

Diwali, Our Story Retold

30th October 2022, 5-6.30pm

GCH, London

REPORT

As dusk drew in on the first evening after the clocks went back for winter, the auditorium lit up ever more brightly to welcome souls in to celebrate Diwali, the festival lights, and to the theme of 'Our Story Retold'. 230 souls attended in person and 150 joined online.



A Dance by **Vasantakumari**, with a beaming smile, introduced the event to the song: 'Shubh a din aayo' - A wonderful day has arrived.

MC Nidhi welcomed everyone: *'the living lights' to celebrate with us and the evening would include lots of music, song and spiritual exploration on the significance of Diwali.* And **MC Pavan** noted *'As Diwali closes we celebrate a wonderful finale this evening'*.



Many friends and local dignitaries were then invited on stage by **Sister Jaymini** to get the celebration moving with a candle lighting ceremony and many sharing their best wishes and blessings for this time:



Those who spoke included **MP Virendra Sharma**: *'Diwali is a sign of unity and peace and praying to God for prosperity for all. This is what the ancestors gave us and we carry on and hopefully share this legacy with those to follow.'*

Cllr. Muhammed Butt, Leader of Brent Council: *'Seeing all the variety of people here in Brent, celebrating and commemorating Diwali and New Year is a chance and opportunity to reaffirm the vow to see goodness and to make sure light prevails in all our interactions.'*

Rhoda Ibrahim, CEO of SAAFI: shared good wishes on behalf of the Somali community in Brent.

Cllr. Ramji Chauhan, Deputy Mayor of Harrow noted: *'To have these cultures and identities in London makes us so proud. We need to continue to work and support each other and when we do this we have great communities.'*

Lakshmi Vyas, Chair of Hindu Forum of Europe and **Kamuben Palan**, representing the **Diwali in London Committee** and **Golden Tours** both shared their greetings.

Mahesh Patel, Trustee of BKWSU UK: *'let the light shine and help everyone achieve what they need to.'*

Those lighting candles also included: **Krupesh Hirani AM**, London Assembly Member for Brent and Harrow; **Vinod Thakrar**, Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan – Trustee; **Cllr. Krupa Sheth**, Brent Councillor for Tokyngton and Cabinet Member for Environment & Climate Action; **Meena Chauhan**, Deputy Mayoress of Harrow; **Ajay Maru**, Former Mayor of Harrow; **Dimps Sanghani**, Mrs England Universe; **Kesh Morjaria**, DIL Committee and Palan Foundation; **Mahendra Jadeja**, Flypop – Director of India Operations; **Murli Mukhey**, representing the Sindhi Community; **Maureen Goodman**, Brahma Kumaris UK, Programme Director; **Georgina Long**, Brahma Kumaris UK, Interfaith Coordinator; **Charu Patel** Brahma Kumaris UK, Finance; **Shashi Mehra**, Brahma Kumaris, UK, Greenford centre coordinator; **Daxa Shah**, Inner Space, Wembley coordinator; and **Jaymini Patel**, BKIS Director.

Sister Jaymini hosted the guests on stage and noted that *'lighting the candle here reminds us of the significance of light and how the light within each one of us, when lit up, can dislodge the darkness within.'*

Sister Maureen also shared and said how she loves living in Brent, as so many different cultures live here and she has had the honour to work with so many. *'Diwali is about light and we need to keep our light alive very brightly so we can help and uplift others.....so we can use the light of the gifts from God so by sharing that light there is going to be a world of light and peace for all of us. Thanks.'*

A short video invoking four aspects to Diwali...to see, understand, learn and apply in our lives. How, as in the story, Ram shoots the arrows at the ten headed Ravan, this symbolises how as we take spiritual power from God we can all finish these vices and close the old karmic accounts as our weakness finish and then a new



world will be set to return with a new kingdom and prince Sri Krishna can rise. Dadi janki in this video mentioned a 'deep' closure of the old is needed to finish the past.

MC Nidhi then returned and challenged everyone gathered to *'to check what "tail" ' of the past we carry ...from our childhood to this morning. To reflect and see what has upset us and realise that now Diwali is the time to clean that out and bring closure.'* MC Nidhi also acknowledged this is easy to say but hard to do....

Sister Jaymini was invited to speak on how we go about closing the pains or bothers of the past.

'I ask myself the question, how do I feel about what is lingering on the mind and heart', 'what is disturbing the present'? To close this requires great inner strength and power. We have to be determined to finish the tail, that it is spotted and out of the door. If we do not do it now, will there be another day....Time is moving and time is changing.... I forgive and do not allow bad feelings of any old situation to linger in the mind.

Sister Jaymini then offered a guided meditation and took everyone into their inner space of light that naturally generates positive energy, *'and from here to forgive and let go, to clean the old "stains", so we can radiate light'.*



Brother Thiru weaved a joyous dance, full of light and love.

Closure - cut off the sadness and allow the joy to emerge and celebrate. Inner joy comes from inner freedom and the foundation is victory...when we gain it over the self and become the self-sovereign. We have lost ourselves somewhere in the midst of our lives and so it is returning to the king again.....We celebrate many festivals but how long do they last!

Pavan and Nidhi explored then the notion that we celebrate many festival but then how long do these really last. How can we maintain the staying power to keep the happiness going? How do we do this?

Sister Jaymini:

- We can become self-sovereigns. I can choose and decide how I wish to feel, no matter what someone else is doing.
- It is choice and when we watch our thoughts and the feelings they create we can make sure we steer our thinking, and bring our feelings back to the natural enthusiasm of our heart.
- When we are in silence and go deeper within, externally we can radiate....inner light and external radiance go together.
- I go deep into the silence, beyond the noise of the mind... Allow the mind to be in the space of sweet silence, so inner self is nurtured with peace, with love that lies within each one of us.
- Take time to be with the inner being and touch base with this every now and then, so that we can remain constantly charged and empowered....

Karishma Patel sang *'I am light'...I am not the colour of my skinI am divinity on the inside.*



MC Pavan noted that Light, Courage and Self-respect feel like the thread of retelling our story and that Cooperation then arises when we feel an inner satisfaction and we can help each other and that generates a feeling of belonging. He asked Sister Jaymini : *'How can we brighten our lives everyday through cooperation?'*

Sister Jaymini shared:

- The value of nurturing the self-love which will enable us to cooperate with anyone and everyone... to bring joy and happiness. And that when others don't cooperate the trick is to do our best, let go and let it be. And when others challenge, don't allow the doubts within that to diminish the enthusiasm we have.
- Love is the foundation for cooperation and cooperation is the foundation for success..... now that everyone is coming together again, cooperation also brings hope....
- This evening is a good example of hope and support....we all wish to do good in the community and give our best, so your presence is souls who are doing this so if we can continue to give support and be present... cooperation will continue...

Sister Jaymini closed with a final meditation to help everyone journey in faith and connect with the Divine.

Both MC's extended thanks to all participants and everyone who attended in-person and online.

The evening closed with the sharing of toli and gifts.

ENDS