sanstha shares many of these: attention may be drawn to six. First, the principle of membership into a voluntary association as symbolizing only those who have personally gained their own faith. (46) This relates to the second, the importance of the concept of commitment, (47) which is needed to maintain the "extraordinarily strict moral discipline" (48) which is required as part of the general ethos of "separateness from the external world" noted by Wilson, (49) as identifiable in many sects. The third characteristic is, the tendency of sectarian groups to evolve a professionalized and centralized organization, based on personal rather than office charisma. (50) The fourth characteristic is the dominance of lay members in terms of the high level of participation of lay members within the sect (51), perhaps connected to the fifth characteristic, the principle of the sovereignty of the community of believers or the ideal of the "priesthood" of all believers. (52) Lastly, there is usually the requirement that sect members practise brotherliness towards each other

(47) ibid., 13.
(48) GERTH and WRIGHT MILLS (eds.), 316.
(49) WILSON, 1959, 4.
(51) GERTH and WRIGHT MILLS (eds.), 317. WILSON, 1959, 4.
in all affairs. (53) These six are significant characteristics by which a sect may be identified.

The A. P. Sanstha shares all these characteristics, as made obvious throughout the thesis, (54) and as will be discussed below, whereas the Sanatan Mandir shares none of them, being part of sanatan dharma, having an absence of definite dogmas, except for the belief in the authority of the Vedas, and the non-existence of a central controlling authority. (55) The Bochasanwasi Shree Akshar Purushottam Sanstha can definitely be seen as a sectarian movement sharing identifiable

(52) ibid
WEBER, 1974, 145.
GERTH AND WRIGHT MILLS (eds.), 316.

(53) ibid., 321, 322.

(54) See pp. 72-74 above, for information on the "spiritual membership" of the A. P. Sanstha and the initiation ceremony necessary for entry into the "spiritual membership".

See pp. 41, 61, 79-80, 261, for information on the commitment to the spiritual leader and p. 74 for the vows taken by satsangis during initiation.

See chapters one, two and three for information on the centralized organization of the Sanstha, under the charismatic, absolute authority of the spiritual leader.

See p. 133 above, for information on the active participation of lay members within the Sanstha.

See pp. 36-41 above, for the discussion of the philosophical concept of akshar, and the place of the spiritual leader in the Sanstha. It is through contact with such a saint that one reaches Akshardham. Therefore such contact is essential.

See pp. 179-182 above, for the discussion of seva within the Sanstha. This concept is linked to the requirement that members are humble and show brotherliness towards one another; members must be prepared to serve one another as well as their spiritual leader.
characteristics with all sects, and the A. P. Sanstha in Leicester is part of this movement.

Earhart's four-point phenomenology for the "new religions" of Japan (56), which is believed to be a useful statement on new religious developments of any kind, according to Turner, (57) is certainly relevant both to the development of the main Swaminarayan sect, as well as the A. P. Sanstha. Both sectarian movements share the following features; "they presuppose a prior and established "classical" tradition", (58) from which there is a substantial or radical break. The outcome of which is "recognized by both parties as a new departure" which "provides a thrust towards renewal or revitalization". (59) The new religious movement which is formed has

"new cultic and social forms, a reforming ethic and distinctive ethos, and a new symbolic system; it is often based on a new or further revelation supplementing, correcting or superseding the revelation belonging to the classical tradition." (60)

The main Swaminarayan sect can be seen to have come into being through spontaneous development around a local charismatic leader. As Wilson states, "some such sects

(56) Quoted by TURNER, 23. (60) ibid.
(57) ibid.
(58) ibid.
disappear when the leader dies .... others .... spread and retain their identity". (61) The retention of the identity of the main Swaminarayan sect was aided by the deification of the leader or founder (62) which O'Malley views as a tendency of sects within Hinduism. (63)

The A. P. Sanstha fits into Wilson's (64) category of sect emergence by schism. This "schismatic sect" remains vigorous "as long as its protest against the parent body remains significant, and as long as the rival group exists as a challenge". (65) Both of these conditions are still being fulfilled, since the main Swaminarayan sect remains a healthy movement, and the difference in philosophy which separates the two groups, namely the position of akshar and purushottam, remains the core philosophical belief in the A. P. Sanstha. The original schismatic group quickly adjusted to continuance as a sect, and in view of the reasons for the split (66) and the subsequent reforms instituted (67), the A. P. Sanstha adjusted to continuance as a reforming sect.

The A. P. Sanstha needed energy and vitality successfully to establish itself as a sect, separate from the parent group.

(61) WILSON, 1959, 7.  (65) ibid., 7.
(64) WILSON, 1959.
The sect as a whole has been shown to have such characteristics (68) which led to the institution of many reforms, (69) the acceptance within the sect of its own distinctive ideology and philosophy, based on the personal form of akshar, and the formation of its own highly centralized organization, also based on the particular philosophy of the sect.

In the early 1950s, when the number of devotees in East Africa started to grow dramatically, the sect as a whole was able to adapt to this situation in a way made possible for two reasons. The first is the inherent energy built into the Sanstha from its formation, which was originally necessary to express and enforce a religious identity separate from the parent sect. The second is the charismatic nature of the leadership, based on the distinctive philosophy of akshar, made effective through the belief in the spiritual leader as "the perfect devotee". Therefore, within the sect, the word of the spiritual leader is regarded as absolute. These two joint forces facilitated a great period of growth within the sect, which started in the 1950s and still continues to date, which is a result of successful adaptation to the changing needs of devotees.

This adaptation took several forms. Firstly, there was an increase in the organizational structure of the Sanstha, to include temples outside India. Secondly, this led to a more

active involvement of lay members in both administrative and spiritual aspects of temple life. Thirdly, the international Youth Organization was established, along with a centralized educational programme for youngsters. As a result, temples within the sect serve as centres not only of spiritual activity, but also for social and propagational activity.

This is directly related to the A. P. Sanstha in Leicester, since as it is part of the main Sanstha, it shares the same characteristics, and takes part in the same processes. It is attributable to these characteristics that the temple in Leicester is successful in the formal religious nurture of its young membership. The first characteristic is charismatic leadership. The Youth Organization and broad educational programme was initiated by Yogiji Maharaj (70), and it has been further stressed and promoted by the present spiritual leader, Pramukh Swami. Owing to the philosophy of akshar within the Sanstha, the agna or wishes of the spiritual leader are followed absolutely. Therefore each temple within the Sanstha has its own Youth Organization, and follows the educational programme as set out by the headquarters. This points towards the concept or characteristic of commitment, which is vital within the Sanstha, and is linked to the charismatic leadership.

Commitment takes the form of following the agna of the leader. As Wilson states,

(70) See pp. 134-135 above.
"the commitment of the sectarian is always more total and more defined than that of the member of other religious organizations." (71)

This commitment to the spiritual leader is essential, as it is believed that only by contact with the personal form of akshar, can one gain release from maya in Akshardham, the abode of God. (72) As Williams writes,

"worship of the preceptor, guru bhakti, is intense in this sect. They say one should worship him with the same intensity with which one offers worship to God." (73)

Therefore, the leader's wishes or teachings are adhered to as closely as possible. Satsangis try to conduct their lives in a disciplined way, according to the teachings of Lord Swaminarayan, as stressed by Pramukh Swami. Since the leader stresses the importance of the educational programme and the place of young people within the Sanstha, all strata within the temples are committed to continuing and promoting such activities within each temple, including committee members, the teachers, as well as the youngsters themselves.

All the above processes are aided by the highly centralized organization of the Sanstha. Each individual temple is kept in touch with Pramukh Swami, his exact whereabouts, his daily activities, his teaching, and with the Sanstha headquarters, through Sanstha publications, the administrative

(71) WILSON, 1959, 4. (73) WILLIAMS, 1982, 95. (72) See p. 41 above.
structure of the Sanstha, and through the direct contact of individual satsangis with the spiritual leader. The educational programme is undertaken and actively supported by the Sanstha as a whole. Like all aspects, and because of all aspects of the sampradaya, it is a highly organized and effective programme.

To refer to the three criteria mentioned earlier, (74) defined as necessary to provide successful formal religious nurture, not only is success in each area interrelated with success in all areas in the A. P. Sanstha, but successful fulfilment of each area is related to aspects of sectarian involvement. Because the temple has such a high level of formal instruction, which ensures that the youngsters reach at least a certain level of understanding concerning the tradition, (so fulfilling the third criterion), it has a good reputation for such activities among the Hindu communities in Leicester. This encourages parents to send their children to the activities, whether or not they are satsangis themselves, or as is often the case, the youngsters start attending themselves, having heard of the activities from friends. As a former committee member of the Sanatan Mandir once remarked, "we have lost a lot of children to that temple". (75) Hence the first criterion is fulfilled,

(74) See pp. 258-259 above.

(75) Personal communication - 1.9.87.
and the success of the A. P. Sanstha in meeting the first criterion, analysed above, is directly related to its character as a sect.

The great success of the A. P. Sanstha in fulfilling the second criterion (which involves evoking commitment from the young people), is also significantly related to the character of the Sanstha as a sect. Commitment plays a vital role in the Sanstha ideology; the rate and level of commitment in the temple is very high, in that most who attend the sabhas once, will continue to attend, and further, most become involved in other activities outside the classes.

At first the youngsters may attend regularly either because there are so many activities organized specifically for them to enjoy, or because they appreciate the formal instruction. Slowly however, the young person becomes drawn into temple life, and will spend more time in the temple environment. For those who regularly attend, a certain level of commitment is expected, and this is made clear through the teachings and beliefs of the Sanstha as taught in the classes, and as elicited through the expectation of involvement in such activities as the seva "departments", samaiyas, shibirs, adhiveshans and examinations. Eventually, activities are taken part in for a further reason, to carry out the wishes of the spiritual leader; for "Bapa's sake". So, to a great extent, the young people are expected to respond to what is
taught; to put their understanding of their religious tradition into practice, and this usually happens. At this point, young people are integrated into the sect, and the level of commitment is great. This is why the success of the A. P. Sanstha in meeting the second criterion is so significant in its relation to its sectarian characteristics.

As is obvious, the A. P. Sanstha is in no way independent of the Sanstha as a whole. Although many factors are involved, its success in the nurture of its young membership cannot be separated from the various aspects of sectarianism, as discussed above. The dominant underlying factor in the success of the temple in such terms, is directly related to its sectarian nature.

The Sanatan Mandir, as part of "sanatan dharma", is not used to the long-term process of formal nurture of its membership, as was explained in chapter three. (76) Such activities were started in East Africa by many groups, but for various reasons (77) it was easier in that country than in England, and there was not the anxiety over the integration of young people into the religious tradition of Hinduism. Perhaps to a large extent the potential threat to the traditional methods of transmission had not been perceived. However, the threat has become obvious to many in the migrant situation in which

(76) See p. 103-106, 108 above.
(77) See pp. 103-106 above.
Hindus find themselves in Britain, and the long-term process of formal nurture is proving to be not only a daunting task, but also a new experience.

The tradition of Hinduism, or sanatan dharma, is slowly developing or adapting, owing to the new environment in which it is being practised, and the self-awareness this induces. (78) One such area is the reinterpretation of the place of the temple within the religious tradition. Adaptation is taking place, but it is slow. The fact of the establishment of the Shishu-Kunj in 1974 is an example of the temple authorities responding to the perceived needs of the young people. However, the needs of this group is ever-changing, as more children are born and brought up in Britain. The young people themselves are aware of the pressures of growing up between two cultures, and they want more responsibility within the temple setting to organize, and become involved in, activities which they know, from their own experience, will benefit the youngsters. With the role of the temple slowly changing within Hinduism, in Britain at least, and if the young people do not lose faith in the temple authorities, and become entirely engrossed in separate activities, such as the Shree Ram Mandir Seva Trust, it seems possible that adaptation will slowly continue, and the needs of the young people will come to be met more fully.

(78) See chapters one and three for the full discussion of these points.
In sum, it has been seen that there are many differences between the nurture programmes of the two institutions. This concluding chapter has attempted to account for such differences, with reference to the distinct traditions of both temples - the Sanatan Mandir as part of sanatan dharma, or the mainstream Hindu tradition, and the A. P. Sanstha as part of the thriving sectarian movement, the Bochasanwasi Shree Akshar Purushottam Sanstha. It has also been suggested that the nature of these contrasting cases becomes clearer in the light of the academic analyses of sect and new religions.

In this study of formal religious nurture a choice was made to carry out a case study of two particular temples; one belonging to mainstream Hinduism and one being part of a sectarian movement, thus showing two aspects of Hinduism, sanatan dharma and sampradaya, both being part of the amorphous religious tradition of Hinduism. The study discusses the nurture programmes in each temple within the context of both particular traditions, thereby exposing the wider issue of the adaptation processes at work within both, in the "alien" environment of Britain.

One temple is established as being more successful than the other in terms of formal nurture, and such differences are linked to the differing traditions of both, and to the fact that the sectarian temple has clearly defined working systems which enable the sect as a whole to adapt to meet the needs
of individual temples and groups of devotees. For the mainstream temple the process of adaptation is much slower and more difficult; when needs are perceived they are not so easily responded to. However, this study shows that the Sanatan Mandir, along with other mainstream Hindu temples in Britain, is involved in the processes of adaptation, and that the needs of the young people are perceived by temple authorities at the mainstream temple, and changes are slowly taking place to come some way towards meeting such needs.

This study has been involved in addressing itself to the values, beliefs and practices of ordinary people in two temples in Leicester, who are part of the living tradition of Hinduism in its various aspects. As was stated at the start of the study, it must be remembered that the situation in neither temple is static, since inner dynamics are constantly at work in any living religious tradition. Therefore the material presented within this thesis is to be considered as an insight into a particular period during the evolution of two institutions.
APPENDIX A
THREE DEMOGRAPHIC MAPS OF LEICESTER
(Reproduced from the Survey of Leicester 1983)

Asian people
Language/Religion Groups: Belgrave

POPULATION COMPOSITION:

The analysis areas for which details are given are all those where White or above represent less than 50% of the total population.
POPULATION COMPOSITION:

The analysis areas for which details are given are all those where White people represent less than 50% of the total population.

Language/Religion Groups: Highfields

Not to scale
guru-parampara - (jay naad) -

Reciting the names of the line of spiritual leaders, from Sahajanand Swami and Gunatitanand Swami to Pramukh Swami.

3 shlokas -

1. "Aksharbrahman, Purushottam".
   (repeated).

This was first heard by the yuktis at the Bicentennial Celebrations in 1985, and they have incorporated it into their sabha since then.

2. "Guru is Lord Brahma, Lord Vishnu and Lord Shiva.
   Nay! Guru is the incarnation of the Supreme Being.
   Salutations to such a guru again and again."
   (Sanskrit)

3. "You are the mother, you are the father, you are the friend, you are the teacher. You are the Lord of all Lords."
   (Sanskrit)

The last two shlokas are sung because they appear in the syllabus book for the balaks.

dhyan -

"O Shriji Maharaj! You, your eternal abode and the released souls, please attend our sabha.
You are wearing golden clothes.
On your head is a golden crown.
On your ears are golden ear-rings.
Round your neck are beautiful garlands of roses.
On your feet are lovely anklets.
In your right hand is a colourful handkerchief and a golden sceptre.
In your left hand is a lovely lotus flower.
From your form emanates divine rays of light.
O Maharaj: Soft velvet covered seats are ready for you.
You and Gunatitanand Swami, Gopalanand Swami, Bhagatji Maharaj, Shastriji Maharaj, Yogiji Maharaj and Pramukh Swami, please attend our sabha and purify us."

(Gujarati)

dhoon -
Swaminarayan mantra.
Chanting the name of Lord Swaminarayan, while silently asking the Lord to keep Pramukh Swami in good health.

last shloka -
"Shripatim Shridharam ..... "
Repeating various names of God, such as "Madhavam, Vasudevam, Swaminarayan", and offering one's respects to God.

(Sanskrit)

arti and thal
As in "The Standard Items In The Yuvuk Sabha".
guru-parampara -
standard.

3 shlokas -
standard.

dhoon -
"Whoever takes the Swaminarayan name will have their sins washed away. There are many names in the Vedas, but only this one is supreme. To take this name only once amounts to the same as taking others a thousand times. No-one can measure the fruits that are achieved by chanting this name. Even an evil person attains salvation if he remembers this name on his death bed. All evil spirits scatter away at the sound of this name. By chanting this name, good thoughts awaken in the mind. The devil will not come near anyone who takes this name. Whosoever takes this name, with or without affection, will attain salvation. This name should be taken constantly, whether you are pure or impure. Like water cleans the body, so this name cleans the mind and soul. The Swaminarayan name is great, all sins are washed away by it."

dhyan -
standard.

prathana -
"We are the children of Swami, we will die for him. We are the youths of Shriji Maharaj, we will fight for him."
We are fearless; we will not shirk sacrificing our lives, for we are born to die.
We have launched this movement, and will undergo any suffering.
We will sing the praises of Akshar-Purushottam.
We are the sons of Shriji; we have our abode in Akshar.
Consecrated as we are to Swadharma, (religious faith) we have no apprehension whatsoever.
Lord Purushottam and Akshar, Gunatitanand Swami, are with us. We have achieved our goal."

Patrika - 27.1.87

Titles -

"In today's colleges, habits are increasing instead of decreasing". -

"Swamishri calls the youths to attend the college of Brahma-knowledge".

"Looking at the behaviour and conduct of the youths today a famous Gujarati teacher said, 'today we are producing educated monkeys'.

Where teachers have given up hope, there Swamishri has kept his head high in educating the youths in moral and religious duties. He says 'we want to become the best youths. We want to rid ourselves of bad habits and to do that we have to attend the college of Brahma-knowledge'.

In Bombay on the 12.12.86 Swamishri talked to the youths saying, 'we want to become the best youths. If our faith, thoughts, food and company are good then we will become good too. Our habits are our good enemies. On top they look very good but are eventually harmful. Believing them to be our friends we will never be able to break away from them. We will never enjoy God's happiness until we have
broken our habits. It is a great necessity to break them. In today's colleges habits are increasing instead of decreasing. Then what good can youths be to the community? From the beginning you have been thoughtless and rude. Then how can you live peacefully? We have found this satsang so we should try to improve our lives. What is the benefit of satsang? We develop good qualities. In the college of Brahma-knowledge, bad qualities/habits are discarded and good qualities are attained. Therefore we should attend Yogiji Maharaj's Brahma-knowledge colleges and attain good marks. If we keep God and his saint in front of us, then all bad habits will disappear. If we have not rid ourselves of our bad habits, then it is difficult to develop love for someone else, to do service for them. Therefore you should attend the Brahma-knowledge colleges to rid yourself of these bad habits and qualities'.

Title -

"Swamishri amidst the children's gathering-assembly". (shibir)

"In Bombay on the 18.12.86, there was a get-together of all the youths, where all the little boys (balaks) made speeches. Swamishri stopped all his activities and attentively listened to the boys. Then he spoke to the leaders of the boys, saying, 'If the boys receive good education then the community will improve. Today's parents or elders are never free, because everyone is busy trying to earn money. Therefore today, no-one knows what the Ramayana or the Mahabharata are. With children you have to become like them. We should have their innocence. If there is fighting and bad language in the house then the children will do the same. If there are strange photographs kept then the children receive the same print. But if from childhood the seeds of devotion are sown, then when they grow up, they will still have them. Whatever effort we make for the children will be beneficial to us in the long run'."
Vachanamritam - Sarangpur 4.

Read by Mrs. M.

It was generally discussed that Bapa (Pramukh Swami), is atma and therefore he is able to carry out all the activities he does without any bother.

Everyone remarked on Pramukh Swami's tiring schedule, and unceasing care for everyone else.

tape recording -

One of the girls brought in a tape recording which was recorded last year when some of the sadhus were in England and they went on a camping holiday with some yuvuks. The tape recording contains a speech given by a sadhu popularly known as Doctor Swami. He is talking about the value of the human body.

dhoon -
standard.

last shloka -
standard.

arti and thal -
standard.
guru-parampara -
standard.

3 shlokas -
standard.

dhoon -
"Rama, Krishna, Govinda,
Jaya, jaya, Govinda ........."
(repeated) Chanting the names of the Lord.

dhyan -
standard.

prathana -
"You are the Lord of Akshardham,
You are Purna Purushottam, Lord of all.
You are the saviour of the devotees.
You are ever moving on this earth.
Let me have your darshan.
Pramukh Swami give us your darshan,
we forever chant your name.
We hold your image forever in our hearts.
0 Lord, give us a pure mind, and bless us with wisdom and virtues.
Let your hand be placed on our hands,
So all our fears are warded off and our difficulties removed.
Shastriji Maharaj I shall forever sing your praises.
Yogiji Maharaj I shall forever sing your praises.
Pramukh Swami I shall forever sing your praises.
I lower my head at your lotus feet.
0 Lord, give us always your blessings."
general conversation -

Two women are introduced who have come to the sabha for the first time. One has married a satsangi and lives in Birmingham. She and her husband visit Leicester fairly frequently, so she will try to come to the sabha. Mrs. M. introduces two young girls to whom she teaches Gujarati. She has brought them to the temple for the first time.

A letter has arrived from the London temple in Neasden, asking which activities will be performed by the Leicester women at the shibir to be held in London over Easter.

The letter is read out.

General discussion follows as to what items to prepare. A dance and drama is suggested. Discussion about transport to London. Mrs. M. says that people are needed to prepare speeches - not ladies, but yuktis.

They also want balikas to prepare one item, perhaps a dance.

Patrika -

Read by Mrs. M. (part reading, part explanation).

The article is about two festivals in Bombay - Utrang and Jodhi.

"Shastriji Maharaj built temples such as Sarangpur by begging, collecting money. Yogiji Maharaj collected food-grains. The saints have to beg and eat what they are given; it must be a hard life. Pramukh Swami begged for food (bhiksha) in Bhadra while he was studying and gaining knowledge. At this time of year they have pulses and grain and cane all ready for Utrang. Here is a photo of the festival hall in Bombay ready for the festival."
Pramukh Swami says no matter how much you give worldly wise, this does not affect God - he only cares about your inner love."

Mrs. M., while talking of food, says with regard to thal, that one should not make food just for oneself, but for the Lord also.

"We want to be atman, the soul, not the body. But one only becomes atmarup by actions, one cannot just decide to be it. If one puts the Lord first, one is on the way to becoming atmarup. For example, it is written in the Shikshapatri that one should offer food and water to the Lord first."

"The whole occasion of Utrang and Jodhi is not just about giving food, it is about giving of oneself, to show your inner love. A way of getting rid of bad bits from the inner-self."

"Usually Pramukh Swami, when in little villages during this festival, will go out and beg food from house to house. Because he is in Bombay due to ill-health, he has asked people to bring food offerings to the temple. The temple is full of displays of food offerings."

Second article -

Someone went to Pramukh Swami asking for his blessing, because he was going to America. Pramukh Swami said that there are many satsangis in that country living a pure life. "Go there, be careful and try and live a pure and religious life like them. If you are going there to study for your country, then study. But the example your country has given you, you must not forget. Don't forget your dharma. You should never forget your background wherever you are living."
Mrs. M. asks why he has said this. She explains, that when one is at home one is safe, but when one goes out one might get pressurized. "You have to say no. For example, if you go to a party and are asked to have a drink, you must say no".

Pramukh Swami (still talking to the man) says "don't feel inferior to Americans. Don't fall into any traps. Believe our technique is better than theirs. You should make use of what they have in America, but don't let it affect you adversely."

Mrs. M. - "What Pramukh Swami said, applies to everyone, so take note. One man was not a satsangi, but a friend of a satsangi. Pramukh Swami told him to give up meat, and the man said he couldn't live in America without meat. We live without it, and are healthy, aren't we?"

Pramukh Swami - "No matter how long you live in America, will they ever consider you as one of them?"

Mrs. M. - "No matter how we dress like them and have hair-styles like them, and have British passports, and are even born here, they will never call you English. You will always be considered Asian, a black person."

Pramukh Swami - "Americans will consider you an Asian. Then be firm in your faith and stay as you are."

Mrs. M. - "Why should we change then? Just stay as an Asian. We are Indian, India is our country. Have firm faith that we are from India."

Pramukh Swami - "In America, there are many living pure lives. If they can do it, so should you."
Third article -
A Medical Centre is being opened in Bombay by Pramukh Swami. The president of the Gujarati Samaj gave a speech. In the Centre, cancer and diabetes will be investigated. Mrs. M. talks of the humility and simple life of Pramukh Swami. At the beginning of the ceremony to open the Centre, a man garlands Pramukh Swami. The man later drops his glasses onto the stage and Pramukh Swami picks them up and gives them back. This is humility.

Fourth article -
Pramukh Swami gives a talk before a recitation of the Bhagavad Gita, which is held in a village in India. He talks on the importance of the scripture; "With this human body we should worship God - that is why we are gathered here."

Mrs. M. - "The whole aim of everything is to worship God, to do seva. The shibir, everything - all to worship God. The human body is meant to worship God."

"There are two ways of worshipping God: through action and through speech. Day-by-day the list of spoken words is added to. Pramukh Swami said that if a story is repeated over and over, it becomes embedded in the heart. If you learn a religion, it is only when you have learnt number one that you can learn number two. It is the same with the alphabet, and learning to speak. If you learn the basics of a religion you can go on and learn more specialized things. An example is the series of exams - they must be done in order."

Pramukh Swami - "The human body is not cheap, it is expensive to get hold of. This time in a human body is very precious, and must not be wasted."
Mrs. M. - "Dr. Swami gives an example of a way to calculate the worth of the human body. For each second we waste we lose three rupees. So each minute of every hour, or per day or per year; money-wise, this is how much the human body is worth.

But we cannot put a price on the value of the human body. We are wasting time when we don't worship God. We don't realize how expensive the human body is. That is why we are in this cycle of births and deaths. So Pramukh Swami has to keep repeating 'worship God'; that is why he tours everywhere."

"A lot of people read the scriptures. Only when they understand them in their hearts does it count. Only when they put the gems of what they say into practice will it mean anything."

"Now we are in the Mandir; we have come. We think we have done satsang, and will get praise and be uplifted. Then we think satsang means a lot, but if there isn't any of that praise, then we become dissatisfied because we are not valued enough. It is when you value satsang as a way of life rather than yourself as individually valuable, that it is true. It you come to satsang just for praise, and if you stay in satsang for ninety-nine days and in one day something happens, you are just as likely to fall from the satsang as if you have only come for a few days. This is pride in the body.

Pride is the thing that makes you fall from satsang. If you have pride then you have problems. You should come to satsang with a clean, pure heart, not out of pride. You should do satsang of the jiva."
Mrs. M. - (referring to the first article on Utrang and Jodhi) -

"During Utrang, even the little lads went out to beg for food - to spread the satsang - this was the aim. They went out with the saints. The saints went to beg for food and to encourage people to come to the satsang."

"Pramukh Swami says if you have something to say, it is well worthwhile saying it. Wherever you are, talk about satsang. If you talk to ten people, perhaps one will come. From that one person, how many more people will hear about it? We should, as the saints, carry on talking about the religion."

"All the groups of satsang are doing this at this time of year. Utrang is also a joyful time for children: most will fly kites. Satsangis and balaks gave up these activities to go begging. While everyone else in India had fun, the little balaks went begging for food and telling of satsang. There must really be something in it then. We can see where Pramukh Swami's words have got to - to the little kids, to show them the importance of satsang. There are about fifteen towns in India where the Bal Mandal went begging."

Fifth article - "The Eye of Knowledge"

"The Bombay Yuvuk Mandal did satsang in front of Pramukh Swami on the tenth of January. A quiz was arranged with four groups of yuvuks answering questions on a fourth-year exam book called 'Akshar Purushottam Upasana' and on the third section of Swami ni Vato. The yuvuks answered quickly and well. Pramukh Swami talked of the need of learning about Upasana. Every morning yuvuks should sing a kirtan bhakti (devotional song)."
This Vachanamritam is about ways to eradicate Vasana, and about the forms of Jiva, Ishvara, Akshar Brahman and Parabrahman.

General explanations and discussion -

Mrs. M. - "You can't touch the jiva. People only believe in something they can see and touch, so it is difficult to teach about the jiva."

One of the girls - "If someone comes to sabha, at first they don't know what it is about. Slowly they come to understand more."

Mrs. M. - "If you have any bad things within you, by satsang and gaining knowledge, slowly they will go. If you know the greatness of God's existence the bad habits will die away."

One of the girls - "We all say God is in everyone, then why is he separate? When is he separate and when isn't he separate?"

Mrs. M. - "Just as the jiva, when it considers itself with the body, is called the jiva; when it considers itself with the soul it is called the atman. So we have to consider ourselves as atman, otherwise jiva suffers. This is a difficult thing to do. Because the jiva thinks of itself as 'I am the body', it suffers. If you consider yourself separate from the body you will be happy and at peace. Atma is separate from everything, it doesn't own anything. As Pramukh Swami says, 'atma is something not me and not mine'. While you still think this or that is mine you are not atma."

One of the girls - "Whether you are with God or without God, Purushottam is within everyone. The jiva that is bound with
the body (maya), or not bound - these two states - in either state, people still have Purushottam inside them. Purushottam transcends all states, beyond akshar and atman; He is at the top, the Ultimate."

One of the girls - "Is chanting of shlokas and having darshan and so on, meant only for the God-oriented? The eagerness of people to gain darshan varies from person to person."

Mrs. M. "Someone going to the Mandir to have darshan, with no understanding, differs greatly from someone who understands and cares, so goes to have darshan. It is when you can see it with your eyes, with understanding, and it goes into the heart that you have succeeded - this is the type of darshan you should have. The aim is to have darshan of the eye, the heart and the mind." Reference to Vachanamritam Loya 10, where Shriji Maharaj talks of participating in something just with one's senses. "If you have faith and understanding in whatever action you are doing, it is fruitful." Quotation from a Swami ni vat - "If what is read is not understood, it is just as good as unread." "If you read something and don't put it into practice, it is also useless."

Mrs. M. - "If you are doing your rosary in the morning and not thinking about Swaminarayan, it is pointless. When doing pooja in the morning, if your mind diverts, you must put it back to Maharaj's murti. If you don't do anything with conviction, then it is not worth doing.

The knowledge of God on earth is central, everything else depends on this. So one of the ways to get rid of vasana is by total faith in Lord Swaminarayan. Have no doubt that he is God. Accept his talks without question. Also, listen and accept the talks of the saint who has realized him fully. This saint is God who walks amongst us now."
Read in English by one of the yuktis.
It is about Gunatitanand asking a shepherd the way to a village. In return he promises to show the shepherd the way to Akshardham. Gunatitanand appears to the shepherd when he is on his death bed, and accompanies him to Akshardham.

kirtan -
"We welcome you with joy Swami, we celebrate you.
We welcome you with happiness Swami, we welcome you.
With decorated flowers and garlands of many colours,
With water of the holy Ganga and Yamuna,
We welcome you with infinite prayers.

(repeat first two lines)
We will decorate you with glistening diamonds strung like thousands of stars,
We will decorate you with glowing lights.
We welcome you with infinite artis.

(repeat first two lines)
We will sacrifice our bodies to serve you,
My mind is intent on singing your praise.
We welcome you with our hearts, Swami."

(repeat first two lines)

kirtan -
"The name of Swaminarayan is so enchanting, hear it continuously,
Never forget it for even a moment during your day's work.
Meditating on the son of Dharmadev, it is easy to obtain salvation,
Remember the Lord in your heart during all activities.

(repeat first two lines)
If misery befalls you, do not be sad; if happiness comes, do not be overjoyed, Keep courage in your heart to overcome all obstacles.

(repeat first two lines)

This world is an ocean of ups and downs, it is very difficult to swim across, Control your mind by associating with a saint.

(repeat first two lines)

Peace will prevail if you remember the Lord, your miseries will disappear, Mulji says 'Maharaj has saved me and granted me salvation'..

(repeat first two lines)

last shloka - standard.

arti and thal - standard.
Yukti Sabha - Sunday, March 8th

Most of the yuktis were downstairs in the hall, practising a dance for a forthcoming festival. By the time we arrived upstairs, the sabha had already started.

Patrika -
First Article -
About Vasant Panchami being celebrated in Ataladara, in the presence of Pramukh Swami. The Yuvuk Mandal performed certain items for Shriji Maharaj.

Second Article -
Extracts from a speech of Pramukh Swami, where he talks of Shastriji Maharaj, the guru of Yogiji Maharaj, who laid down the foundation of Akshar and Purushottam. "It is very firm and no-one will be able to move it. We too should have complete faith in our guru's (our spiritual leader's) words. Remember God is the all-doer and we are just his instruments. The saint wants to purify us but we must put in effort to succeed."

Third Article -
In the Bombay Dadar Mandir, on the eighteenth of January, Dhabra Utsav was celebrated. Three thousand haribhaktas were present. The yuvuks did a play depicting an incident in Gunatitanand Swami's life. Balaks made speeches and there were competitions for them on such things as Swami ni vats.

Pramukh Swami gave a speech, and his message was that we have to develop detachment, become brahmarup and serve parabrahman. This is the aim of life. We aim to forget this mortal world, and we can do this by renouncing and concentrating our life on God. A satpurush (himself) wishes to make everyone brahmarup but one must wish for the same also, then we can achieve it in this lifetime.
Fourth Article -
A man named P. Dadaji who had known Yogiji Maharaj, went to the Mandir in Bombay on the thirtieth of January to meet Pramukh Swami.

Dadaji had an illness, for which he had to go to Bangalore. Pramukh Swami phoned him and wrote to him there to wish him well, although at the time he himself was unwell. Dadaji formed an attachment towards Pramukh Swami. This illustrates the love Pramukh Swami has for others.

discussion by yuktis -
This action of Pramukh Swami is unique. Discuss how, when they are ill, they are too tired to think of others. But Pramukh Swami always thinks of others.

Fifth Article -
Satsang Mandal News
Yogiji Maharaj established the mandals, especially the Yuvuk Mandal, for the spiritual advancement of each of us.

News of what the different yuvuk mandals are doing. One group did a recital of Shastriji Maharaj's life story and of the Shikshapatri.

general chat -
About the Cultural Festival of India.
In London everyone had worked so hard for six weeks, on the food stalls; this was seva.

Talked of going to London and taking turns working on the stalls. Worked extremely hard. Got up at four-thirty every morning and worked until late at night, "but we were never tired because Pramukh Swami was near". "He has a special magnetism - we were so full of energy. It was so wonderful".
Lots of people from the temple went to the Cultural Festival in India. Everyone had to give their names and these were sent to Ahmedabad, where the sect rented whole blocks of flats, and they sorted out accommodation for everyone. Sometimes there were groups of fourteen people sleeping in one room, having to share showers. "We went to bed late and got up early to be at the temple in the morning to see Pramukh Swami do pooja."

One of the girls -

"It was lovely. When we were all there together we forgot who we were - I forgot myself, and that is what is meant to happen; one becomes atman. You forget yourself and become that."

Mrs. M. -

"In India I used to go to the nagar every day, and wouldn't get back to my quarters until midnight. We would be back at seven in the morning though." She tells of Pramukh Swami's birthday in 1985; the car arriving decorated with flowers, with a tilak on the bonnet. She still remembers this car and the shawl of flowers made by the santos.

Everyone talked with wonder about Pramukh Swami - they put up with so many things because of him. "He has such magnetism and attraction."

Vachanamritam - Sarangpur 8

The Instinct of Envy

Mrs. M. - "There is no joy in having jealousy. Things like this are rubbish in one's body. Maharaj wrote the Vachanamritam to help us get rid of these things."

A common phrase is discussed - "If we have jealousy, jiva is burning." "Who ever has pride, jealousy will develop from this."
Mrs. M. - refers to Gadhada I : 28, which is about progress or regression on the spiritual path.

"Anger also erupts from pride."
"God only is able to get rid of the inner rubbish. Bapa can do this by his wish."

Discussion about the exams, and gold medals. "There is no jealousy over this because we all understand."

Discussion on different forms of jealousy. "Viveksargar Swami talks of jealousy. If something nice happens to a neighbour one becomes jealous, but if something bad happens one becomes happy. This is jealousy."

"We must strive to look at the good in others and not to develop jealous feelings."

"This is a very small Vachanamritam, but very important."

Mrs. M. - "daily reading of the Vachanamritam is very important."

Article from 'Prakash' -
An interview with Pramukh Swami in Bombay on the seventeenth of December 1986, by Mr. Navinbhai Soni. (This interview appears in English in the 'Swaminarayan Bliss', February edition, 1987.)

general discussion -
About the santos or saints.

They talk about why the saints cannot look at women.

Mrs. M. says that friendship between men and women is seen as more in society's eyes; it can be interpreted as something more. Therefore it is important to practise the vows set by Maharaj.
Mrs. M. - tells a story.

"An old friend of Dr. Swami met and rebuked him for wasting his education and his family's money by becoming a saint. Dr. Swami listened quietly, then said that the man was right, but asked, 'who should I follow, Bapa's wishes or my family's wishes? I have practised Bapa's wishes'."

They talk of a boy who was once a Leicester yuvuk; he was very punky and wild. Then suddenly he met Bapa, and became a saint. A transformation took place, and he is now a well-known saint.

Swami ni Vato -
Mrs. M. reads.

"Above everything, to sing the praises of the Lord is greater."
"Greater is talking/thinking of the greatness of God. Greater is dhyan.
Greater is to keep God within one's heart always."

This is discussed.

article from 'Prakash' -
Read by one of the girls.

Tells the story of a poor boy called Manu who helped his father earn a living by looking after someone else's sheep on a hillside.

Manu loved the animals and they loved him, and would run to his call.

"It was afternoon one day in the summer, and a wealthy man came and tied his horse up. His eyes were very red due to the heat. He sat in the shade of a tree and called to the boy
'do you have any water?' Manu said he did, and he gave it to the man in his mud pot. The man drank the water and felt better. He asked Manu how far the village was. Manu told him. The man asked if Manu had anything he could eat. Manu said he had just finished his rotolo.

The man asked Manu to go into town and get him something, but Manu refused because of his service to the animals.

The man went home and ate. He looked for his workers, most of whom had left their jobs unattended. He called Manu and his family, because he was impressed with Manu's loyalty and carefulness, and he gave him a good job. The moral is that everyone likes a man who does a good, loyal deed, and keeps to what he should be doing - a man who is loyal.

kirtan -
"Jasmine flowers are dear to the Lord,
Lotus flowers are dear to the Lord,
Roses are dear to the Lord.
I offer these flowers to you, my Lord.
My mind is fixed on your beauty, enhanced by your jasmine garland.
(repeat first three lines)
I've made a rosary of a hundred and eight flowers,
Chanting your name as I sewed each flower.
Now my mind will go nowhere else."
(repeat first three lines).

kirtan -
"Today is a very special event,
I have found God himself in physical form.
So my heart is feeling very peaceful and divine,
I am experiencing divine showers of wisdom.
The instinctual nature of sensual desires, anger and other bad habits, are being removed from me. I feel that I am becoming nearer to the almighty Lord. Man is a social animal, so he makes various mistakes, But the merciful Lord forgives them. To err is human, to forgive is divine. I have become tired of the cycle of births and deaths, O Lord, please relieve me from this cycle. O Lord, I am experiencing divine, divine, divine; I am over the moon."

dhoon - standard.

last shloka - standard.

arti and thal - standard.
APPENDIX C

STANDARD ITEMS IN THE YUVUK SABHAS AND THE TRANSCRIPTIONS
OF THE TAPE RECORDINGS OF THREE YUVUK SABHAS

Standard Items in the Yuvuk Sabha

Guru parampara - (jay naad) -
Reciting the names of the line of spiritual leaders, from Sahajanand Swami and Gunatitanand Swami to Pramukh Swami.

Dhoon -
Swaminarayan mantra.
Chanting the name of the Lord to fix the mind and clear the mind of worldly thoughts.

Dhyan -
Silent concentration on the form of the Lord.

Arti and thal -

1. Arti -
Written by Muktanand Swami, a paramhansa of Lord Swaminarayan.

In the arti, Muktanand Swami extols Sahajanand Swami, saying he is very kind and yet all-powerful. He destroys all the sufferings of those who seek refuge at his lotus feet. Born into a Brahman family, he has uplifted innumerable wicked and helpless people from the clutches of maya. "He is indestructible, has been perpetually performing lilas and all the holy places reside at his sacred feet. Whoever shall have darshan of this pragat Purushottam, shall be set free from the bondages of kala and karma and attain the heavenly bliss, together with his family. The sadguru Swami is an ocean of compassion and has made final beatitude easily accessible to all."

(Gujarati)
2. dhoon -
Chanting the different names of God.

"Rama Krishna Govinda, Jaya Jaya Govinda, Hare Rama Govinda, Jaya Jaya Govinda. Narayan Hare Swami Narayan Hare Swami Narayan Hare, Swami Narayan Hare. Krishna Dev Hare, Jaya Jaya Krishna Dev Hare .......

3. ashtak -
Seven shlokas in Sanskrit, extolling the work of Lord Swaminarayan and praying before him.

"I bow to Lord Swaminarayan, who is surrounded by innumerable muktas (liberated souls) and eternal Akshar Brahman in his Divine Abode, Akshardham, which is bright as infinite suns and moons."

"I bow to Lord Swaminarayan, the supreme incarnation, who has descended on this earth with Akshar Brahman - the divine abode - and the muktas, after hearing the prayers of Brahma and other deities."

"I prostrate to Lord Swaminarayan, who has done a great favour to his disciples in giving the bliss of trance through his sheer grace, which is extremely difficult to be accomplished by Hathayoga and other difficult sadhanas."

"I bow to Lord Swaminarayan who moves on this earth, performing sacrifices, who is invincible in his prowess and whose actions are only for the good of his disciples."

"I bow to Lord Swaminarayan, who for establishing Ekantik Dharma, delivers inspiring sermons and who showers nectar in the form of Vachanamritam."
"I bow to Lord Swaminarayan, the Lord of the Universe, who has built beautiful temples on this earth so that people can easily offer devotion to him."

"I bow to Lord Swaminarayan, who has founded this great Swaminarayan fellowship on this earth, which has helped people in shattering the bondage of this world and which has delivered ultimate salvation to the people."

4. prathana -

"The best type of faith in you, Ghanashyam, grant me this. May I offer devotion to you with full knowledge of your glory. Make me pure, with no faults, oh Dharmas's son. The feelings towards your devotees, may I never see any faults in them. Give me the company of a realized devotee. Give me your darshan constantly, my master; I am your servant. I ask for this from you - keep me with you always. O merciful! O lover of your devotees! Listen to me. O gracious one! I ask for seven things. Sahajanand Maharaj, all your devotees, May we all firmly follow all the codes of Shikshapatri, And observe the eleven niyams. (code of ethics) Please listen to me attentively. Make sure I do not commit violence to any small being, Keep away from unchaste women, Not eat meat, or drink any liquor, Not touch widows, or commit suicide, Not commit theft or slander anyone at all; Not slander any gods, eat something which is not pure, Or listen to discourses from someone unsuitable. These codes and ethics, follow them. Worship Shree Sahajanand, surrender all to him. Stay within these eleven niyams, love God, And Premanand says with conviction, that you will achieve Dham."

(Gujarati)
5. shlokas -
Spoken while prostrating to the Lord.

"Show mercy upon me, oh Lord Sahajanand, give me the knowledge to sing your praises. Akshar Purushottam manifests on earth in human form to redeem our souls."
(Gujarati)

"Sahajanand is the God and Gunatitanand Swami is Akshar. They are one and the same. Whoever thinks of praising them together will be freed from this cycle of life and death."
(Gujarati)

"He (Purushottam) was born in Kaushaldesh and at a very early age left home and wandered around the holy places of India. Then he met Ramanand Swami whom he made his guru, and started the Swaminarayan Sampradaya, and performed many ahimsic yagnas. He constructed majestic temples and resided in Gadhpur. He established two sects, one at Vartal and the other in Ahmedabad, before he left this world for Akshardham."
(Gujarati)

"I offer my obeisance to the great sage Gunatitanand Swami, who perpetually practised dhyan, who attained and maintained the sacred Ekantika Dharma firmly and steadily; who constantly experienced divine bliss, and yet had an innate practice of giving discourses regarding Shriji Maharaj."
(Sanskrit)

"I pray and bow to sadguru Pragji, who is nirgun, (beyond the influence of the three gunas) full of jnan, (knowledge) with all the virtues of a great saint, above the influence of maya and possessed of divine powers, and who has the ability to dissolve the flaws of those who come into his contact."
(Sanskrit)
"I lovingly bow at your holy feet, o Yagnapurushdas, by whose simple chanting all evil thoughts are extinguished, by seeking refuge at whose holy feet one gets liberated from the cycle of births and deaths and whose glory is sung by devotees in all directions."

(Gujarati)

"I offer my obeisance with great devotion, o Yogiji Maharaj, Swami Jnanjivandas. Your sweet speech is like nectar that restores life. All the devotees perceive divinity in your eyes. You have motherly love in your heart and an ever-smiling face."

(Gujarati)

"I bow down heartily to you, o Narayanswarupdas! Ever simple, detached and adorned with all saintly virtues, you are doubly blessed by Shastriji Maharaj and Yogiji Maharaj. You are the defender of the faith and are possessed with deep knowledge like the vast ocean." (Gujarati)

"Make us become Brahmarup and constantly see Shriji and Swami. With the feelings of a servant, I ask this request with folded hands."

(Gujarati)

6. greeting -

Whilst thal is being prepared, devotees meet each other with the greeting, "Jai Swaminarayan."

7. thal -

"Please come to my house with your turban adorning your head. I am offering ladu, jalebi, seva with my love, suran, bhaji, karela, papad, vantak, valor, cholafali, kaju, bhat, dhal, lmbu, panbioi, taja, elchi, javantri. Come daily please, so I can meet you and feed you, Jeram Brahmachari is calling you."
last shloka -

"Shripatim Shridharam ....."

Repeating various names of God, such as "Madhavam, Vasudevam, Swaminarayan", and offering one's respects to God.

(Sanskrit)
Yuvuk Sabha - Saturday, February 14th

guru-parampara - standard.

dhoon - standard.

dhyan - standard.

prathana -
"Swami Sahajanand Maharaj, please stay within my heart. Ocean of mercy, King of Vraj*, bestow upon me your darshan. O Lord! Please purify my home.

O Lord, I am full of faults. I used to go around enjoying material pleasures, but still you have accepted me. Please grant me salvation.

Today o Lord, I have surrendered to you. My request is - please fulfil my desires. Hear the words of your humble servant, please take care of me.

Please remember me in your heart, O Ghanashyam, this is my request. Lover of devotees, I bow by head to you. Carer of the poor, please redeem me."

* Vraj - the place where Shree Krishna used to live.

Swaminarayan Satsang Patrika -
(fortnightly journal).

First article -
"In Bombay the senior advocate of the supreme court, Nani Palkhurala, came for darshan of H.D.H. Pramukh Swami Maharaj.
Nani Palkhurala said, 'I'reve come here for Swamishri's darshan because I have much respect for this institution'. (He came to a celebration in Ahmedabad and was impressed by it.)

'Pramukh Swami does a lot for our culture, spreading morality around India. In my opinion, the Swaminarayan Sanstha is a very powerful sanstha which has many followers in many different parts of the world. I can say with my heart that whatever Pramukh Swami says and does is the truth. I saw how your institution works when I came to Ahmedabad (for the bicentennial celebrations of Gunatitanand Swami's birthday).'

Second article -
"Other well-known people also came for Swamishri's darshan whilst he was in Bombay."

"One man said, 'I have done a doctorate on Jain dharma and Hindu dharma. I also teach this, but I have not practised any of these religions. For this reason I have come to Pramukh Swami'."

Third article -
"A speaker asks this question, 'Why do we need to call these 'top' people to our religious meetings?' He asked this question to a saint of our Sanstha in India and got the following reply, 'If we need to bring about a change in society, for example, stop alcohol, stop cigarettes especially for those under sixteen years; if we are on good terms and we impress the leaders, then our work is made that much easier by their influence'."

Fourth article -
"At a school for learning Brahmic knowledge, a top teacher said, 'at present in our educational institutions we are producing 'learned monkeys' who do little for their country,
but Pramukh Swami is showing youths the road to morality and keeping youths on the path of Indian culture'."

Fifth article -
Pramukh Swami, whilst addressing members of the Youth Organization, said, "We should make our life pure and control our pride, anger and jealousy and so on, and culturate (sic) love for all and serve society."

Sixth article -
"It is natural for children to want food and quibble for it, but a ten year old child, a devotee of Pramukh Swami did darna parna for one month to please his Guru." (darna parna is a one-day complete fast, one day food, on alternate days).

kirtan -
"I like the name of Swaminarayan,
It plays in my heart, day and night.
You took birth in the village of Chhapaiya.
You did penance in the form of a varni,
You granted salvation to thousands of Yunnis.

(repeat first two lines - chorus)
You took initiation at the hands of Guru Ramanand Swami,
Toured around Kutch, Gujarat and Saurashtra,
You removed the misery of your devotees.

(chorus)
You gave us nectar in the form of Vachanamritam.
You taught us morality, knowledge and detachment,
You taught us devotion for one's salvation.

(chorus)
With your mercy you gave us the Shikshapatri,
Granting the desires of your devotees.
It is the book of all your devotees.

(chorus)
You are forever present in this satsang.
Hear my prayer in your heart,
Give me your darshan and make me pure."

announcement -
A committee member spoke about the London temple, and the
decision of the Council not to grant permission to build a
temple on the land purchased by the Sanstha in Harrow.

kirtan -
"0 Lord so pure and graceful, how can I come to you with
this body,
So full of impurities and contamination?
In my heart, within myself, I feel shameful.
With a body so pure and divine, you sent me into this world.
(repeat above line)
After coming into the world, I myself, through ignorance,
Made it impure and contaminated
(repeat above line)
How can I get rid of the dirt,
Of countless births from this body?
(repeat above line)

(chorus - first two lines)

Never have I sung your name,
Even though I attained such a beautiful voice from you.
(repeat above line)

O Lord of Lords, never have I for a moment
Closed my eyes and meditated upon your glorious form.
(repeat above line)
How can I sing your glory now that the threads of my mind's vina* are broken?

(repeat above line)

(chorus)

With these feet I have never taken the trouble To walk and come to your temple.

(repeat above line)

Wherever your devotion and worship was going on, I have never bowed down to you in prostration and salutation.

(repeat above line)

O Lord, ** I have come, defeated, to you. What garlands shall I offer you?"

(repeat above line)

(chorus)

* 'vina' - a musical instrument.

** 'O Lord' - the word used is 'Hare Har' - the name of Shiva.

arti, thal standard.

kirtan -

"The talks of my Lord are as sweet as honey. So fascinating that whoever hears it is attracted to him. Whoever hears the talks is so impressed that he feels like renouncing the world.

One who listens to the discourses of the Lord with love, Feels like leaving home and family To serve a saint and wander in the jungle to meditate on his form.
Saints like Shukaji, the Sanaks, Narada (great sages of the past) Sing his praises constantly. Not for any worldly desires but they wander from place to place spreading his glory.

If I understood the Lord’s glory as much as the sages do, then I would also constantly recite his name.

If we serve those who sing the Lord’s praises, The Lord will be pleased. Serve the master of Muktanand and you will overcome the misery of the world."

This devotional song was looked at by two of the older men, and after it was sung, the meaning was explained. It was decided to do this, because this is one of the older kirtans and many young people feel at a loss because they do not really know what the older kirtans mean or are about.

Vachanamritam - Gadhada I: 74.

"The true understanding/spiritual faith of a devotee is realized when he faces adverse circumstances.

When do we know that a devotee or a friend is sincere? In times of difficulty.

For example. A bawo (type of saint/ascetic) was going past a village, when he saw a man crying. When he asked why, it turned out that the man's son had just died. The bawo tried to comfort the man by saying that everyone must die one day, and so on. After some time the man got over his son's death. The bawo started living in the same village, and kept a goat on whose milk he fed himself daily. One day the goat died, and the bawo started lamenting and crying. The man who had been comforted said, 'Just six months earlier you explained
to me about this false body and so on, and now you are crying!
The bawo replied, 'that was your son, but this is my goat!
The man then realized what little understanding and
spiritual knowledge the bawo had.

Gunatitanand Swami says in one of his talks,

'You cry for those who die
yet those who cry will also die.'
So one day we will all die.
Therefore, cry for yourself and not for others.

True devotees will find it a lot easier to overcome grief
(although they may have true feelings for the relatives)
when a close one dies. With this knowledge we can also
overcome the fear of death."

Another type of understanding -
Nityanand Swami - one of Maharaj's saints. (This is taken
from 'Satsang Reader Part Two').

"A scripture was being composed about Lord Swaminarayan and
there was a discussion amongst the top saints as to how to
describe Maharaj, either as a great saint, as equal to Lord
Rama and Krishna or as even higher, as the Supreme Lord.

Nityanand Swami firmly declared that Maharaj is supreme and
this must be written. Others disagreed, saying this must not
be written yet in the scriptures, even Maharaj himself said
so. But Nityanand remained firm. Maharaj excommunicated
him. After seven days Maharaj called him back and told the
others, 'A true devotee has an understanding like this
Nityanand Swami'. In this way Nityanand Swami 'passed the
test' that he was put through."
Looking at present time. "Lilas that God or saints may perform may cause a doubt of their divinity in people's minds, but a true devotee remains firm. For example, 'Why can't Pramukh Swami build a temple in Harrow if he is so great?' But a true devotee realizes everything, good or bad, to be the wish of the Lord."

"What constitutes true understanding?"

"True understanding: - Shikshapatri 116.

'One who realizes this soul is Brahma/Atmarup and above the influence of the three bodies and worships God in this manner, he has true realization'.

The final purpose of this human existence is to become Brahmarup (realized) and with this understanding, to worship God.

In any other body, this soul goes through what it has to go through. But in a human body it can choose, for example, direct its course for future births depending on its actions.

If any other body, plant or animal, has one thousand pounds to spend, they will spend it, die, and enter the next body. But in the human body, one thousand pounds can be increased in value or decreased, depending on your deeds. So direct the future course of soul.

Everyone, humans, animals, all living entities, want sukh, (happiness, bliss, peace). There is superficially no difference between humans and animals (eating, mating and so on). So why do humans exist? Why are we unique? We have the ability to advance our soul and redeem ourselves. We can gain salvation, ultimate redemption and reach a further happiness. The Bhagavad Gita states that there are four dukhs (miseries); including birth (the process of being born) and death.
Who would now wish to enter their mother's womb? No-one. But if we don't liberate ourselves, we will have to suffer that same misery in future births.

Similarly, no-one wants to die. If we had it all our way, we would all wish for an eternal life. Whilst in the womb the foetus requests God to liberate him, to free him from his prison of being in the womb. He promises to do good. When he leaves the womb, maya overcomes him and he forgets God.

Animals can enjoy. If the purpose of being human was to enjoy, then why not have the body of an animal?

Humans have buddhi, intelligence, ability to think abstractly. From this they are meant to extract happiness from within; soul happiness, which is sat-cit-anand - blissful, which comes from knowledge and is ever-eternal. This happiness is eternal. Unlike worldly happiness, for example, tasty food. If we keep doing that, for example, eating this and doing that, there will come a time when you will become tired of that activity. But spiritual happiness, from within, from the soul, is eternal and stays with you forever, even after you die. Only those who have experienced it can describe and know what happiness there is to be gained from the form of God and this saint.

kirtan -

"The name of Swaminarayan is so appealing, I remember it constantly. Whatever I may be doing, I never forget it. Meditating on the sea of Dharma, You can easily swim the ocean of misery. Whatever you do, keep Hare (the Lord) in your heart. If misery occurs, don't be depressed, If happiness comes, don't be overjoyed, Keep courage always and tackle this life.
This world is full of miseries and apparent happiness - no-one can face it. Keep the company of a true saint, and keep the mind focussed on God. If you remember the Lord, you will secure happiness and be released from worldly miseries.

Mulji* says, 'Maharaj, I'll think of you constantly'.

*Mulji - the poet's name.

Swami Ni Vat -
This is discussed and read in English. It is taken from 'Kishore Satsang Pravesh', the second-year examination book, (pages 84-86).

This is led by a young man. He says he will read a chapter every week. He reads and asks questions. He reads the story of the prince and the king. He asks what the meaning is. To gain salvation, we must follow a God-realized saint.

Discussion about the acceptance of a God-realized saint, a true guru for the advancement in the path of salvation.

The older men correct the young man if he says something which is not quite correct.

last shloka -
standard.
guru-parampara -
standard.

dhoon -
standard.

dhyan -
standard.

prathana -
"Seva (service) is our life. 
Fill every part of our body with it. 
I bow to you Lord, with all my love. 
(repeated)
0 beloved of the devotee, ocean of mercy and compassion. 
(repeated)
Requestfully we pray to you with our hands folded. 
(repeated)
Devotion without motive, grant us oh Lord, 
With all our body, mind and wealth." 
(repeated)
(repeat the first line)

Swaminarayan Satsang Patrika -
First article -
"Whilst in Bombay, at the Dadar Mandir in January 1987, 
Utrang Parva was celebrated traditionally by saints and 
devotees of our Sanstha, by begging (doing bhiksha) for food 
holding a zoli (bag or sack)."
Swamishri took the handles of the begging sack on his shoulders and loudly cried, 'Narayan Hare, Sachidanand Prabhu' (which is what saints say whilst in a village so that devotees and others know that saints are there).

It is believed that whatever donation of food is given on this particular day, is beneficial to the donor in terms of advancing spiritually. (For example, good deed or karma.)

Shastriji Maharaj used to personally go with the begging sack for bhiksha and made five huge temples. Yogiji Maharaj did the same and cooked for the devotees. Pramukh Swami, when a young saint, used to do likewise in Bhadra whilst he was studying.

Even though it is not necessary nowadays, (they previously needed food and donations so they had to go out to collect it) this special day is still kept by our saints as a custom, as it allows them to preach simultaneously and also keep 'smruti' - remembrance of what it used to be like in the old days.

Likewise, during Pramukh Swami's pooja that morning, the platform was decorated with traditional things in keeping with the special day, for example, tins of food, sacks of grain and more.

Giving blessings, Pramukh Swami said, 'God is impressed only by pure love'. On the day, we offer things we like to God. Physically we give food, rice and so on, to God, but metaphorically we should give God our love, to propitiate God. It is not important that what we give is big or small, cheap or dear, but what is important is with how much love it is given and for what reason (such as, to please God and his saints, and not for any return)."
Second article -
"A devotee from Gujarat was going to America. En route he was in Bombay so he went for Pramukh Swami's blessings. Pramukh Swami told him, 'You are going to America, but keep your satsang. Many of our devotees live there and abide by the rules laid out by Lord Swaminarayan. Therefore, concentrate on leading a moral life whilst doing what you are going to do there. Never get involved in consuming liquor or flesh. Don't think we are inferior to the Americans; compared to them we are morally superior!"

Third article -
"Similarly a devotee came early with his son who was going to America. The son thought that one cannot live in America without eating meat. However, Pramukh Swami told him, 'If you have been there (America) for a few years, will you be called an American? No, you will not. Thus keep your Indian culture high and do not let any impurities into yourself. There are many Indians in America who live a pure life, so we should follow them'."

Fourth article -
"In Bombay, Swamishri opened a Medical Centre. After the ceremony, a small gathering/reception was held. Dr. Samani (a devotee of Bombay - a cardiologist) went to garland Pramukh Swami, when the doctor's spectacles fell out of his shirt pocket while he was bowing his head. (The speaker comments - 'medical corps are very useful in India. It is not like here - big hospitals and free treatment. In India even if you get an infection of water, you will be charged, so the purpose of the medical corps is that patients can be examined and treated free of charge which is very useful in a country such as India'.) Pramukh Swami stooped down and picked up the glasses to return them to Dr. Samani. So, it doesn't matter how much you praise/garland a saint like Pramukh Swami, because he will never lose his humility,"
egolessness and sense of inferiority. There should be a willingness to serve others, however big or small the action may seem."

Fifth article -

Balaks also accompanied the saints in Bombay when they went begging on the special day.

Sixth article -

"Pramukh Swami said (echoing the words of Yogiji Maharaj, who often said 'do anything and everything you wish, but worship God'), 'With this human birth, one must worship God. Concentrate on this, realize this body is very difficult to attain. Therefore, make the most of it in the service of God'.

Kirtan -

"Sahajanand the Lord, worship him, Sahajanand Hare.

(repeat)

Liquor, flesh, theft and adultery, keep away from these four.

(chorus - first line)

The cycle of births and deaths is difficult to overcome
Keep this in your mind and worship the Lord.

(chorus)

By repeating the name of 'Narayan'
You can swim the ocean of this world (i.e. become liberated).

(chorus)

Nishkulanand says, 'become firm in your faith
And do not keep any doubts!"

Sermon on Swami Ni Vato -

(a) "We've met God, we've met his saint,
Therefore don't let your heart suffer in misery.
But if some unhappiness comes your way (karma)
Then suffer it with strength and knowledge."
The meaning -

"Once we have met and realized God and this realized-saint, we have all the happiness before us, if we know how to take it. Therefore, there is no need to be miserable, feeling you haven't got this or that.

If some misery does come our way, suffer it in the knowledge that the cause of this suffering is part of this life. Whatever it is, it is God's wish anyway."

(b) "Whatever words one hears, the soul becomes as such. Therefore if we listen to a strong devotee of God, we advance spiritually and if we listen to words of a 'Kusangi', (evil person) We degrade spiritually."

Meaning -

"Look how much enthusiasm we gain when we hear words in the shibir, gatherings, or when saints or Swamishri comes. But in bad company, look how much we can change in our attitudes. Whatever company you keep, that determines the happiness you get within."

(c) "Keep a saint foremost in your mind and do as he says, not as your mind tells you to do."

Meaning -

"Obeying the agna (instructions) of a realized-saint helps one to advance spiritually.

We all have our own ideas of what is best, but following the advice of a saint is essential.

We get so big (with pride) that we have doubts and do as we wish, not as the saint wishes. For example, a guru gave a
stick to his disciple, and told him whoever is touched by this stick, you will be able to read their mind. The disciple went around reading other people's minds, and felt a lot of pride in what he could achieve. One day he wondered what the guru was thinking, 'What sort of things does he think about?'. Due to the disciple's status he got pride and started thinking wrongly of his own guru.

(d) "The realized-saint must have some grace on us otherwise one would not behave like one does."

Meaning -

"Devotees follow strict rigours and codes, only because the realized-saint has been pleased. He extends his mercy to us and allows us to stay within satsang.

Why does he bestow his grace on only a few? - Due to our previous births and our spiritual efforts in this and previous births.

Therefore, keep in mind that whatever we achieve, it is due to the mercy of God and his saint, and in this way, pride and egoism for the self will not be an obstacle in the spiritual quest."

(e) "Cleanliness is next to Godliness."

Meaning -

"There are two types of cleanliness. One is physical or material, of the body or atmosphere. One is spiritual, such as, no desires, covetousness, anger, jealousy, malice to anyone, and so on. Both are needed to reach God."

arti, thal - standard.
The Life Story of Sadguru Nishkulanand Swami

In English - by a yuvuk.

"We are talking about Sadguru Nishkulanand today because it was his birthday two weeks ago. That day also celebrated the birthday of Shastriji Maharaj and the Shikshapatri, and we had a samaiya. The day was known as Vasant Panchami.

Nishkulanand used to write kirtans but his speciality was - his great attribute was that he was completely unattached to anything - totally detached.

Gopalanand's speciality was meditation and dhyan.

Gunatitanand's speciality was in being able to talk to people - but his speciality involved everything really.

There are four attributes of an ekantik devotee; dharma, bhakti, vairagya or detachment and jnan or knowledge. Nishkulanand had these four attributes.

Anyone know what year he was born in, or how old he was compared to Maharaj? Well, he was 15 years older than Maharaj, born in 1822.

He had already made Ramanand his guru before Maharaj came on the scene.

When did Maharaj first come on the scene? At Loj.

His childhood name was Lulji Suthar.

We take one incident from his childhood:

In a small village near Bhadra - when he was about 20 years. He and Gunatitanand Swami (who lived in Bhadra) used to meet
every day. During the day they did their work - Lalji was a carpenter and Gunatitanand was a farmer. At night, instead of going to sleep, they used to meet halfway between Bhadra in a temple dedicated to Shiva. They used to meet there and talk. So they had very little sleep over the few years when they used to do this.

They both had Ramanand Swami as their guru.

Lalji Suthar got married. He had two sons.

One example -

Ramanand Swami told all his disciples to go to Loj: because Neelkanth was in Loj. Ramanand Swami was elsewhere. If Doctor Swami is here in Leicester, and he tells us to go and see this haribhakta in London, we won't think 'who is this haribhakta', we will go to see Doctor Swami, won't we?

Well, Ramanand Swami told everyone to go to Loj, but Lalji didn't think much of that, and went to where Ramananda was instead. Ramanand Swami asked him why he was there, and not at Loj. Lalji answered, 'Master, since you are lodging here, why should I wander elsewhere?' So Ramanand said 'haven't I issued an instruction that everyone should go to Loj for the darshan of Harani? (that is Maharaj). He is a great yogi and a glorious personality'. This incident is very well described in a book. Lalji asks how great he was; 'even greater than you?', and Ramanand Swami replied, 'he is even greater than me'. So Lalji went to Loj and met Maharaj.

The first incident between Lalji and Maharaj: Maharaj came to Bhadra. Can anyone tell me how many times Maharaj visited Bhadra? Thirty-two. Maharaj was in Bhadra, and there were other haribhaktas - everyone around, including Lalji, came to see Maharaj. There is a river in Bhadra, with a big tree next to it. Both the banks of the river had overflowed.
Maharaj decided upon a boating excursion. Maharaj asked Lalji to make a small - it says yacht here - boat. It was a problem for Lalji to make a boat without tools and materials. Maharaj was determined, so he ordered someone to bring a piece of coarse cloth. Lalji obeyed the order. People like us would say how the hell are you going to make a boat out of bits of cloth? But Lalji obeyed; he had faith in the words of Maharaj. Maharaj floated the piece of cloth and sat down on it. Everyone was convinced of the divine character of Maharaj.

Then Maharaj moved to another village and celebrated the festival of Vasant Panchami. Why? Because it is the start of a new season - spring, isn't it? That is why it is celebrated in India. It is just a coincidence that Shastriji was born on that day.

(An explanation in Gujarati by one of the older men - on the meaning of **Vasant Panchami** in India.)

Then Maharaj wanted to go to Kutch. He said to Lalji that he wanted to go, and told him to find a good guide like him. Lalji decided to go himself. It was a long journey, so Lalji took some water and fruit. It was very dry, and they travelled through desert. He also took some money. He hid his coins in his shoes - in India you have to do these silly things - incase thieves take it away. When we go to India we take money bags, but he didn't have a money bag, so he put it in his shoe. He didn't tell this to Maharaj. On the way they met a beggar. Maharaj heard his pleadings and made Lalji give away the food. Then they had an encounter with robbers, who searched both of them, but found nothing. Maharaj told them they were not clever in their own art, and he told them to examine Lalji's shoes. They found the coins and took them.
Lalji felt embarrassed - he was worried about what he would offer to Maharaj for meals. Moving on, they met a thirsty saint, and Maharaj made Lalji give the water away. In this way, Maharaj relieved Lalji of all the worldly things - he wanted to make him realize we don't want to depend on these worldly things when we have God in front of us.

In the desert, Lalji was very thirsty - there was no water. Maharaj showed him an oasis in the desert. Maharaj told him to dig for water, and when Lalji tasted it, he found it to be sweet. When he offered this to Maharaj he drank himself. When he returned to where he had got the water and tasted it again, he found it was salty. He realized Maharaj had worked a miracle for him.

Maharaj was barefooted, so under a tree, Lalji took the thorns out of Maharaj's foot. When he removed the thorns he saw the divine marks on Maharaj's feet, and realized how great Maharaj was.

Eventually they reached the limits of a village. Maharaj said, 'I feel hungry, so bring me some food'. Lalji reminded Maharaj that they had no money or food. Maharaj said that in the village was a devotee, and Lalji should bring some food from their house. Lalji said this was the village of his in-laws and everyone knew him, so how could he beg? This would mean shame. Maharaj asked him if he would do it if he was transformed so no-one would recognize him. Lalji said that this would be good. Lalji shaved his moustache and hair off, and changed his clothes: he made him look like a sadhu. He gave him guru mantra and initiated him on the spot, so made him into a sadhu, naming him Nishkulanand. Why did he name him this? What does Nishkul mean? It means family or relations. So it means, one who has abandoned his relations and family. Then Maharaj ordered him to go and beg at his in-laws house. So Lalji did this.
Lalji's wife was there. She came out and saw her husband in the dress of a sadhu. She rushed and told her mother, who got the children to try to change Lalji's mind. She felt this would move his heart, but here was a soul who had renounced everything. He had changed his heart completely, and merely uttered these words, 'Just as termites cannot effect the fire, I too remain detached from you. I come only because Maharaj is here, and if you wish to be redeemed, render him some service by giving some food for him'. They gave him some food. Maharaj was very pleased.

After this, members of his family used to come and bug him - to get him back. But he used to explain to them, 'I belong to eternity and what you say is a mere botheration for me'. Hearing this they went away. He was so detached from the world and his relations.

Maharaj made him write a book called 'Yamdan' about what happens in hell. Maharaj made him see Yamdan, and he wrote from the experiences there.

After some years, Nishkulanand's wife and two sons came to take him back. It was then that Maharaj talked to the elder son, and inspired him to become a sadhu and renounce the world. Maharaj made him a sadhu. Gopalanand Swami initiated him. We sometimes say, or the Vadtal Sampradaya say, that santos can't initiate, that Pramukh Swami can't initiate anyone, because he is not acharya. Maharaj appointed the acharyas and only they shall initiate. But even in Maharaj's time he used to make Gopalanand Swami and Muktanand Swami, the great saints, he used to make them initiate devotees into sadhus. So Gopalanand Swami initiated Nishkulanand's son and named him Govindanand.

A couple of examples to show how great his detachment was. Once Maharaj asked Swami to go and address an assembly of females. The saints were under orders of Maharaj to shun
wealth and women in an eight-fold way (eight-fold celibacy). So he didn't go to the assembly - he broke Maharaj's agna. Later on when Maharaj asked for an explanation, he said he was prepared to be punished for disobedience, but he was not prepared to deviate from the rules of sadhus on asceticism, by addressing a female assembly. Maharaj was pleased. He was only testing Swami. Only such saints can emancipate themselves and society. In the Shikshapatri it says if your guru gives you orders which go against dharma, then you don't do them.

In another place, milk is supposed to be a food; it is a privileged food. Like ghee, it gives a lot of energy, so he didn't used to drink much of this. One day he went to Baroda, and saw rice cooked in sweet milk. He began to prepare for his departure from the place seeing this. Gopalanand Swami came to know about this and asked why he was doing this. Nishkulanand asked how he could stay where milk was overflowing. Gopalanand realized how detached this saint was and he made sure that he would only be given simple meals.

We will just quickly look at some other incidents.

Maharaj wanted to make Nishkulanand Mahant of Gadhada, and when Swami heard this he wanted to go to another village. When Maharaj asked him why, Nishkulanand asked what happens to a small mouse when a heavy weight falls on its body. It gets crushed. So he didn't want all these administrative duties, he wanted to advance spiritually, so Maharaj agreed not to make him Mahant.

He was also famous for kirtans. Also for sculpting. He made some doors.

He used to write a lot of scriptures. Yogiji Maharaj really liked them. He wrote on the attributes of a good saint.
Maharaj used to say - Maharaj wanted all the santos to learn Sanskrit, but there were two great saints who didn't learn Sanskrit, Gunatitanand and Nishkulanand. Maharaj used to say, if these two had learnt Sanskrit, we could have really - I mean, he used to give it as examples of how great they were at spreading satsang, that Nishkulanand spread satsang through his books and kirtans, and Gunatitanand Swami used to spread it through his talks."

kirtan -

(Describing Lord Swaminarayan's divine sports in Bhadra, the birthplace of Gunatitanand Swami. About a boating excursion).

"Lord Swaminarayan (Hare), came to the banks of the River Und (in Bhadra), He climbed on the tree near the bank, dived into the water, Started to splash water to all devotees, Started to swim, to all four corners. To make us happy he was so charming.

(chorus - first line)

Lalji Suthar who is Nishkulanand Swami, he was so firm. Maharaj told him to bring a yacht quickly, The other devotees playing in the water, Pleased Maharaj, constantly chanting his name.

(chorus)

Lalji says, 'I can't make a yacht this quickly' Shree Hare says, 'Bring a cloth, it won't take long'. They brought a cloth, having faith in the Lord's words, Doing such service to please the Lord.

(chorus)

Maharaj made a cloth into a yacht which floated, He then sat in it with his akshar muktas (devotees), The yacht started moving in different directions and the devotees enjoyed immense bliss.

(chorus)
(Maharaj says) 'This Mulji (Gunatitanand Swami) is my
divine abode,
Realize this, and worship me, you will be redeemed.
I am the king of that abode, all-knowing,
Having Godly attributes, such is my name!

(chorus)
Kanaiyo says, 'Shree Hare did so many divine sports such as
these in Bhadra
that Bhadra's glory has become as great as Chhapaiya.
Even if you do a million fasts, go to all the pilgrimage
places,
But nothing is equal to realizing this Akshar, the divine
abode of the Lord'."

Vachanamritam - Gadhada I - 74.
continued from last week.

"'The true understanding/spiritual faith of a devotee is
realized when he faces adverse circumstances'. This is what
Lord Swaminarayan says.

There are different types of understanding/knowledge. For
example, we can read or hear that malaria is acquired by
mosquito bites. You have some friends who come back from
India and catch malaria; they go to hospital for treatment.
Your knowledge that malaria is caught by mosquito bites is
reinforced, reaffirmed, made more firm. You might go to
India and get malaria yourself. Your knowledge has been
experienced now and fully developed. So, for example, if
you go to India or anyone else is going, you advise them to
take tablets to prevent malaria, as you have full knowledge
now (more than you had at stage one and two).

Similarly, the intensity of spiritual wisdom (jnan) differs.
For example, Dadar Khachar, the prince of Gadhada at whose
place Lord Swaminarayan stayed for most of his ministry, he
was a great devotee, but he had a lot of problems. He lost a complete harvest, and he had a court case which he lost. But still he kept his faith in Shriji Maharaj. He never for a moment thought, 'If he is God, why couldn't he have done this and so on?' He took it all as, 'God is testing my faith in him'.

Similarly, Nityanand Swami, one of the paramhansas of Lord Swaminarayan, he had so much faith that Lord Swaminarayan was the Supreme God. He said, 'Presently Lord Swaminarayan is amongst us. But say tomorrow he got married and had two children who walked around town with faces unclean, and generally dirty – still I wouldn't have the slightest doubt that this man is the Supreme Lord'. One should cultivate this type of faith in God, this unmoved faith despite any sort of circumstances.

We should cultivate understanding that 'Whatever God does is for the good'. Whether satsang increases or decreases, whether you are honoured, (for example, ride an elephant) or insulted (given a humiliating ride on a donkey) we must accept it willingly as God's wish.

For example, Pragji Bhakta (Bhagatji Maharaj) was insulted beyond imagination, and excommunicated from this fellowship, yet he kept faith and his love of God increased day by day.

Therefore, whatever happens, never leave the worship of God."

last shloka - standard.
guru-parampara -
standard.
dhoon -
standard.
dhyan -
standard.

prathana -
"Swami Sahajanand Maharaj, please stay within my heart.
Ocean of mercy, King of Vraj, bestow upon me your darshan ...."

(see prathana of Yuvuk Sabha - February 14th)

Swaminarayan Satsang Patrika -
First article -
About Vasant Panchami being celebrated in Ataladara, in the presence of Pramukh Swami. The Yuvuk Mandal performed for Shriji Maharaj.

Second article -
Extracts from a speech of Pramukh Swami, where he talks of Shastriji Maharaj, the guru of Yogiji Maharaj, who laid down the foundations of Akshar and Purushottam. "It is very firm and no-one will be able to move it. We too should have complete faith in our guru's words. Remember God is the all-doer and we are just his instruments. The saint wants to purify us, but we must put in effort to succeed."

Third article -
In the Bombay Dadar Mandir, on the eighteenth of January, Dhabra Utsav was celebrated. Three thousand haribhaktas
were present. The yuvuks did a play depicting an incident in Gunatitanand Swami's life. Balaks made speeches and there were competitions for them on such things as Swami ni vats.

Pramukh Swami gave a speech, and his message was that we have to develop detachment, become brahmarup, and serve parabrahman. This is the aim of life. We aim to forget this mortal world, and we can do this by renouncing and concentrating our life on God. A satpurush (himself) wishes to make everyone brahmarup, but one must wish for the same also. Then we can achieve it in this lifetime.

Fourth article -
A man named P. Dadaji who had known Yogiji Maharaj, went to the Mandir in Bombay on the thirtieth of January to meet Pramukh Swami. Dadaji had an illness, for which he had to go to Bangalore. Pramukh Swami phoned him and wrote to him there, to wish him well, although at the time he himself was unwell. Dadaji formed an attachment towards Pramukh Swami. This illustrates the love Pramukh Swami has for others.

Fifth article -
Satsang Mandal news
Yogiji Maharaj established the mandals especially the Yuvuk Mandal, for the spiritual advancement of each of us.

News of what the different yuvuk mandals are doing. One group did a recital of Shastriji Maharaj's life story and of the Shikshapatri.

kirtan -
"A saint like him should be honoured, One who has the true qualities of God. He has no lust or anger. To him gold and mud are equal."
Gita has mentioned about true saints like him. He has no other mundane thoughts except God. True Vedic knowledge he has fully practised. Then the knowledge of the universe is negligible. The lover of animals The Lord resides in him, The Lord was won over by great attributes of such a saint."

**guru parampara** - Chanting the names of the spiritual leaders.

**Swami Ni Vato** -

1. "This is God not an ordinary saint or a false saint."

Discussion on each word of the vat. "Gunatitanand Swami was talking about himself in this vat.

In India there are five hundred and sixty thousand saints. He is not an ordinary saint (Pramukh Swami). Gunatitanand Swami was not an ordinary saint. The same is true of Pramukh Swami. He practises what he preaches. God stays in a saint like him. We, due to our ignorance, stray from God, but God does not forget us. But even more a true saint like Pramukh Swami, God wants to be near him all the time. In fact, that is the reason he is in him ever-present. So although the saint is 'not God' but the fact that the God from heaven resides ever-present in him means he is equal to God. But God is the controller of the saint.

Most people only turn to God when they are helpless, or in a crisis. Pramukh Swami thinks of God all the time. We only remember him on odd occasions, for example, on waking or before eating."

Discussion of samadhi, and how Shriji Maharaj used to send people into samadhi. "Pramukh Swami does not like miracles because he believes they are a hinderance. If we want to see
miracles, it shows we don't really know the true value/meaning of Pramukh Swami's life." He gives the example of Krishna and his power over the *gopis*. "We have access to a higher God through Pramukh Swami, and we must realize this."

2. "If you do not look at faults of a Great Saint, fair enough, but if we have fault in us God will help us to overcome this. However, if we do look at faults of a Great Saint, then we are doomed."

"If we look for faults in such a Great Saint, then God will punish us, and we may have to take several births before we are redeemed. The agony of births and deaths on this earth is what we will be faced with. But the faults we may find in ourselves, God is sure to help us to get rid of them. If we make a chalk mark on a blackboard, we can easily rub it off; a line in wheat flour we can erase, but a mark made on a steel pipe is difficult to erase. This can only be removed by melting the steel. Likewise, looking at faults of a Great Saint is putting a mark on steel. It takes time to be forgiven.

Any sin committed outside can be forgiven by a God-realized saint, if it is confessed to such a saint. But if you take faults at such a saint, who can you turn to for forgiveness? He is pure, divine and beyond all faults such thoughts should entertain our mind.

Sometimes the saint might say to donate a certain amount of money, and we might be reluctant and then see the fault of the saint. But the saint is only trying to get the greed out of us. We do not possess enough knowledge to understand the divinity of the saint."

Discussion -
"If we think badly of a saint, the evil reciprocated is not wiped away, by jatras for example.
If we don't say or think bad things about the saint, but have faults ourselves, these faults are redeemable by performing jatras."

"The difference between a satsangi and a non-satsangi, is in thinking badly of saints and so on, and not having a full understanding. Non-satsangis know no better."

Tales of various saints are told - used to illustrate various principles of satsang.

One of the main points discussed was fault-taking.

arti, thal - standard.

reading about the life of Shastriji -

Read chapter from the second-year examination book on Shastriji Maharaj.

"He had no thought except that of God and to go to God's Akshardham. Although there were great saints during Shastriji Maharaj's time, it was only Shastriji Maharaj who could properly explain the Vachanamritam, the spoken words of Lord Swaminarayan. Shastriji Maharaj was a God-intoxicated saint. He was always at hand and laid the foundation for the Akshar Purushottam Movement. He cared very little for his body. Waking up at three in the morning to do morning rituals, prepare breakfast for one hundred saints, attend spiritual discourses, assist in the building of temples, and look after the affairs of the temple, and not to say he was the perfect example of a true saint.

Bhagatji Maharaj used to favour Shastriji Maharaj from his early initiation days. He used to take personal care of Shastriji Maharaj. When Shastriji Maharaj strayed from Bhagatji Maharaj he could not bear the separation. (True
guru-disciple relationship). Shastriji Maharaj used to send gifts and his true love to Bhagatji Maharaj."

Vachanamritam - Sarangpur 8

About jealousy.
discussion -
"Jealousy can kill."

"A father left his money and estate to two sons. Later they fought over who has the money and who has the estate. After sharing it out, one son, who had the money, put fire to his brother's estate. This was an act of sheer jealousy. If you want to go forward in satsang and if you feel jealous of someone, for example, who might be a good drum-player or guitarist or well versed in the scriptures, then approach that person to assist you in going forward. Learn from him."

Kirtan -

"Elephant decorated with gold garments.
On the elephant is seated the Lord.
Come all to look at him.
Horses, soldiers, beautifully clothed.
Procession is slowly moving forward.
Come all to look at him.
The Lord's ears are decorated with flowers
And he has garlands of beads on his neck,
And this garland is worth thousands of rupees in love.
Come all to look at him.
Some people are playing the bugle and others playing the drums.
Saints and devotees are singing kirtans.
Come all to look at him.
The Lord is so lovable from far away.
He is the fountain-head of the incarnations.
Come all to look at him."
reading -

Chapters from the examination book about the life of Bhagatji Maharaj, whose birthday will be celebrated next Saturday.

Discussion of his life and work.

last shloka -

standard.
APPENDIX D
SEVA DESCRIPTIONS

KEY

A  Number of Yuvaks
B  Location
C  Equipment
D  Job Description
E  Future Aims
F  Responsible to

MC  Management Committee
YOC  Youth Organisation Committee
YM  Yuvak Mandal
1. PUBLICATIONS DEPARTMENT

A 3.

B Strongroom - second floor, front side.

C Stationery

D Selling of Mission's Publications.
   Stock control (eg. re-ordering, etc.).
   Monthly reports.
   Handling cash.
   Filing.

E Selling off Mission's premises - research into places,
   times etc.
   Master present system within months so that the system
   can be reviewed and personnel can be placed and
   allocated to other duties.

F Responsible to Internal Auditor and YOC Secretary.

2. AUDIO & VIDEO CASSETTES DEPARTMENT

A 3.

B Strongroom - first floor, front side.

C Stationery.

D Selling of Mission's audio and video cassettes.
   Stock control (eg. re-ordering, etc.).
   Monthly reports.
   Handling cash.
   Filing.

E Selling off Mission's premises - research into
   places, times, etc.
   Master present system within six months so that the
   system can be reviewed and personnel can be replaced
   and allocated to other duties.

F Responsible to Internal Auditor and YOC Secretary.
3. PATRIKA DISTRIBUTION DEPARTMENT

A 3 administrative, 20 + distributors.
B To be allocated.
C Stationery, photocopying facilities.
D To ensure printing or writing of patrikas and timely distribution of patrikas by distributors. Maintain master register of names and addresses of all satsangis.
To arrange for distribution of leaflets for non-Mission purposes.
E To increase the distribution list and research into more cost-effective methods of distribution.
F Responsible to YOC Secretary.

4. TOOLS DEPARTMENT

A 2.
B To be allocated.
C Stationery.
D Stock control of hardware.
Inventory control of tools.
Monthly report of use and consumption of hardware.
Monthly report of use and consumption of tools.
E Research into most cost-effective methods of using available materials.
F Responsible to Internal Auditor and YOC Secretary.

5. CARPETS DEPARTMENT

A 2.
B Carpet Room.
C Vacuum cleaner.

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5. (Continued)

D To lay out carpets in hall when required.
To clean before and after use.
To put back carpets after use.

E -

F Responsible to YOC Secretary.

6. P/A SYSTEM DEPARTMENT

A 2

B To be allocated.

C P/A equipment.

D To handle the P/A system during kirtan practices.
To handle the P/A system during samaiyos.
To record programme items as instructed by authorised personnel.
To communicate during public functions and practices with Music, Library, Audio and Video Cassettes departments and with YOC and MC Secretaries.

E Research into most efficient use of present equipment.

F Responsible to YOC Secretary.

7. BOILER ROOM DEPARTMENT

A 2 + 1 vadil.

B Boiler Room.

C Tools.

D To operate heating system whenever required.
To ensure the room is clean.
To immediately report damages, malfunctions, etc., to the YOC Secretary.
To ensure regular maintenance.
Not to meddle with the system, physically or otherwise.
7. (Continued)
E Research into operation and most cost-effective method of using present system.
F Responsible to MC/YOC Secretaries.

8. LIBRARY DEPARTMENT

A 5.
B Library.
C Stationery, tables, chairs, exhibition boards.
D Under the guidance and authority of the Co-ordinator:
   To operate issue/return system for books, magazines, exam papers, video cassettes, audio cassettes, etc.
   To ensure proper organisation of the above sections.
   To ensure up-to-date records of Sanstha's activities are kept.
   To provide information and available materials for publicity.
E To encourage use by non-satsangis.
F Responsible to Internal Auditor and YOC Secretary.

9. SABHA SECRETARY

A 2.
B -
C Stationery.
D To conduct sabha within the guidelines set by the YOC.
E To develop new ideas to make the sabha more attractive, interesting, appealing etc., by research, contact with saint etc.
F Responsible to YOC Secretary.

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10. YM ABSENTEE FOLLOW-UP

A 2.
B -
C Diary, stationery.
D To visit absentees from the sabha. To visit old yuvaks who used to attend sabhas and encourage them to return. Monthly report of progress.
E -
F Responsible to YOC President and Secretary.

11. YUVAK MANDAL - EXPANSION

A 2.
B Sabha Room.
C Diary, stationery.
D To socialise with new yuvaks and to create a favourable impression so that they continue to come.
To liaise with Library, Music and Sports Departments and sabha and YOC Secretary to find out "what's on".
E Research into methods of recruitment employed by other branches of our Sanstha and other organisations.
F Responsible to YOC President and Secretary.

12. SPORT DEPARTMENT

A 3.
B Sports Room.
C Diary, sports equipment
D To provide sports facilities for youths.
To arrange sports events with other mandals and communities.

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12. (Continued)

D To organise physical fitness training classes.
To direct activities to enable recruiting of more yuvaks.
E Increase variety of sports played.
F Responsible to YOC Secretary.

13. DECORATION DEPARTMENT

A 3.
B Decoration Room.
C Decoration materials.
D To ensure proper decoration of the stage, including the
Akshar Deri and screens for (i) Samaiyos and (ii) other
functions organised by the Mission.
Decoration of the mandir for special occasions e.g.
Diwali.
Decoration of mandap, if required.
E Research into ideas and designs for future decoration.
F Responsible to YOC Secretary.

14. GUJARATI TEACHING DEPARTMENT

A 3.
B To be allocated.
C Stationery, blackboards, tables, chairs.
D To teach Gujarati to the yuvaks and encourage them to
learn to the highest standard possible.
E Yuvaks should be able to read and write fluently.
F Responsible to the YOC Secretary.
15. CLEANING DEPARTMENT

A 3.
B Equipment store.
C Cleaning equipment and materials.
D To maintain cleanliness of every part of the mandir. To ensure proper materials are provided to yuvaks for cleaning and that proper care is taken of all equipment.
E To encourage cleanliness.
F Responsible to YOC Secretary.

16. CHAIRS DEPARTMENT

A 2.
B Chair Room
C Chairs.
D To ensure chairs are laid out for samaiyos, meetings, weddings, VIPs and other necessary occasions. To ensure that they are put back in their proper place. To make sure that chairs are in good condition and to arrange for necessary repairs.
E To research into layout design and chair maintenance.
F Responsible to YOC Secretary.

17. MANDAP DEPARTMENT

A 5.
B Mandap Room.
C Mandap.
D To set up mandap for weddings. To dismantle and put away after use.
17. (Continued)

D  To ensure safety of mandap.
   To ensure that necessary repairs are carried out promptly.
   To liaise with the Decoration Department.

E  To research into mandap maintenance and decoration.

F  Responsible to YOC Secretary.

18. SERVING DEPARTMENT

A  4.

B  Food, utensils.

C  Dining Hall.

D  To organise serving of food in samaiyos and other
   functions in which Mahaprasad is served.
   To ensure dining hall is cleaned after use.
   To ensure yuvaks and vadils are recruited to carry out
   all the necessary duties.
   To ensure dining arrangements for VIPs are made.

E  To learn efficient methods of serving.

F  Responsible to MC/YOC Secretaries.

19. TRANSPORT DEPARTMENT

A  4.

B  -

C  Diary.

D  To organise transport required to carry out duties for
   mandir purposes only, e.g. Yuvaks for kirtan performances,
   carnivals and other functions, etc.

E  -

F  Responsible to YOC Secretary.

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20. PUBLICITY DEPARTMENT

A 5 vadils, 3 ladies, 5 yuvaks, 2 balaks.
B To be allocated.
C Diary.
D To represent the Mission at samaiyos.
   To represent the Mission at all outdoor activities.
   To represent the Mission on the media.
   To use the media for publicity.
   To keep up-to-date with events happening worldwide in
   our Sanstha.
   To look after VIPs.
E To research into effective ways of using all forms of
   media to promote our aims.
F Responsible to MC/YOC Secretaries.

21. SAMAIYO CO-ORDINATOR

A 2
B -
C Diary.
D To ensure all arrangements for samaiyos and other functions
   arranged by the Mission, on or off mandir premises, are
   made.
   To set the samaiyo programme timetable.
   To liaise with MC/YOC Secretaries and ensure that
   samaiyo details are posted on the noticeboard.
E -
F Responsible to MC/YOC Secretaries.
22. MUSIC DEPARTMENT

A 2.
B Music Room.
C Cupboards for storage of instruments, kirtan books/files, instruments and tape recorder.
D To give performances of devotional songs at samaiyos, outside functions, people's houses, etc.
   To arrange appropriate practice sessions for above occasions.
   To organise kirtans to be sung in sabha.
E Encourage new participants to sing kirtans and to learn to play instruments.
F Responsible to YOC Secretary.

23. FIRST AID DEPARTMENT

A 2.
B -
C First aid boxes with suitable materials.
D Ensure first aid facilities are available in different parts of the temple, e.g. carnival, samaiyos, etc.
E To teach first aid to members of the Mission.
F Responsible to YOC Secretary.

24. AUDIO VISUAL DEPARTMENT

A 2.
B -
C Photographic equipment.
D To take photographs, slides and videos of all mandir events and activities for both publication and record purposes.
24. (Continued)

D Responsible for all developing and processing and ensuring that all materials reach the Library Department.

E to develop advanced photographic skills.

F Responsible to YOC Secretary and Library Department.

25. WEDDINGS DEPARTMENT

A As many as possible, so that MC Secretary can organise rota.

B

C Diary, stationery.

D To ensure all arrangements are made for facilities to be provided by the Mission for weddings held on the premises, e.g. heating, wedding room, dining hall, kirtan, etc. To ensure that all rules are obeyed by the users, as per the signed agreement. To report any breakage of rules or damage or abuse of Mission property to the MC/YOC Secretaries, to enable appropriate action to be taken.

E To provide the most cost-effective service in Leicester.

F Responsible to MC Secretary.

26. SATSANG EXAMINATIONS DEPARTMENT

A 2.

B To be allocated.

C Stationery.

D To encourage all satsangis to sit the satsang exams. To set mock exams and to ensure adequate facilities are provided to all participants.
26. (Continued)

D Duty requires administration of forms and correspondence with headquarters in India and other centres in the UK.

E To cultivate such enthusiasm that all satsangis WANT to sit the exams.

F Responsible to YOC Secretary.

27. NEW TEMPLE PROJECT DEPARTMENT

A 2.

B To be allocated.

C Buchet Coombs, stationery, money bags.

D To organise regular emptying of Buchet Coombs.
   To account for all monies received.
   To prepare quarterly report of progress.

E To expand membership and working force.

F Responsible to Internal Auditor and YOC Secretary.

28. SUBSCRIPTIONS DEPARTMENT

A 2.

B To be allocated.

C Stationery.

D To encourage all satsangis to subscribe to Sanstha's periodicals.
   To collect all fees and account for all monies received.
   To communicate with headquarters in India with respect to subscription details or queries.

E To cultivate such interest that all satsangis WANT to subscribe for the periodicals.

F Responsible to YOC Secretary.
29. COMPUTER DEPARTMENT

A 2.
B Computer Room.
C Computer equipment and accessories.
D To provide available computer facilities for all satsangis.
   To organise teaching sessions for yuvaks and balaks.
E To devise tests to monitor progress in various fields,
   e.g. satsang, school subjects, etc.
F Responsible to YOC Secretary.

30. YM KITCHEN

A 2
B Kitchen adjacent to santo's room.
C Utensils, basic food items.
D Responsible for supervision of kitchen use by YM for "small" gatherings e.g. for practices, overnight stays, etc.
   To ensure kitchen is kept clean and tidy.
E -
F Responsible to YOC Secretary.

31 MAINTENANCE DEPARTMENT

A As many skilled people as possible.
B -
C Tools.
D To carry out any maintenance work required, e.g. repairs to pipes, windows, doors, etc.

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31 (Continued)

E -

F Responsible to MC/YOC Secretaries.

32 DRAMA DEPARTMENT

A As many as possible - performers, stage and lights specialists.

B To be allocated.

C Costumes, make-up, mirror, cupboard.

D To hold regular practices and performances of dramas.

E Research into developing skills to improve quality of performance of dramas.

F Responsible to YOC Secretary.

33 ACCOUNTS DEPARTMENT

A 5.

B Accounts office.

C Stationery, calculators, etc.

D To write cash book for receipts and payments.
   To prepare account analyses by month and in cumulative form.
   Bank reconciliation.
   To prepare Source & Application of Funds, Income and Expenditure and Bank Statements Schedules.
   To devise a system of internal control.
   To liaise with Treasurer, MC/YOC President and Secretary, Bank and Hall Booking, Tools, Audio & Video cassettes, Publications and Library Department.

E To develop better reporting techniques and tighter controls.

F Responsible to Internal Auditor.
34 WELFARE DEPARTMENT

A As many as possible.
B -
C Diary, stationery.
D To assist, in confidence, any youths requiring help in matters relating to DHSS, education, domestic difficulties, satsang etc.
E -
F Responsible to MC/YOC Secretaries.

35 TRAINING DEPARTMENT

A 2.
B To be allocated.
C Diary, stationery.
D To arrange training for youths in all aspects of satsang and social life. To constantly liaise with all departments to identify where the youths need training.
E -
F Responsible to YOC Secretary.

36 HALL BOOKING DEPARTMENT

A 2.
B To be allocated.
C Receipt book, agreement forms, diary, stationery.
D To accept hall bookings at the rates specified by the MC and for authorised functions.
36 (Continued)

D To hire out, at set rates, utensils and mandap and to accept seva for YM cleaning and band after consultations and written authority from persons concerned.

E Research into improving services and competitiveness of our facilities.

F Responsible to MC/YOC Secretaries.

37 SECURITY DEPARTMENT

A 3.

B –

C Torches.

D To ensure that all parts of the mandir are secure and up to standard to prevent fire and unwanted people from entering.

E To research into the most cost-effective ways of making the whole of the premises secure.

F Responsible to MC/YOC Secretaries.

38 PARKING DEPARTMENT

A 3.

B –

C Torches.

D To co-ordinate car parking at samaiyos, Swamishri's visits and other major functions.
To be aware of where and when cars can be parked so that satsangis can be advised accordingly.

E To develop contact with the police.

F Responsible to YOC Secretary.
APPENDIX E

BOCHASANWASI SHREE AKSHAR PURUSHOTTAM SANSTHA
FIRST YEAR EXAMINATION PAPER

S. S. P. JULY, 1987

BOCHASANWASI SHREE AKSHARPURUSHOTTAM SANSTHA
SATSANG SHIKSHAN PARIKSHA
SATSANG PRARAMBHA

Time: Sunday 5th July, 1987 11.00am to 2.00pm

Note: Figures to the right indicate full marks for that question

TOTAL MARKS: 100

SECTION : 1

GHANASHYAM CHARITRA

Q.1. (A) For any TWO of the following state who said to whom, and when the incident happened. (6)

1. "My Ghanashyam would never steal anything."

2. "If you allow, father, then I will decide on who wins this debate."

3. "Respected brother, rest assured, there will be no complaint against me from to-day."

4. "You shall all have to take birth on the earth ......."

(B) To the questions below, a set of possible answers have also been given in brackets. For each question select that answer which you think is correct. Answer ALL the questions.
1. Who saw Ghanashyam steal the ring?
   (Bhaktimata, Iccharam, Suvasinibhavhi)

2. What philosophy did Ghanashyam prove right in the debate with scholars?
   (Advaita, dvaita, Vishishtadvaita)

3. In which place did Ghanashyam send the sparrows into a trance?
   (In the fields, in the house, on the trees.)

4. To whom did Ghanashyam show a miracle after putting His hand on the grinding stone?
   (Laxmibai, Chandanbai, Suvasinibai)

5. Whose vision did everyone have in the form of Ghanashyam on the banks of Meen lake?
   (Ramchandra, Shri Krishnachandra, Vishnu)

6. Which wrestler did Ghanashyam defeat?
   (Bheemsang, Kesarisang, Diloisang)

7. When did Ghanashyam leave home?
   (Shravan Vad 10, Ashada Sud 10, Ashada Vad 10)

8. In which direction did Ghanashyam search after climbing the Peepal tree?
   (East, North, West)
Q. 2. (A) Answer clearly and to the point any TWO of
the following (in approx. 12 lines each) (8)

1. How did Dharmadev test his son? And of what
was he then convinced?

2. What miracle did Ghanashyam show the greedy
confectioner?

3. How was King Gumansingh convinced that
Ghanashyam was God?

4. How did Ghanashyam find Gori cow?

(B) Answer ALL of the following questions. For
each answer use only ONE sentence: (6)

1. From who did Hanumanji free Ghanashyam and
bring him back?

2. Give the names of any four of Ghanashyam's
friends.

3. What did Ghanashyam ask for if he allowed
His ears to be pierced?

4. What trick did Ghanashyam play so that
Vasantbai would carry him?

5. Where and when was Ghanashyam born?

6. What signs were on Ghanashyam's left sole?

Q. 3. Fill in the blanks. Answer all questions (5)

1. Bal Prabhu was given a name by __________ Muni.
2. Ghanashyam would always go to ________ for the evening arti.

3. Ghanashyam left home in order to perform penance in the ____________.

4. Ghanashyam granted salvation to the ghosts and sent them to ____________.

5. ____________ tied a bandage on Ghanashyam's thigh.

SECTION : 2

Q.4. (A) For any TWO of the following state who says to whom, and when the incident happened. (6)

1. "I have performed the arti of the idols to be installed in the Gadhada temple. They will now be ritually installed by Yogiji Maharaj."

2. "Why do you bring your wailing children to my farm"?

3. Uncle, you need not worry, I will look after the daily services with all my heart."

4. "He scolds so that I may improve."

(B) Narrate briefly any TWO of the following and bring out the moral of the incident (in approx. 12 lines each) (8)

1. Ideal student.

2. Austere Jina Bhagat.
3. A real saint.

4. Devotion par Excellence.

Q.5. (A) Answer clearly and to the point any TWO of the following (in approx. 12 lines each) (8)

1. Why did the School Inspector give a prize to Jinabhagat?

2. What did Yogiji Maharaj say of Pramukh Swami Maharaj? Explain the true meaning behind these words.

3. In what way was Shriji Maharaj won over by Yogiji Maharaj?


(B) Answer ALL of the following questions. For each answer use only ONE sentence. (6)

1. What name was Jinabhagat given after being given bhagavati diksha?

2. Where was Yogiji Maharaj's 65th birthday celebrated?

3. How many foreign tours did Yogiji Maharaj undertake?

4. What were the names of Jinabhagat's father and mother?

5. Where did Shastriji Maharaj and Yogiji first meet?

6. Yogiji Maharaj would often say that some people were his very heart. Who were these people?

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Q.6. Complete ALL of the following. (5)

1. The youth should maintain unity ...............  
2. While walking on the road ..................
3. One should not think of .................
4. One should try to carry on ...........

SECTION: 3

KISHORE SATSANG PRARAMBHA

Q.7. (A) Give the reasons for any TWO of the following (in approx. 9 lines each) (6)

1. Mulji Sharma left his sugar-cane field and immediately set out for Gadhada.
2. Samat Patel sold his house and belongings.
3. We should sing the dhun.
4. Muktanand Swami wrote the arti.

(B) Write briefly on any TWO of the following subjects (in approx. 12 lines each) (8)

1. Nath Bhakta 2. Ganga Ma
3. Vajiba 4. Punja

Q.8. (A) Complete any THREE of the following verses. (9)

1. Shobho Sadhu gune ......................
2. Nitya nitya nautam .............. Sugam kari sidhi.
4. Uttishhotishtha ...........

5. Shastra sakalno saar ....... Shri Hari Sahajanand.

(B) Complete and explain fully ONE of the following "Swamiji's talks."

1. "God always protects those .......... "

OR

"One must think of salvation ............ "

Q.9. Answer all of the following questions. For each answer use only one sentence. (6)

1. Where did Shriji Maharaj install His own idol?

2. In the word 'Swaminarayan', who is devotee and who is God?

3. Who wrote the verse, "Jamo thal jeevan ....... "

4. Write down our guru parampara.

5. For how long and whose association should all keep, did Shriji Maharaj order in Junagadh?

6. What did the old lady from Bhal pray for from Shriji Maharaj?
"SWAMI SHREEJI"

RULES AND MARKING GUIDELINES FOR:

1. MUKHPATH

(a) VACHNAMRUT:

RULES:
(i) Each entrant shall provide the judges with the total number of Vachnamruts memorised together with the title of the each Vachnamrut and its reference.

(ii) Minimum requirements for the entry:
(a) for Bal Mandal - MINIMUM TWO Vachnamruts
(b) for Yuvak Mandal - MINIMUM FOUR Vachnamruts

(iii) Vachnamruts may be memorised either in ENGLISH or GUJARATI

(b) SLOKAS:

RULES
(i) Slokas must be from the Shikhsapatri, Vachnamrut, Satsangi Jivan, Harileela Kalpatru, Janma Mangal stotra, Ustak, Bhagvat, Geeta or the Ramayana.

(ii) Slokas may be either in English, Hindi, Sanskrit or Gujarati.

(iii) Each entrant shall provide the total number of slokas memorised (references or a list should be provided)

(iv) Minimum requirements for entry:
(a) Bal Mandal - 10
(b) Yuvak Mandal - 30

(c) SWAMINI VATO

RULES
(i) Each entrant shall provide the relevant references and/or a list.

(ii) Minimum requirements for entry:
(a) Bal Mandal - 10
(b) Yuvak Mandal - 30

(d) KIRTANS

RULES
(i) A list or reference of kirtans must be provided to the judges;

Note: One padha equals one kirtan.

(ii) Minimum requirements for entry:
(a) Bal Mandal - 5
(b) Yuvak Mandal - 10
(e) **DOHA/SHAKHI**

**RULES**

(i) A list of Dohas/Shakhis should be provided to the judges.

(ii) Minimum requirements for entry:
   (a) Bal Mandai - 5
   (b) Yuvak Mandal - 10

**GENERAL MARKINGS FOR MUKHPATH**:

Marks will be awarded based on:

(i) Numbers memorised.
(ii) Presentation.

**NOTE**: 10 to 25% of the total memorised by each entrant will be tested by the judges.

2. **KIRTAN KALA**

(a) **GROUP KIRTAN**

**RULES**

(i) The group shall consist between 5 - 8 members.
(ii) Maximum time allowed is 10 minutes per Kirtan.
(iii) Music to be played by the group except for Bal Mandal for whom music may be provided if required.

(b) **SOLO**

**RULES**

(i) Maximum time allowed is 7 minutes per Kirtan.
(ii) Music will be provided if required, by prior arrangements.

**MARKINGS FOR BOTH GROUP AND SOLO**

Marks will be awarded on the following:

(a) time limit
(b) choice of kirtan
(c) Rhythm and music
(d) singing to tune
(e) participation of group members

(c) **SOLO INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC**

**RULES**

(i) Each individual will play the chosen instrument which will account for 75% of the total marks, and another instrument which will carry 25% of the total marks.

Further rules and marking guidelines to be finalised at a later date.
3. **VACHNAMRUT EXPLANATION:**

**SELECTION** out of 15 VACHNAMRUTS from the list provided.

**RULES:**

(i) This competition is open to Yuvaks only.

(ii) Select one Vachnamrut from the list (see list) which will be tested by the judges.

(iii) Time limit for explaining the Vachnamrut is twenty-five minutes.

(iv) It should be read and explained to a panel of judges. The explanation must be done orally and under no circumstances will notes be allowed.

**MARKINGS:** Marks will be awarded on the following criteria:

(a) Applicant's understanding of Vachnamrut...........15%

(b) With reference to other scriptures.................25%

(c) With reference to kirtan, doha, chhoppay, etc...10%

(d) Style of explanation and fluency.................25%

(e) Whether fully explained or not...................15%

(f) Observation of time limit........................10%

4. **SWAMI VATO EXPLANATION**

(for Balaks only)

**SELECTION** out of 30 SWAMI VATOS from the list provided.

**RULES**

(i) This competition is open for Balaks only.

(ii) From the list of Swamini Vatos (see list) select 5 and these will be tested by the judges.

(iii) Time limit for explaining the Swamini Vatos is fifteen minutes.

(iv) The explanation must be done orally and under no circumstances will notes be allowed.

(v) It should be read and explained to a panel of judges.

**MARKINGS:** Marks will be awarded on the following criteria:

(a) Applicant's understanding of the Swamini Vato...15%

(b) With reference to other scriptures...............25%

(c) With reference to kirtan, doha, chhoppay, etc..10%

(d) Style of explanation and fluency.................25%

(e) Whether fully explained or not..................15%

(f) Observation of time limit.......................10%

5. **SPEECH**

**RULES**

(i) Select one topic from the list (see list)

(ii) The speeches may be in English, Hindi or Gujarati

(iii) Maximum time allowed for the speech: 5 minutes.

**MARKINGS:** Marks will be awarded on the following criteria:

(i) Presentation.

(ii) Fluency and clarity of speech.

(iii) Relevance of speech to its topic.

(iv) Observation of time limit.
6. **RESEARCH PROJECT**  
(for yuvaks only)

**RULES**
- Select one topic from the list (see list)
- Minimum 5,000 Maximum 10,000 words.

**MARKINGS**: Marks will be awarded on:
- (i) Presentation.
- (ii) Relevance to topic chosen.
- (iii) Use of references.
- (iv) Quality of material.

7. **ESSAY**  
(for balaks only)

**RULES**
- Select one topic from the list (see list)
- The length of the essay should be:
  - between 500 to 1,000 words.

**MARKINGS**: Marks will be awarded on the following:
- (a) Relevance of content to the subject chosen
- (b) Handwriting
- (c) Grammar
- (d) Presentation and style

8. **QUIZ (MASTERMIND STYLE)**

**RULES**
- Separate competitions will be held for yuvaks & balaks
- The competition will consist of two sections - specialist + general.
- Each entrant will have to choose their special subject from the list provided.
- No written matter will be allowed.
- Time limit will be set, equally between specialist & general questions.

**MARKINGS**: Marks will be based on the number of questions correctly answered in the time allowed.

9. **ART: SKETCH/PAINTING**

**RULES**
- Size of the paper to be used - 30" x 24"
- The art work must be done under supervision.
- Time limit for completion: eight hours.
- Select one topic from the list provided.
- The entrant should bring brushes, paints, pencils, etc., required for the art work.

**MARKINGS**: Marks will be awarded on the following:
- (i) Proportion of drawing to its size.
- (ii) Sketching and colouring technique.
- (iii) Presentation.
10. PHOTOGRAPHY

(a) Single Photography

RULES
(i) Only one photograph of size 8" x 10" allowed.
(ii) The photograph must have been taken by the entrant.
The following are suggestions:
Cultural Festival of India, Lord Swaminarayan
Bicentenary Celebration, 1981, Aksharbrahm
Gunatitanand Swami Bicentenary Celebrations, 1985
or Suvarna Mahotsav.
(iii) The entry should be submitted by the end of July.

(b) PHOTOGRAPHIC EXHIBITION

RULES
(i) Maximum 50 pictures, minimum 25 pictures
(ii) Area allocated 6ft. x 4ft.
(iii) This competition is open for a group consisting of a
maximum of 3 members.
(iv) The entry should be submitted by the end of July.

MARKINGS FOR BOTH SINGLE PHOTOGRAPHY AND PHOTOGRAPHIC
EXHIBITION: Marks will be awarded on the following:

(a) Choice of subject.
(b) Photograph relevant to topic.
(c) Heading and captions and art of displaying.
(d) Quality and resolution of the pictures.
(e) Photographs related to sampradai.

Note: Judges to question on related subject or
photographs

11. FANCY DRESS

RULES
(i) No imitation of Maharaj, Sad-Gurus, Santos, Avtaars or
Devos are allowed.

MARKINGS: Marks will be awarded on the following:
(i) Presentation
(ii) Style
(iii) Dress, costumes used.

12. HAND WRITTEN MAGAZINE

RULES
(i) One magazine per mandal is allowed.
(ii) Entry should reach by the end of July.
(iii) Each article including art work and design must
be done by the author himself.
(iv) Maximum of two articles per author
(v) Standard size A4.
(vi) Maximum 30 single sided pages, minimum 25 pages.

MARKINGS: Marks will be awarded on the following:
(i) Presentation.
(ii) Art and design work including front cover and back
page.
(iii) Contents of the magazine.
(iv) Numbers of authors participating.
(v) Originality of material.
13. RAAS

RULE
(i) Mandal participation between 12 to 16 members per group.
(ii) Time allowed is 10 minutes.
(iii) Recorded music will be allowed by prior arrangement.

MARKINGS: Marks will be awarded on the following:
(i) Presentation and style which includes entry and exit
(ii) Dancing to rhythm and tune.
(iii) Observance of time limit.
(iv) Dress and costumes.

14. PLAY

RULES
(i) Script to be submitted before 15th. July.
(ii) Time limit of the play is twenty-five minutes.
(iii) The theme of the play should be of Religious Nature.

MARKINGS: Marks will be awarded on the following:
(i) Theme of play.
(ii) Acting and dialogues.
(iii) Outstanding character.
(iv) Observation of time limit.
(v) Dresses, costumes and scenery.
(vi) Mistakes will result in marks being deducted.
(vii) Prompting will not be allowed.

15. SPORTS

(a) INDOOR

Table tennis: single and double
Snooker: single and double
Darts: single and double

RULES
STANDARD GAME RULES APPLY.

(b) OUTDOOR: "SUPERSTARS" STYLE

RULES:
STANDARD GAME RULES APPLY.
GENERAL RULE

Preliminary selections should be held locally to provide up to three participants for the final competition on each of the following:

(a) Mukhpath
(b) Kirtan Kala
(c) Speech
(d) Quiz
(e) Fancy Dress
(f) Vachnamrut explanations
(g) Swamini Vato explanations
(h) Sports - Indoors only

The other items will be included as a direct entry to the final competition.

Age limits: Bal Mandal - under 16 (prior to 29th Aug. 1987)
Yuvak Mandal - 16 to 45 (prior to 29th Aug. 1987)

JAI SWAMINARAYAN
APPENDIX G

STANDARD ITEMS IN THE SHISHU-KUNJ AND THE TRANSCRIPTIONS
OF THE TAPE RECORDINGS OF THREE CLASSES

Standard Items in the Shishu-Kunj

Starting Prayers

1. "Aum, Aum, Aum".
   (Chanting "Aum" to bring about tranquility and one-pointedness.)
   (Sanskrit)

2. "Prostrations and respects to the divine Aumkara, along with the eternal Bindu, who is the bestower of liberation and one who fulfils all desires. Again and again, many times, I bow humbly to the divine Aum."
   (Sanskrit)

3. "Ram, Ram, Rameti, Rameti; the name of Ram is very powerful. To repeat it is very auspicious; repeat the name of Ram".
   (Sanskrit)

4. "Aum, Aing, Hring, Kling. Respects and salutations to the Mother Chamuda."
   (Sanskrit)

5. "O Lord, may I meditate on your glorious name on all occasions and in all conditions.

   In the sky, and in the gentle breeze; in every house and forest; in every stream and lake, I hear nothing but your name.

   In the captivating scent of the flowers and in the many colours of the universe, I see nothing but your creative knowledge with eagerness.
Early every morning, all of us together, we recite the divine name of Lord Rama, and whilst taking the name we bow and prostrate to you, o Lord."
(Gujarati)

6. "He who has the curling trunk and a large body; he who shines like countless suns in the sky; o Lord, remover of all evils and obstacles, make all our undertakings a success."
(Sanskrit)

7. "With the dust of the lotus feet of the Guru, I cleanse the mirror of my mind. So that I may be able to narrate the divine and pure pass times of Lord Rama, by which one is able to attain the four fruits of this life.

Victory by to Lord Rama
Victory be to Hanuman."
(Avadhi)

8. "Knowing this body to be without intellect, still I meditate on the son of Pavan, Hanuman. Grant me o Lord, strength, intellect and knowledge. Remove all enmity and distortions of my mind.

Victory be to Lord Rama
Victory be to Lord Hanuman."
(Avadhi)

9. "Guru is Lord Brahma, Lord Vishnu and Lord Shiva. Nay! Guru is the incarnation of the Supreme Being. Salutations to such a guru again and again."
(Sanskrit)
"Keep worshipping God, keep repeating God's name. The time is passing, keep repeating 'Rama'. Time is passing.

Having come to the world of maya, have you been caught in it? For the sake of fleeting happiness, you have idly wasted your life.

(Repeat last two lines)

Be warned, still there is time. Time is passing, keep repeating God's name.

(Repeat last two lines)
(Repeat first two lines)

You are filling your bag with evil actions, small or big. Perform some meritorious actions, or else the cycle of births and deaths. Keep on performing religious acts, time is passing.

(Repeat first two lines)

Time is passing, the saintly people invite all to come with love. Sing and make others sing the auspicious name of God, the Lord. Adhere to what the saints say, time is passing.

(Repeat first two lines)

Time is passing."

(Gujarati)
"Beholder of the mountains,
the infant who herds the cows,
Victory be to you of Kanya,
Victory, victory to Radha and Shyame."

(Gujarati)

"The son of Mother Kaushaliya and the beloved infant of
King Dasarath. The beloved one of Sita, do come to partake
of food at my dwelling. O do come to my dwelling.

For you we have mangoes, bananas, paw-paw and other exotic
fruits, along with sugar cane. Green grapes and oranges are
so nice and full of taste. Pomegranate seeds, served in
plenty, and what to say of the delicious sweets. Let me
serve you dates and dried fruit. O do come to my dwelling.

Semolina sweets, puri and jalebi are fried for you, with
churma too. Ghari and ghebari are fried in the purest of
ghee. With love and devotion we have made the kansar sweet.
With many varieties of rice, we serve many tempting curries
too.

To see you, our eyes have become impatient. My heart longs
for and awaits you. Many dishes are prepared for you on a
beautifully prepared plate, and the divine waters from the
Ganges are flowing. O, do come to my dwelling.

Do bring with you your brother Lakshman, and of course, Sita
too. After eating, you will be served with a beautiful pan.
There are so many divine things prepared for you. O do come,
your devotees are beckoning you. O do come, your children
are calling you. O, do come to my dwelling."

(Gujarati)
The Dhoon Sung After the Thal

"Raja Ram, Ram, Ram,
Sita, Ram, Ram, Ram,
Raja Ram, Ram, Ram,
Sita Ram, Ram, Ram."

(Gujarati)

Shlokas said by Mrs. C. while those who have birthdays go to the front

1. From the Gita Dhyan, verse 2.

"Salutations unto thee, oh Vyasa, of broad intellect and with eyes like petals of full-blown lotuses, by whom the lamp of knowledge, filled with the oil of the Mahabharata, has been lit."

(Sanskrit)

2. Gita Dhyan, verse 5.

"I salute Lord Krishna, the World Teacher, the son of Vasudeva, the destroyer of Kamsa and Chanura, the supreme bliss of Devaki."

(Sanskrit)

3. "You are the mother, you are the father, you are the friend, you are the teacher. You are the Lord of all Lords."

(Sanskrit)

4. "May you study well, may your works be beautiful. May you be happy, may you make others happy. Congratulations to you."

(Gujarati)
Prayers sung before arti

1. "O affluent Lord of the Universe, destroy all evils and let us be good and destroyers of evil.
   O Lord, the Supporter of the Universe, Lord Sun, remove all sins from us and grant us all that is good and auspicious."
   (Sanskrit)

2. "O Lord Krishna, Lord of the Lotus, grant us all the divine thinking power, and protect us from evil thoughts. Remove us from the perpetual activity of the world. Make us progress towards duty and religion, advancing us in all our work. Destroy oh Lord, the false activity of this abode. In the company of the Gita, may we make true progress. Only in your abode is there true liberation."
   (Repeat the first sentence.)
   (Gujarati)

3. "Aum, let there be joy and happiness in all beings. Let us hear joyous and happy things, let us see joyous and happy events always. Remove all sorrows always, from all beings.

   Aum, let there be peace, let there be peace, let there be peace. O Lord, let the thoughts of my mind be pure and untainted. Let the words I utter be true and pleasant to hear.

   Let all my actions be pure and innocent. Let good be showered upon all beings. Let auspiciousness be granted to all beings. Let all beings have peace of mind, peace of body, peace of soul, peace of heart, and all peace be unto them always."
   (Sanskrit)
The Dhoon Often Sung Before The Arti

"Shree Krishna Govinda,
Shree Krishna Govinda Hare Morari,
He 'Nath Narayan Vasudeva."
(The names of Krishna).
(Gujarati)

Arti

"0 Lord Rama, I sing your arti.
Whilst singing your arti I lovingly tease you.
0 Lord Rama, I sing your arti.
On the left, standing adorably, is the mother of the universe.
Gazing devotedly at your lotus feet is the son of Anjini.
How fortunate I am to sing your praise.
0 Lord Rama, I sing your arti.
Protector of us all, you are.
Remove all our sorrows.
0 sustainer of the universe.
With faith and devotion I offer these flowers to you.
0 King Rama, I sing your arti.
He whosoever sings Rama's arti, Ram will surely give his
darshan to.
I bow my head into your lotus shrine.
0 King Rama, I sing your arti.
0 Radhasham, I sing your arti.
0 Lord Shiva, I sing your arti.
0 Ambama, I sing your arti.
0 Jalaram, I sing your arti.
Singing the artis, I please all the deities.
0 King Rama, I sing your arti."
(Gujarati)
Prayers After The Arti

1. "Like the beautiful scent of the burning camphor, you dwell in the whole universe. You are the personification of compassion and the essence of the universe. With ornaments of cobra snakes, with your eternal consort Bhavani, you dwell in the hearts of your devotees. My respects and salutations to you, o Lord Shiva."
   (Sanskrit)

2. "Auspicious is Lord Vishnu, auspicious is his vehicle, the swift eagle Garuda. Auspicious is his divine abode, the Pundrila. The Lord Hare is all auspicious."
   (Sanskrit)

3. "Let good be everywhere, O Shiva; let work of all beings be good. Prostrations at the auspicious feet of the personification of the auspicious Shiva, and Gauri."
   (Sanskrit)

The Final Prayer

"I sing your praise, o Lord.
Come and see how your devotee is.
This is a secret between you and me.
No other third person shall learn of it.
I sing your praise, o Lord.
My speech shall flow undisturbed, if you are with me all the time.
Give me one sign of your presence, whisper your stories into my ears.
I have accepted your shrine.
You have made me become engrossed in you.
I sing your praise, o Lord.
Come and see how your devotee is.
I have a debt towards the world, only accepting what comes through penance, austerities and service.
Whatever hardships are bestowed upon me, I will endure them.
I sing your praise, o Lord.
Come and see how your devotee is."

(Gujarati)
SHISHU-KUNJ

Sunday, February 15th

Prayers -
led by Mrs. C.
standard.

Bhagavad Gita

Gita Dhyan  -  Sanskrit
Chapter 12  -  Sanskrit
Chapter 15  -  Sanskrit

Chapter one -

Verse 15 -
Recited in Sanskrit and English, then Mrs. C. gives a Gujarati explanation.

"Carefully listen and understand the verses we are reading. Be attentive as you may be asked some of these questions in your quiz."

Verse 16 -
In Sanskrit and English, then Mrs. C. says in Gujarati,

"Yudhisthira is the eldest brother amongst the Pandavas and is the son of Kunti. What is the name of the five Pandavas' mother? It is Queen Kunti. Addressing Yudhisthira through the name of his mother. Yudhisthira's other name is Dharmaraj. He is named so, because never in his life has he been virtueless in any way. Nakula and Sahadeva are also
two brothers amongst the five Pandavas. The five brothers are Yudhisthira, Bhima, Arjun, Nakula and Sahadeva. Remember these names. Sahadeva was so proficient in knowing the past, present and future of everything, without difficulty, he would be able to tell you in detail all the incidents of past, present and future. Yudhisthira is the eldest brother. Nakula and Sahadeva are the youngest. Bhima and Arjun are the second and third. Amongst the five brothers Arjun has many names. Nakula and Sahadeva blew the conches by the name of Sughosa and Manipuspaka."

Verse 17 -
Recited in Sanskrit and English, then an explanation in Gujarati.

"All these warriors were so powerful in the art of combat that it was difficult for anyone to defeat them. Not only that, they were also observers of total duty. On the side of righteousness there are many such kings and warriors. Even today, if you go to the area of Kasi in India, you will come to meet many people who are dutiful and righteous. There the city lies on the banks of the River Ganges. This is where Tulsidas wrote his Ramayana. So whenever you go to India, be sure to visit all these places of pilgrimage."

Verse 18 and 19 -
Recited in Sanskrit and English, then a Gujarati explanation.

"In the previous five verses are mentioned the names of the conches blown by the Pandavas. Krishna's conch was named Panchajanya. Remember these names by heart. Arjun's conch was called Devadatta. Bhima's shell was called Paundra. That of Yudhisthira was named Anantavijaya and those of Nakula and Sahadeva were named Sughosa and Manipuspaka. Similarly, mighty warriors like Sikahandi, Virata and Satyaki all blew their conch shells with great might and strength. The roar from the conch shells sounded in all four
directions, trembling the earth and creating fear in the warriors of the opposing party. Through this tremendous noise and roar of the conch shells, the Pandavas in a way, had already defeated the Kauravas through their enthusiasm and readiness to fight."

Verse 20 -
Recited in Sanskrit and English, with a Gujarati explanation.

"After seeing the armies of the Kauravas arrayed in front of him, Arjun took in his hand his weapons and requested Krishna to take the chariot into the middle of the two armies. He said this after seeing that some of his nearest and dearest were ready to fight, so he wanted to observe the two armies closely. We will continue next week.

The name of their banner is Kapidhwajah, and its meaning is that Hanuman the monkey god is present at the time of the battle in the form of Arjun's banner. The chariot is driven by Krishna. Arjun will be fighting from the chariot, and Hanuman is present in the banner. During the Ram incarnation, Hanuman served Lord Rama with all his devotion. During the Krishna incarnation, he is present during the battle.

After picking up the weapons, Arjun says to the Lord - what does he say to the Lord? We will see next Sunday."

"Victory be to Gita,
Victory be to Lord Rama,
Victory be to the teacher,
Victory be to Lord Shiva."

Introduction to a guest speaker -
The secretary of the temple speaks in Gujarati.

"Greetings to all present, young and old. Please kindly
listen to the announcement attentively. Today amongst us we have the fortune of having Swami Fakiranand with us.

To the Swami, "In the Sunday programme for the children, we recite various chapters of the Bhagavad Gita and discuss them, along with various other topics. Recently we have also begun a question and answer session for the children to participate in. Today we will ask Swami Fakiranand to speak to the children in English for the next fifteen minutes, giving them some religious message or guidance. Kindly all listen attentively.

Victory be to Lord Rama.

Swamiji has been here before, so we shall not take any time in introducing him, but carry straight on to his discourse."

The Talk -
Given in English.

"It is good to learn the Gita. Gita will only come through in our life when we ask questions like Arjuna. It is no good learning it if we don't live our life by the Gita."

"Our mind is so confused we don't see what is inside us. This causes us many problems, because of restlessness of the mind. So we must control the mind. This is the purpose of satsang."

"Have you ever asked how to see that cosmic form or spiritual insight within ourselves? We must ask someone who can help us. Today, religion is the source of devastation. But if one knows the Reality in oneself, all the gulfs will be breached."

"What lies behind all religions, questions, answers and so on? Know yourself. Lord Krishna can help. Krishna said, a man can be lost in the world because he does not know his inner
consciousness, what makes him live, what makes Christians, Muslims, Hindus live. In this way we are all one.

"God can be realized by humans. But we have to have a technique to realize this energy. Arjuna asked Krishna, and he came to realize and have a restful mind.

Money and such things will not give you permanent peace. Knowing your inner self will give you inner peace.

I have talked only for a short time. I was asked to talk about the Bhagavad Gita, and I was very happy to do this, as I always enjoy talking about the Gita."

The secretary speaks -
In Gujarati.

"Swamiji has been for the past few minutes, giving a talk on the Gita. He has said that as taught in the Gita, we are not this physical body, but the atma. Through this body by gradual process, our aim is to recognize and experience our true nature. In addition, the Swamiji has said that God is omnipresent and omnipotent. This he has explained by using the analogy of radiowaves. He has mentioned that science has advanced in leaps and bounds today, so much that man has landed on the moon and aims to land on other planets. But all this material progress is of little value until we realize our true nature. For those of us who are not able to understand English we have translated the revered Swamiji's speech in short. May we thank him gratefully for being here with us today, and proceed further with our regular programmes of thal and arti". 
"Guru is the Lord Vishnu, Shiva and Brahma,
Guru is the mother, father and the great Lord.

(repeat the first line)
In serving the Guru I take this invaluable opportunity.

(first line)
By serving the Guru I shall attain the merits of sixty-eight places of pilgrimage."

(first line)

During the singing of this dhoon, Mrs. C. takes one of the small boys up to the Swami, and helps him put a kum-kum mark on the forehead of the Swami, who sits with eyes closed.

**dhoon -**
Standard, before the thal.

**Thal -**
standard

**dhoon -**
Standard, after the thal.

**The Quiz - In English**

Fourteen to sixteen age group. Questions on chapters one and two. Three girls and three boys.

An older girl asks the questions.

1. What was the conch that Yudhisthira blew?

2. How does the intermingling of the castes arise?
3. Name three things associated with Bhishmabhai.

4. Which conch did Sahadeva blow?

5. Which people grieve neither for the living nor the dead?

6. Name three things associated with Sthitaprajna.

7. What are the names of Uttamaujas' parents.

8. Name the bird who tried to save Sitaji while being captured by Ravan?

9. Name the sloka associated with the three gunas.

10. Which bow slips out of Arjun's hand?

11. What are the names of the Pandavas' parents?

12. Name three qualities of the atman.

13. Name the sloka associated with Krishna Bhagwan.

14. Name two or three of the five elements.

15. In chapter two what are the thoughts of the irresolute, with wavering and undecided mind?

16. What is born from attachment in chapter two?

17. If you fulfill your duty, where do you go to?

18. Which animal is mentioned in chapter two, and why?

19. Name two names Krishna called Arjuna.

20. What is dishonour like, to one who has been honoured?
The Swami Speaks

"God is our true father. All the dreams, amenities of life are there for you, but still you miss something - this can only be gained by learning and understanding the Gita. Krishna has all the solutions to life.

Our mind is like Arjuna, it has no direction. All questions are beyond. The real question is what made Arjuna so brave and good.

This knowledge Krishna told him. Krishna said, man comes and goes; all have to go from this world. This body and all life is full of actions and reactions.

When one dies, all activity will be left behind. Reality will go with you.

The real Gita starts from chapter two. Krishna says Arjuna's soul will not be destroyed, that it is indestructable. This material body came from the womb. One day it will become ash. Material self is founded upon energy, spirit, soul, God.

We are bewildered, roaming in the world aimlessly. Here in England we find the same problems that are in India, East Africa and America. People are isolated from each other.

Truth, bliss and consciousness are the soul. Only meditation on the soul can attain peace and liberation or saturation in yourself. Material things will not give truth and bliss.

In chapter four Krishna says to Arjuna, 'I imparted this knowledge to you; in the beginning, knowledge was transported down to Manu. Now I have manifested myself to show this knowledge again.'
Introspection is to study what you are. All saints have introspection. 'God is within you'. This is what Lord Christ said. There is light within oneself. This one light is self-illuminating, needing no help from outside. There are masters who have to teach about this inner light.

Outer differences can be overcome when you recognize that the inner self is the same within everyone, such as Christians, Hindus and Muslims. This is true knowledge.

Rituals and practical realization together give bliss.

You are to go deep into the scriptures and understand."

Prayers -

Standard, before the arti.

Birthdays -

Mrs. C. speaks -

"Those of you whose birthday it is come forward quickly, we are running out of time.

It is Rajesh, Bavesh, Shemuld, Dipak, Dinah, Hinah, Sonul, Priya, Reshma. All these children's birthdays we are celebrating today, very fortunately in the presence of the Swamiji. May we pray that they become grown-ups soon and become very strong and powerful youths.

May we request Pandyaji to say a few words."

The pujari -

"Today it is a number of children's birthdays and whenever we celebrate anyone's birthday we should think of God that much more sincerely and specially, to ask him to grace these
children with his blessings and give them pious thoughts and practise religious principles in their life, and when they are adults encourage them to be of some service to society. When we are born it is the greatest boon we can ever receive from the Lord. On these children's birthday today, we all pray together for their long and healthy life, full of strength and knowledge."

**Standard Shlokas** -
Led by Mrs. C. while those who have birthdays are at the front.

Sing "Happy Birthday".

**arti** -
standard.

**prayers** -
standard.

**last prayer** -
standard.
Prayers - 
led by Mrs. C.
standard.

Bhagavad Gita -

Gita Dhyan - Sanskrit

Chapter 12 - Sanskrit

Chapter 15 - Sanskrit

Chapter one -

Verse 20 -
Sanskrit and English, with a Gujarati explanation -

"Standing amidst the two armies, Krishna drives Arjun's chariot into the middle and observes both the armies. All the conches of the two armies have been blown aloud. On hearing the loudness of the Pandava's conches, some degree of fear occurred in the hearts of the Kauravas. After this description, the twentieth verse begins.

With the trembling sound of the conches so strong that even the earth and the heaven were disturbed, the Kauravas became frightened. First the Kauravas played their conches. Then the Pandavas played theirs. They played them tremendously loud because they were full of enthusiasm, because their army was fighting for a righteous cause. There is a lot of difference between a righteous and unrighteous person. The Kauravas became frightened of the conch noise and thought they would not be able to defeat the Pandavas."
Verse 21 -
Sanskrit and English, with a Gujarati explanation.

"O prince, arrayed are both armies, ready to fight with their weapons. Seeing this, addressing Krishna, Arjun said the following words. Just before the commencement of the war, Arjun with a fleeting mind, asks to observe the two armies. Arjun said" -

Verse 22 -
Sanskrit and English, with a Gujarati explanation.

"It is like a story. It contains everything about religion. But we must also remember the last time when we were reading the account of the playing of the conches, none of you could remember the names of the conch shells. If you look outside and don't pay attention to the Gita, you won't learn. Until now you were not being asked questions, but now, through the quiz, you should make the effort to answer them by learning."

Verse 23 -
Sanskrit and English, with a Gujarati explanation.

"Now the meanings of the three stanzas together. 'O Achynta, drive my chariot amidst the two armies and park it.' Who is saying this? - It is Arjun. Earlier on it said 'Uvaacha' which means 'Arjun said', 'park the chariot in the middle so I may be able to observe who has gathered to fight in the war. Before we do anything, we must look and think of the whole situation'. Here also, Arjun is looking and thinking of the whole situation. 'In hastily taking a step we may not be successful in our undertaking. So let me observe those who have arrayed to fight carefully'. Actually the kingdom should be ruled by the Pandavas because King Pandu was the eldest amongst his brothers. But through deceit
the Kauravas took away the kingdom from the Pandavas. However, so the Pandavas could live somewhere, they asked for five villages for themselves. This was refused by the Kauravas, who said they would not give them even a piece of land occupied by a needle's head. So the situation resulted in a challenging war.

The Gita is a part of the Mahabharata, it is not an independent text. So, after such tremendous torture; after not giving them five villages or five houses to live in. Not only this, but on many occasions, they tried to kill them, through means of burning them alive and poisoning them. But because Krishna was on their side they couldn't be harmed. So Krishna has become annoyed and instructs Arjun to fight. So Arjun says it does not matter who they are who have come to fight, but I would like to observe them. Then Sanjay goes on to say - we will discuss that next week."

"Victory be to Gita."

"Those who have Gita at home, tell your parents to read it to you and explain it in any manner they can. There is no particular time given in the Gita for its recitation. Read it during the day whenever you can, and insist on your parents to read to you at least two verses a day, so they get the benefit of reading as well as you."

"Victory be to Gita."

Kirtan -

"Victory be to Krishna."

"Shiva's damaru sounds like the Lord of Raghus, Raghava. The venna of Narada sounds like the name of Lord Vishnu. (repeat)"
The gandiva of Arjuna twangs 'save me Lord'
(repeat)
The leaves of Vidura say
'The edibles are non-edibles'.
(repeat)
Shabries' bow says
'Sita Ram, the rescuers of the sinners'.
(repeat)
The flute of Krishna sounds
The lovable name Radhe Radhe.
(repeat)
Meeran's anklets sound
'Mine is Lord Krishna, the lifter of the mountain,
and the shepherd'
(repeat)
Tulsi's manas says
'Shree Ram Jaya Ram, jaya jaya Ram!
Victory be to Lord Rama.'
(repeat)
"Victory be to Krishna".

Prayer -

"O Lord of the universe, the son of Vasudeva,
The slayer of Kansa and Chanur,
The absolute bliss of Devki,
Protestations to you, o Lord Krishna, the world preceptor.
O guru, o teacher, you are the creator, Brahma,
The sustainer, Vishnu and the destroyer, Shiva.
Also, you are the ultimate form of reality.
My salutations to you."
Kirtan -

"All the residents of Dakore, o black one, my dear. 
O player of the murli, I come to your doors. 
Listen to what I have to say ...."

(See the same kirtan in the Shishu-Kunj of March 8th.)

dhoon -

Standard, before the thal.

Thal -

Standard.

dhoon -

Standard, after the thal.

Kirtan -

"Colourful flowers we are, 
Colourful flowers we are, 
Blossoming in the bosom of Bharata. 
Always living together, we will blossom into beautiful flowers, 
Gathering the warm sunrays of the different nations. 

(repeat the last 2 lines)

Although we have different ways of dressing and speaking, 
Still, we are the same humans. 

(repeat the first two lines)
Forward we will always walk,
Although at times we may fall and become tired.
Even so, we will hastily get up and better ourselves.

(first two lines)
The whole world is part of our own family,
So it is wonderful to play throughout the world.
Together we sing beautiful, sweet, loving songs."

(first two lines)

"Victory be to Krishna".

The Quiz

Twelve to fourteen age group.
Questions on chapter three.
One of the older girls asks the questions.

1. What is Arjun's confusion?

2. Why can't man reach perfection by renouncing his actions?

3. How do we celebrate Gita Jayanti?

4. What is the Gujarati or Sanskrit name for Nature?

5. Who is known as the thief in Gitaji?

6. What is wisdom enveloped by?

7. Of what quality is desire born?

8. Who is freed from all the sins?

9. How should action be performed, and why?
10. Where does desire reign?

11. What are superior to the body?

12. What is superior to the mind?

13. What is the sole cause of Arjuna's delusion?

14. Name the king mentioned in the chapter and why?

15. Why does Krishna tell Arjuna to fight?

16. The atman is beyond three qualities; name them.

17. What is the meaning of God?

18. Name the three worlds.

19. What is the meaning of this shloka?  
   (Reads it out in Sanskrit).

20. What is the meaning of this shloka?  
   (Reads it out in Sanskrit).

Prayers -

Standard, before the arti.

Mrs. C. speaks -

"Victory be to Krishna".

"The questions were difficult, as were the answers. Yet the participants being young, answered well, getting half the answers right. They are definitely deserving praise. Even
the older people would not have been able to answer some of the questions. Even though there is no regular reading at home, they have gathered a great deal of knowledge. You should all dive deep into the meaning of the Gita. Here, everyone who attends the Gita classes learns how to recite the twelfth and fifteenth chapters, but at home they should learn the meaning and the gist of the verses. Sometimes we are bound not to ask you emphatically for the concern that you might stop attending the classes for the fear of becoming burdened. The secretary will tell you that we have a list of all of you who have been attending for the past five, seven or ten years, and when your turn comes, you will all have to answer the questions."

"Victory be to Krishna."

Birthdays -

Mrs. C. -

"Today is the birthday of Haritaben, Krishnaben, Nikesh and Sandip. So we request revered Manubhai to wish them well, bless them, and pray for their well-being and prosperity. Next Thursday it is Shivratri, and since Ramunbhai is back from India, he will tell us about the programme on Thursday."

The pujari -

"Victory be to Krishna
Victory be to Rama
Victory be to mother goddess
Victory be to Jalaram Bapa
Victory be to Lord Shiva."

"My greetings to all the Lord's devotees present today."
"Victory be to Krishna
Victory be to mother goddess."

"Today is the birthday of these children, so we ask Lord Krishna, Lord Rama and the Universal Mother, and Lord Shiva, that they grant upon these children, great knowledge and the right discrimination, make them clever and intelligent, and when they grow up, they serve their parents."

"Victory be to mother goddess."

"There is a saying in Gujarati, the 'younger the stalk of a tree, the easier to bend in whichever direction you desire'. Similarly, these children are young presently, and from this early age we can mould them in whichever way and direction we wish them to be. If we have a religious atmosphere in our family, if the parents at home perform devotional service every day, then these little children will see this activity going on in the house, and will be keen to do the same. So my intention by saying this to you is that some activities like this in the house, those of you who are not doing so, should start now. When you wake up in the morning, light a lamp and an incense stick, perform your prayers, and then go to work. When your children see you doing this, they will also perform this kind of worship before they go to school."

"Victory be to Krishna."

"Victory be to mother goddess."

Standard Shlokas -
Led by Mrs. C. while the youngsters are at the front.
Sing "Happy Birthday".

- 411 -
Short talk by a committee member -

Everyone is told about the organizations for the coming Shivratri. It is to be in the evening. "It celebrates the day of Lord Shiva's advent. He was not born. He is called Ajanma, meaning birthless, because he just appeared."

"The shivling will be annointed with milk, and the sixteen-fold pooja will be performed on it."

Arti -
standard.

Prayers -
standard.

Last Prayer -
standard.
SHISHU-KUNJ

Sunday, March 8th

Prayers -
standard.

Bhagavad Gita -
Recite Gita Dhyan - Sanskrit
Recite chapter 12 - Sanskrit
Recite chapter 15 - Sanskrit

Chapter one -

Verses 23, 24, 25.
In Sanskrit and English, then in Gujarati by Mrs. C.

"The chariot is brought between two armies. Arjun asks Krishna if he can see those with whom he is going to fight. Dhritarashtra asks Sanjaya what the sons of Pandu and his own people did when they assembled together. Sanjaya says there were great warriors equal in battle to Bhishma.

Arjun asks 'with whom am I to fight? These are sons and grandsons and other warriors'. There he is, overwhelmed, and he forgets about his duty."

Verse 26 and 27
Sanskrit and English, then Mrs. C. translates it into Gujarati.
Verse 28 -
Sanskrit and English, then Gujarati translation by Mrs. C.

Verse 29 -
Sanskrit and English, then Gujarati translation.

Now Mrs. C. gives her explanation:

"If we face relatives in the battle, how can I kill them? 'My mouth is parched, my body quivers and my hair stands on end'. Whatever he feels in his own heart, Arjun tells God."

Verse 30 -
Sanskrit and English, then explanation in Gujarati.

"My mind; what is my mind? It means, my soul. Because the mind is reeling, not steady, the gandiva slips from his hand."

She refers to the story of the Pandavas not being given the five villages, not even five houses.

"Krishna says that there is no sin in killing a sinner."

"Arjun is standing between the two armies and is sympathetic or overwhelmed by the situation."

Verse 31 -
Sanskrit and English, then Gujarati translation by Mrs. C.

She explains that "Kesava" is the name of the Lord.

"If we have a house and kill everyone in it, and stay alone, how would it be then? Arjun then asks how he can fight. We will leave it here."
Gita Mahatmya -

"We have not read this for three or four Sundays, so we will do so today."

Verse 8 -
Sanskrit and English, then Gujarati explanation.

"Why do we all read the Gita? The rishis read, the sages too. People keep it with themselves. Why all this? Gita is indescribable. Even if you read the Pranawa Aum, it becomes married to you. Keep it with you, even in your satchel. Wherever you go, keep it with you. How beneficial and advantageous it is to move with the Gita. You will come to realize only when you move along with it. There is no doubt that it is the form of Brahman. The Lord himself talks to Arjun."

Verse 9 -
Sanskrit and English, then Gujarati.

"The second name of the Lord is Chidaanandena. The Lord himself has spoken to Arjun. It has not been instructed by any poet."

Verse 10 -
Sanskrit and English, then Gujarati.

"If you know how to read it will just take one and a half hours. If we read Gita while living, we will get the Lord's help, and even after our death we won't have any worries. 'What will happen to us?' is not the problem we face if we read the Gita. We should all be ready for death. Not for you young children, but it is for us.

The body becomes old and God gives us another body. We should not be afraid of death. At the time of death we pray. There are many prayers that invoke God, the Lord, and ask

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him to come and help. But the Lord does not come and help. What helps you are the good actions. If we call God, he does not come, but if we do good actions, he may come. If it is a faultless life, there is no worry when we die. If we have the habit of saying 'Ram, Ram', even when a small insect dies, the sin that we commit melts away and we can say we have not done anything wrong. We have not stolen anything, we have not killed anyone, we have not spoken ill of anyone. Our life should be full of God and we should be ready for death. Then it does not matter if there be an accident or any pretext. These three things have been predestined; the cause or pretext, the place and the time. They will not change.

If one is a follower of God and prays or remembers from morning to evening, and moves with God, he does not have any worry. If the mind does not wander, one can say, like Bhishma, 'I will die after six months'. The best thing for us is to remember and pray to God, and take care of our actions. 'Am I doing something bad?' That is what we have to watch.

Remember the kirtan, 'know the one who is within'.

We may feel, who is there to check us? If the mind does something wrong, how is the heart to detect it? Even when God says 'no', we sometimes do it. When God says 'no' we have to remember for all the wrong actions we have done so far, we must go along with the Gita or be in the company of the Gita.

Not all the eighteen chapters, not ten, not five, not one, not half, but even if you read a quarter, even if you read one stanza or a fraction of it, 'I liberate you', so God says. When God guarantees liberation, even if we open a page and look for a moment, the whole stanza gets read. Remember what Tulsidas said, 'a moment, half a moment, or
even half of the half is sufficient'. An illustration is that, the moment you step into a temple, you naturally have the blessed sight of God. Once a person is in, he has the sight of God, which is one action. The second action is, he places some money. So when we talk of a fraction of a moment, it might mean one hour. That is why Tulsidas says let it be a matter of half a moment.

If you open a book, look at the line or read half the line, the first temptation is to come on Sunday. So what I say is, make it a point to come even if some say they don't want to learn anything, or they have wasted their life, it does not matter. Those who come here have their time well spent. So it is not a matter of wasting time. Come in, keep the Gita with you, we haven't wasted our time. Keep it with you everywhere, even if you are travelling in a bus. Keep it in your bag: keep the Gita with you. It does you good."

"Victory be to Gita."

**Kirtan -**

The standard one, after the Gita Class.

**Kirtan -**

"Victory be to Amba."

"She is happy to be in Arasur. There is a soft sound of a peacock. She is called Maha Lakshmi on Monday. She sits there and is happy.

(chorus - first two lines)

She is called Maha Kali on Tuesday. She is happy on her tiger seat.

(chorus)
She is called Bahujar Mata on Wednesday.
She is happy sitting on the cock.

(chorus)

She is called Mataji on Thursday.
She is happy sitting on the swan.

(chorus)

She is known as Santoshima on Friday.
She is happy to be seated on a wooden seat.

(chorus)

She is known as Sarasvati on Saturday.
She is happy being seated on the peacock.

(chorus)

She is called Ambaji on Sunday.
She is happy to be seated on the tiger."

(chorus)

"Victory be to Amba".

Kirtan -

"Victory be to Krishna."

"All the residents of Dakore, o black one, my dear.
O player of the murli, I come to your doors.
Listen to what I have to say.

(repeat above lines)

I am exhausted with wandering about.
Nobody accepted me within their fold.
So now I have come to your doors for your fellowship.
Do not delay, o Dakore - waler.

(repeat first three lines)
What I long for is the blessed sight.
O, one who has lifted the mountain, open the doors.
Do not delay, o Dakore - waler.

(repeat first three lines)
I have fallen at your feet,
Please do not take long,
It will be a favour to one who is helpless.

(repeat first three lines)
The game of life is not true.
Please see that it is not spoilt.
Please hold my hand and take me beyond."

(repeat first three lines)

"Victory be to Krishna".

Kirtan -

"Victory be to Krishna".

"Shiva's damaru sounds like the Lord of Raghus, Raghava.
The venna of Narada sounds like the name of Lord Vishnu ...."

(Refer to the Shishu-Kunj of February 22nd for the same kirtan.)

dhooon -
The standard one before the thal.

Thal -
Standard.
"Jai Shree Krishna to all devotees, and to the children. It is time for arti and also the quiz will start. Before that, this person standing next to me I want to introduce, Kirtibhai Fatania. I have to say that I came to know of him in Ashwell Prison. He was in a prison, and so was I. That is not a jail. Whatever offence he did, it was a place for him to pay for his conviction in six or seven months. But the good use of the sentence that he made can be seen. At times this kind of sentence is due to divine providence. He has become an instrument of God. When this sentence was given to him, and he went to prison, he came closer to God. (The Gujarati word for ashram is used in the place of prison throughout this speech.) I have seen this myself, because I have been to see him a couple of times. He wrote to me to come and see him, and I went.

There he had nine days of Ramayana recitation. The atmosphere was so good. All who went felt like listening. In simple language he recited the Ramayana. In audience, there were none, except one or two prisoners. On the final day we went to the prison. The officials gave him a small room attached to the church. Today he visits us and we welcome him. Mrs. C. will welcome him on our behalf. What he has started from prison, we hope he will keep going. He has started typing the Ramayana in English on a word processor. We pray to God that his project comes to completion early."

Mrs. C. recites a shloka from the Gita -

"The son of Vasudev, the destroyer of Kansa and Chaura, the absolute bliss of Devki, we salute you, oh Krishna, the universal teacher."
The Committee Member -

"The experience he has gained; we say that when we come to
the temple we think of God, but when someone gets an
opportunity to be alone in a place like prison, in this
atmosphere, how near we can get to God. He has experienced
this. Similarly, I also request you all when you come to
the temple, to think of God in a single-minded way and
experience his presence. Kirtibhai will also say a few
words to you."

Guest speaker -
prayer in Sanskrit.

"Brothers and sisters, devotees, lovers of Ramayana. With
the grace of God, what has happened to me, the experience
I have gained, Ram Charitmanas, which I have taken into
my life, drop by drop; I pray to God, the experience I have
gained, perhaps I will be able to let you also share it.
I pray he bestows me intellect, strength and understanding.
The advantage of reciting it in English is perhaps that the
young brothers and sisters who have forgotten their mother-
tongue, leaving Sanskrit aside, they are not even fully aware
of Gujarati, and cannot recite if fully. There is no
particular worry for the elderly, as they regularly perform
kirtans and recitations. But I feel for those who are
younger than me, or of my age, that what we say is our
inheritance, namely Shrimat Bhagwat, Ram Charitmanas and so
on, these scriptures the sages have written for us. These
scriptures you are not able to understand. For this the
effort is directed. Otherwise, who is able to recite the
stories of the Ram Charitmanas? There is no other reciter
as far as my understanding goes, except Lord Shiva. Tulsidas
says he is dull of intellect, and that he admits in the
final section, after writing so much of the scripture and
at such an age. So what chance have we got? A man of the
evil age, even then it is nothing but an effort. God willing,
in a year or two's time, whatever I have taken in, hopefully I will be able to share it all, if God wishes so. If ever I do the Ramayana recitation, I extend my heartiest invitation to you all, to come and hear the stories of the Ram Charitmanas."

"Hail be to Sita and Rama."

Mrs. C. -

"We thank Kirtibhai here, and request he does not wait until he finishes his translation of the Ramayana. As soon as you finish the first section, pass it on to us and we will pass on copies to the children. As you write, the children will learn. There are so many nice stories to learn from the childhood section of the Ramayana. Now it is time for the quiz."

"Victory be to Krishna."

The Quiz
On general knowledge for nine to eleven year olds.
The questions were thought up and asked by a young eleven year old boy.

1. Could you identify this God? (He shows a picture.)

2. (Another picture.) Could you identify these two Gods?

3. Name three things associated with Ambaji.

4. Name two things associated with Lakshmiji.

5. Who was to be King of Ayodya who was sent to the forest in exile for fourteen years?
6. Who was born in jail and became a king?

7. Name an incarnation of Vishnu.

8. Name any other incarnation of Vishnu.

9. Who was the brother of Ram?

10. Who was the sister of Krishna?

11. Give two other names for Krishna, not including Krishna itself.

12. Give two other names of Ram.

13. Name any god/goddess with a mace.

14. Name any god with a disc.

15. Name any five gods.

16. Name any other five gods you know of.

17. What should we learn from the story of Balaram?

18. Why was Vidura born? What should we learn from the story of Vidura?

19. Tell me a quick story about any god.

20. Tell me a quick story about any other god.

Mrs. C. speaking -

"Victory be to Krishna, Victory be to Rama."
"Sit in meditation. Lord Krishna and Balaram were together in the photograph. He had another brother called Baldev, and there was another photograph of Guru Datt. Here it is in front of you. But it is not your fault that you don't know, it is ours. Maybe it is that there is no photograph in your homes, or that your parents and grandparents do not take the trouble to explain to the children who the gods and goddesses are.

This is Guru Datt, and in him, Lord Shiva, Lord Brahma and Lord Vishnu are present. All three are incorporated into one form. Recently a Shivratri Poonam went. There is a big festival at Junagut during the Shivratri of Maha month. There are three mountains; where Guru Datt lives there is a huge peak where many of your sisters and children may have been. There, you climb up the stairs and come down and do it again, and again; three times in all. Then, where there is Guru Datt's footprints on the mountain, you will have the darshan of Guru Datt. When you go up there are two pillars on each side and a huge hanging bell. There is a space the size of half a coconut; there, if thousands of devotees came and took prasad, still there would be no shortage. There is water in this space used as prasad. It is at the top of a hill. How big is it? The size of half a coconut. There is no space to sit, so three or four people go and walk around and come down. A lot of heat is there. But there is truth there. Only with a pure heart, keep reciting 'Guru Datt', then only will you be able to climb up. Your legs are tired, and you even want to give up, but you cannot climb up or down. Still you have to go on reciting 'Guru Datt'. By the time you reach the top, your shoes and sandals are worn out.

With truth you will be able to climb up. When coming down you must keep reciting, otherwise your legs become swollen like pillars. There are now carriages to take you up. But, instead of using them, climb up yourself, and you will get
darshan of Guru Datt. Going up, ring the bell, sip the prasad, and come down reciting 'Guru Datt'. So here I have sketched Guru Dattatrya.

When Krishna is there, Bal Bhadra is together with him. But there is no story about Balaram, so you won't know about him. It is not your fault, it is ours. As there was Ram and Lakshman, there was Krishna and Balaram. But Balaram has worked while being in the background, and he is also the elder brother, so he keeps his respect.

Victory be to Krishna.

These two photographs were shown earlier. We have these in our homes, and in the invitation cards of Divali. In one of the brother's hands is a flute and in the other a plow. His instrument is the plow. He works as much as Krishna, whilst keeping in the background."

"Victory be to Krishna."

Prayers -
The standard ones before the arti.

Birthdays -
"Whoever has a birthday to be celebrated come forward.

We pray to God he grants them divine intellect, regular attendance on Sunday to study the Gita and the Ramayana. The priest will come and bless you.

You should come every Sunday and learn the meaning of everything you are taught. This is only an ordinary explanation, but you should study all year round and learn many meanings. We strongly request the parents to teach the children at home a little too."
The pujari -

"Victory be to Krishna
Victory be to Rama
Victory be to Amba Mata
Victory be to Lord of Parvati."

Sanskrit shloka.

"Victory be to Mother Gayatri."

"The children whose birthday it is today, we must pray to God, to the Mother, to Lord Shiva, that all these children attain a lot of knowledge, become apt at learning, make them intelligent, study, learn, grow up and serve their parents and the public. We bless you so."

Sanskrit shloka.

The pujari makes the tilak mark on the children's foreheads and hands out their presents.

Mrs. C. -

"Victory be to Krishna."

"Today we have been given one hundred and eight Gujarati Gitas by a devotee, to be given to the children, because their mothers know Gujarati and can read and explain it to the children. There is Hanuman's prayer in there with a photograph. So do explain to them, and look after the Gita. You all study a lot and do a lot of good work. Be happy and make others happy. Congratulations to you on your birthday."

Standard Shlokas - Led by Mrs. C.

Sing "Happy Birthday".

"Next Sunday is Holi, so make such a loud noise that the sound reaches to India. All come to the park for Holi darshan."
Fast and then eat after the Holi darshan. You should take a vow to become like Prahlad and do Prahlad's work."

"Victory be to Krishna."

"Give your fruit and your Gita to those next to you, and you birthday people and those who brought prasad, come for the arti."

**dhoon** - standard, before the **arti**.

**arti** - standard.

**prayers** - standard.

**last prayer** - standard.
It must be noted at this point that the standard of English of the Gita Examination Model Paper which is reproduced overleaf, is very poor. Since the standard is consistently poor throughout the model paper, no parenthetic insertions are included. However, it must be remembered that this is only the model paper which was written out by Swami Vishnupuri, a sadhu from India, for whom English is very much a second, if not a third, language. The National Council of Hindu Temples (U.K.) appointed a capable person to set the yearly examination paper, using the model paper as a guide. Therefore the standard of English displayed must not be taken as representative of the standard of English of the examination paper which was prepared, and sat at many temples within the Council in 1986.
GITA EXAMINATION
MODEL PAPER

GENERAL KNOWLEDGE OF GITAJI

1. Who preached Gita? Whom did he preach?
2. What is the meaning of Bhagvad Gita?
3. Where Gita was preached to Arjuna?
4. Give the names of the Pandavas.
5. What are the names of the parents of the Pandavas?
6. Who was the eldest brother of the Kauravas?
7. How Pandavas and Kauravas were related?
8. What was the cause of the fight between them?
9. Write 5 lines on each: (i) Bhima (ii) Arjuna.
10. How Bhishma was related to Pandavas and Kauravas?
11. Who was Dhronacharya?
12. From which book, Gita is adopted?
13. Who has written Mahabharat? How many shlokas are there in Mahabharat?
14. Write 5 to 10 lines on Vyasji.
15. How many chapters (Adhyayas) are there in Gitaji?

16. Which chapter of Gita do you like most?

17. Which 2 stanzas or 2 shlokas do you like most?

18. What was the name of the father of the Kauravas? 
   Write 5 lines on him.

19. Who was Sanjay? Write 5 lines on his life.

20. Who were the first 3 persons to listen Gitaji from 
    the mouth of Shri Krishna?

21. Why do you like Gitaji?

22. There are many religious books, why birthday festival 
    is celebrated of only Bhagvad Gita?

23. On which day Gita Jayanti is celebrated?

24. How best Gita Jayanti could be celebrated?

25. Why Bhagvad Gita is well known as - Gita, the mother?
Model Questions from
First Discourse (Adhyayā) of Gita

Yoga of Sadness

Answers in the Shlokas No.

1. What did Dhritrastra ask Sanjaya?
   Shloka 1

2. Approaching Dronacharya, what Duryodhana spoke to him?
   Shloka 2

3. Write any three names of the heroes in the army of the Pandava.
   Shloka 4-5-6

4. Write any three names of the warriors in the army of the Kauravas.
   Shloka 7-8

5. Whose army was bigger?
   Shloka 10

6. Who first blew his conch?
   Shloka 12

7. Write the name of the Conch of Krishna and that of Arjuna.
   Shloka 15

8. What was the effect of the terrible sound of conches?
   Shloka 19

9. Why did Arjuna ask Krishna to place his chariot between the two armies?
   Shloka 22-23

10. Whom did he see in both the armies?
    Shloka 26

11. What did Arjuna say to Krishna regarding his (Arjuna) physical and mental condition?
    Shloka 29-30-31

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First Discourse

12. Why Arjuna does not want victory, kingdom, pleasures? Shloka 33
13. Why Arjuna refuses to kill the sons of DhrutRastra? Shloka 36-37
14. Why Kauravas do not see evil in destroying their own race? Shloka 38
15. What is the greatest harm caused by the destruction of a family? Shloka 40
16. What happens by prevalence of impiety? Shloka 41
17. Where does the confusion or admixture of castes result into? Shloka 42-43
18. What happens to those men in whose families the religious practices have been destroyed? Shloka 44
19. Why does Arjuna consider bad for him in killing his relatives? Shloka 45
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Answer</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. What did Krishna say to Arjuna who was overcome with pity and whose eyes were full of tears?</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Why does Arjun refuse to kill his gurus?</td>
<td>4-5</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. What does Arjun, becoming a disciple, ask Krishna to instruct him?</td>
<td>7</td>
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<td>4. For whom wise men do not grieve?</td>
<td>11</td>
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<td>5. What are the 3 stages of body?</td>
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<td>6. Why does Krishna ask Arjuna to endure the contacts of the senses with the objects?</td>
<td>14</td>
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<tr>
<td>7. Who is fit for attaining immortality?</td>
<td>15</td>
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<td>8. What are qualities of Atma - the soul or self?</td>
<td>20</td>
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<td>9. With what a body is compared?</td>
<td>22</td>
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<td>10. Write down a few qualities of the soul. Narrated in the Shlokas No. 23-24-25.</td>
<td>23-24-25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Why should we not grieve over the dead?</td>
<td>27</td>
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<tr>
<td>12. How do people speak, see and hear of the soul?</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Second Discourse

13. How do people with honours, feel when they are dishonoured? 34

14. From what a little practice (of Karmyoga) save us? 40

15. Who can not attain determinate intellect concentrated on God or meditation? 44


17. What is our right according to Krishna? 47

18. Who attains the blissful state? 51

19. Write down some of the qualities of steady in wisdom. 55-56-57

20. What happens, one by one, when a man thinks of the objects? 62-63


22. When does a man overcome delusion? 72
1. What does Arjuna request Krishna to tell him by which he may attain bliss? 2

2. What are the two courses of Sadhna? 3

3. Why is everyone helplessly driven to action? 5

4. Who is called a hypocrite? 6

5. Why should we perform our allotted duty? 8

6. Who is undoubtedly a thief? 12

7. Who eats only bin? 13

8. Who lives in vain? 16

9. For which man verily there is nothing to do? 17

10. Who attains the Supreme? 19

11. Whom the world (mankind) follows? 21

12. There is nothing in all the three worlds for God to do, yet why He continues to work? 22-23-24

13. How the wise should act? 25
Third Discourse

14. How should the wise engage ignorant people in actions? 26
15. Who thinks 'I am the doer'? 27
16. Who does not get attached? 28
17. With what conditions, Krishna asks Arjuna to fight? 30
18. Who are released from the bondage of all actions? 31
19. Why is one's duty better than the duty of another? 35
20. Impelled by what does man commit sin? 36
21. Why desire is considered foe in this world? 37
22. How the wisdom of the wise is enveloped? 39
23. What are the seats of desire? 40
24. How should we kill this enemy in the form of desire? 42-43

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Model Questions
Fourth Discourse (Adhyaya) of Gitaji

The Yoga of Wisdom

Answers in the Shlokas nos.

1. Why did Krishna impart this yoga to Arjuna? 3

2. Why does Krishna remember His previous births while Arjuna can't? 5

3. Though God is unborn, yet how He is born? 6

4. Why God is born in every age? 8

5. When does God manifest HIMSELF? 7

6. Who is not reborn on leaving his body? 9

7. Who have become one with God even in the past? 10


9. On what principles the fourfold castes have been created by God? 13

10. Who is not by actions? 14

11. On which question even men of intelligence are puzzled? 16

12. Who is wise among men? 18

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Fourth Discourse

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Shlokas no.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>13. Why are the ways of actions mysterious?</td>
<td>17</td>
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<tr>
<td>14. Whom the wise call a sage?</td>
<td>19</td>
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<tr>
<td>15. Who does nothing at all, though fully engaged in action?</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Who does not incur sin?</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Who is not bound by his action?</td>
<td>22</td>
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<tr>
<td>18. Whose whole action is dissolved or melted away?</td>
<td>23</td>
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<tr>
<td>19. Name different kinds of sacrifices.</td>
<td>28</td>
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<tr>
<td>20. Why is wisdom sacrifice superior?</td>
<td>33</td>
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<tr>
<td>21. What should we do to understand the true nature of knowledge from the illuminated soul?</td>
<td>34</td>
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<td>22. What will happen when we have reached enlightenment?</td>
<td>35</td>
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<td>23. How will the raft of knowledge help the sinners?</td>
<td>36</td>
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<td>24. What does the fire of knowledge do to actions?</td>
<td>37</td>
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<tr>
<td>25. Like what there is no purifier on this earth?</td>
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Fourth Discourse

Answers in the Shlokas nos.

26. Who attain supreme peace? 39

27. Who goes to destruction or is lost to the spiritual path? 40

28. Whom actions do not bind?

29. How should the doubt be slashed? What is to be done afterwards? 42
APPENDIX I

THE QUESTIONNAIRE
USED DURING FIELDWORK

QUESTIONNAIRE - SHREE SANATAN MANDIR

SEX (MALE OR FEMALE):  AGE:

1. How often do you come to the SHISHU-KUNJ? (The Sunday class at the temple.)

2. How long have you been attending it?

3. Why did you first start attending?

4. Why do you attend it now?

5. What do you learn at the SHISHU-KUNJ?

6. Is there anything you think important that you are not taught about?

7. What aspect of the class do you enjoy most?
8. What aspect of the class do you enjoy least?

9. Do you think there is any way in which the class could be improved? In what ways?

10. Other than coming to the SHISHU-KUNJ, how often do you come to the temple?

11. Do your parents come to the temple?

12. When there are festivals at the temple, do you often attend them?

13. Do you participate in the festivals, or are you involved in their organization in any way? Please say how.

14. Do you understand Gujarati well enough to understand what the teacher says?

15. Can you read or write Gujarati?
16. When and where did you learn to read or write it?

17. Do you think that the young people are involved enough in the running of the temple? If so explain how. If not, explain how you think they could be involved more.

18. Are you involved more with the temple or with some other religious organization or group?

19. Is your religion important to you? If so, how is it important?

20. Please briefly explain what you see as the most important aspect of your religion.
ACHARYA - Spiritual preceptor or teacher.

ADHIVESHAN - Competitive youth camp/conference.

AGNA - Wish/wishes.

AHAMKAR - Ego.

AHIMSA - Non-violence.

AKSHAR - The abode of God; an eternal state; thought to have both an impersonal and personal form.

AKSHARDHAM - The heavenly abode; equivalent to the impersonal form of akshar.

AKSHAR PITH - The Seat of Akshar.

ANAADI-BHEDS - Eternal Entities.

ANTAHKARAN - Composite form of mind, intelligence, consciousness of the lower mind and ego.

ANUSTHAN - Morning prayers sung to the deity.

ARTI - Ritual in which a lighted lamp is waved or rotated before the deity.

ASANA - The postures of hatha yoga.

ASHRAM - A religious community/institute.

ATMAN - The universal self or principle of life.

ATMARUP - Self-realization; the realization that one is atman.

AUMKARA - The first/eternal sound.

AVASTHAS - States of body, for example, consciousness, semi-consciousness and un-consciousness.

AVATAR - The incarnation or manifestation of a deity, specifically of Vishnu.

BADRIKASHRAM - The heavenly abode in the northern sky.

BALAK - Male child.

BALIKA - Female child.

BAL MANDAL - Child association.
BAPA - A revered aged person.

BHAGWAT DHARMA - 'Duty' as a means of redemption and worship of 'the Lord', as propagated in the Srimad Bhagavatam.

BHAKTI - Religious devotion.

BRAHMACHARYA - Celibacy.

BRAHMAN - The first or 'highest' varna, or the supreme creative principle.

BUDDHI - Intelligence.

CASTE - System of social differentiation.

CHESTA - Bed-time prayers sung to the deity.

CHITRA-PRATIMA - Image installation ceremony.

CHITTA - Consciousness of the lower mind.

DANDVAT - Prostrations.

DARSHAN - Looking at or viewing the deity.

DEHAS - Bodies; for example, physical, subtle and causal bodies.

DEVA - Lighting a small candle or lamp.

DHABRA-UTSAV - The celebration of the initiation of Gunatitanand Swami into the ascetic life. It takes the form of all devotees bringing food to the temple to share.

DHARMA - Social and religious obligations according to one's status or stage of life; codes of conduct; the basis of social order.

DHAVJA - Flag.

DHOON - Repetitive mantra in musical form.

DHAYAN - Contemplation on the deity.

DIVALI - The "Festival of Lights"; the end of one year and the start of the Hindu new year.

DURGA ASTHMI - Eighth day of the Hindu month of Aasho; the celebration of the advent of Durga.

DUSSEHRA - Tenth day of the Hindu month of Aasho; the celebration of Rama's defeat over Ravana.
EKANTIKA CHAR GUNA - Attributes of an ekantik bhakta, a self-realized devotee.

GARBA - Gujarati folk dance.

GOPIS - Herdswomen with whom Krishna danced.

GUNAS OF MAYA - Modes of material nature.

GURU - Religious teacher, guide or adviser.

GURU-PARAMPARA - The line of spiritual leaders back to the founder of the tradition or sampradaya.

HAR - Kum-kum mark applied to the forehead.

HARI BHAKTA - Devotee

HARI MANDIR - Temple with images in picture form rather than statue form.

HATASHANI MAHOTSAV - Celebration of Holi.

HAVAN - Traditional Vedic fire sacrifice.

HOLI - Festival in which Prahlad's triumph is celebrated.

ISHVARA - The Lord; "Some Swaminarayan scholars translate it as 'demigod' to distinguish it from parabrahman", (WILLIAMS, 1984, 206).

JANMASHTAMI - The celebration of the birth of Krishna.

JARIYAH RAJPUTS - Landowning and agricultural caste from Kathiawad, belonging to the second varna known as Kshatriya.

JATI - Birth; caste group.

JATRA - A place of pilgrimage.

JAY NAAD - Hailing various entities, for example, "Sahajanand Swami Maharaj nee jay", (Victory be to Sahajanand Swami Maharaj).

JIVA - Individual soul; the self.

JODHI - The way in which Utrang is marked by the sadhus of the Sanstha; they beg for food in the streets.

KALA - Time.

KALANI KIRTAN - Centre of artistic culture.

KANTHI - A two-strand necklace with 108 beads, worn by satsangis who have been initiated into the Sanstha.
KARMA - Actions and the results of these actions in this life and the next life.

KATHAK - Form of South Indian classical dance.

KATHAS - Readings from the epics and the Puranas.

KATHIS - Agriculturalist caste from Kathiawad belonging to the second varna known as Kshatriya.

KIRTAN - Devotional song.

KIRTAN KALA - Kirtan singing competition.

KUM-KUM - Red powder as used in rituals.

LAKSHNO - A number of pious or devout qualities in a person.

LILAS - Divine episodes in the life of Lord Swaminarayan.

LINGAM - Phallic representation of Shiva.

LOHANA - Gujarati trading caste.

MAHA SHIVRATRI - Celebration of the advent of Shiva.

MAHANT - Ascetic elected or appointed as manager or head of a temple.

MAHILA - Woman.

MUKHPATH - Recitation by memory.

MALA - Counting the rosary.

MANA - Composite form of the mind.

MANDAL - Association.

MANDAP - Canopy.

MANDIR - Hindu temple.

MANTRA - A formula used in ritual worship or meditation, possessing divine power; a phrase given during initiation.

MAYA - Illusion.

MOKSHA - Salvation; release from the endless cycle of births and deaths.

MURTI - Image of the deity.
NAGAR - A large area set aside for the celebration of a festival or a religious event.

NARAYAN - The Supreme Lord.

NAVDHA BHAKTI - Nine aspects of devotion to God.

NAVRATRI - "The Festival of Nine Nights", in honour of the mother goddess (Mataji) in her various forms.

PANCH JNANINDRIYA - Five organs of perception.

PANCH MAHABHUTTA - Five gross elements.

PANCH-VARTAMAN - Initiation into the Sanstha, involving the taking of five vows.

PANCHVISHAYAS - Five objects of the senses.

PARABRAHMAN - The Supreme Being; equal to Purushottam.

PARAMATMA - The Supreme Self.

PARAMHANSAS - The highest form of asceticism, signifying total renunciation.

PATIDAR - Gujarati landowning caste.

PATRIKA - Newsletter.

POOJA - An act of worship.

PRAGAT - Present; for example, the pragat guru means the present guru.

PRAKASH - Light; luminous.

PRASAD - A gift; grace; food which has been offered to the deity and is then distributed amongst devotees.

PRATHANA - Prayer.

PREMVATI - Full of devotion and love.

PUJARI - Priest.

PUNDITA - A learned person.

PURUSHAARTH - Endeavour; ends to be striven for by a person.

PURUSHOTTAM - The Supreme Person; Reality; Self; the highest divine reality.

RAAS - Gujarati folk dance; stick dance.
RAJA - King; Lord; Royal.

RAJ-GURU - The "highest" guru.

RAMANAVAMI - Celebration of the birth of Lord Rama.

RATHAYATRA - "Festival of Chariots".

RISHIS - Seers; ancient sages.

SABHA - Society; meeting together; gathering.

SAD-GURU - An ascetic who is appointed to be leader over other ascetics.

SADHU - A holy man.

SAMADHI - Trance or meditative-like state of oneness with the deity.

SAMAIYA - Gathering; convention; festival.

SAMAJ - Community.

SAMANYA PANCH-VARTAMAAN - Code of ethics of the Sanstha, involving five vows.

SAMPRADAYA - Tradition handed down from a founder through a line of religious leaders; a distinct religious fellowship.

SANCHALAK - Teacher.

SANDESH - Message.

SANSTHA - Institute; fellowship.

SATI - Widow suicide; the widow is burnt alive on her husband's funeral pyre.

SATSANG - Religious fellowship.

SATSANGI - Member of a religious fellowship.

SAURABH - Fragrance.

SEVA - Selfless service.

SEVA DAL - Voluntary service group.

SHARAD PUNAM - The fifteenth day of the Hindu month of Aasho; the night of the full moon, when Krishna's dancing with the gopis is celebrated.

SHAATRAS - Scriptures.
SHIBIR - Youth camp/conference.

SHIKAR MANDIR - Temple with images in statue form rather than picture form, which signifies the existence of domes.

SHISHU-KUNJ - Children's group.

SHLOKA - Verse.

SHRAVAN - The tenth month in the Hindu calendar. The word literally means "to listen", which is one of the nine forms of devotion as outlined in the Ramayana and the Srimad Bhagavatam.

SHRUTI - What is heard; eternal truths of the Vedas "heard" by rishis.

SMRITI - What is remembered; recollection of the direct experience of shruti.

STUTI - Song of praise, usually in Sanskrit.

SUDRA - The fourth and "lowest" varna.

SWADHAYA PARIVAR - Self-study family/group.

SWAMI - Spiritual master or teacher.

TABLE - Drum.

THAL - Devotional offering of food to the deity as a form of worship.

TILAK AND CHANDLO - The mark of the Sanstha on the forehead. The mark of the U made of sandalwood paste represents the feet of Sahajanand Swami, the red circle of kum-kum in the middle represents Gunatitanand Swami. This mark is worn only by males.

TRIVIDH TAPA - Three types of suffering or distress, for example, mental suffering, physical suffering and suffering caused by unearthly beings.

UPASANA - The fundamental belief specific to a particular community.

UTRANG - A celebration which takes place on January 14th in India, marking the movement of the sun from the Tropic of Capricorn to the Tropic of Cancer.

UTSAVAS - Festivals.

VADIL - An elder (male).
VAIRAGYA - Detachment.

VAISHNAVA - A follower or devotee of Vishnu, or the cult of Vishnu.

VAISHNAVI DIKSHA - Initiation as a Vaishnava ascetic.

VAISHYA - The third varna.

VARNASHRAMA DHARMA - System of duty applying to all Hindus, with reference to their social position and stage of life.

VARNI - The second part of the name by which Lord Swaminarayan was known when he was a wandering ascetic during his teenage years; his full name was Neelkanth Varni. The word 'varni' is sometimes used instead of the word brahmacharya, as well as sometimes used as a shortened form of the name of Neelkanth Varni.

VASANA - Passion; desire.

VASANT PANCHAMI - The celebration of the birthday of Shastriji Maharaj and the day on which Lord Swaminarayan finished writing the Shikshapatri, as well as being the first day of Spring in India.

VISHESH PANCH-VARTAMAAN - Five special vows; the special code of conduct of the Sanstha, for example, non-covetousness, selflessness, tastelessness, desirelessness and non-attachment.

VISHESH VARTAMAANAS - The special code of conduct for Sanstha members.

VISHISTADVAITA VEDANTA - The qualified non-dualism of Ramanuja.

VRATAS - Religious observances, such as fasting.

VYASPITH - Seat for visiting speakers, or from where the scriptures can be read.

YAGNA - Sacrifice.

YAMAPURI - Hell; where the wicked go to be punished after death, while awaiting a rebirth.

YOGA - Union; methods to concentrate the body and mind, to achieve perfect unity.

YOGI - One who practises yogic methods.

YONI - Representation of the female genitalia at the base of a lingam.
YUKTI - Young female.
YUNNI - Various species of life.
YUVUK - Young male.
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