

REMEMBERING DIWALI ON TRAFALGAR SQUARE

'Care, Compassion and Gratitude'

1.11.2020

London

3-7pm

BK SERVICE REPORT



Whole event can be seen on Youtube at:

<https://youtu.be/W0taQkxonIU>

<http://www.diwaliinlondon.com>

From 2002 to 2019 the **Diwali in London (DiL) Committee**, in partnership with **The Mayor of London**, brought Diwali on Trafalgar Square (DOTS) to London. This year 2020 in line with the pandemic it shifted to ONLINE and sought to remember and acknowledge the past 18 years contributions and reference many of the magical moments of upliftment and hope that this Diwali event brought to so many Londoners and those tuning in from around the globe every year. People watched through all the various different online platforms and websites and preliminary figures show approx. 22,000 tuned in live and a further 20,000 watched on Youtube and facebook within 24 hours of the event. (see link above for full event). People tuned in from over 40 countries!

This year 2020 The Brahma Kumaris held the Chair of the DiL Committee. **Sister Jaymini** led the usual BK team with **Sister Urvashi** and **BK Dipti Khatri** both supporting the scheduling the online programme, working with a small focused team to create a seamless 4 hours of online footage from past events and also live messages from all the DiL organisation spiritual leads and representatives, shown throughout the afternoon. **BK Toots Beckett** also supported the BK coordination along with many BK volunteers from GCH, including **BK Rajesh Khanna**, who created fantastic promotion videos for the event and provided filming support.

Nil Kumar coordinated the logistics of the event and was the driving energy to keep the committee all moving forward with the project, as well as with the guidance of **Nitin Palan** of BAPS Swaminarayan, the founder of DiL.

The dynamic DiL team comprises 14 diverse Hindu member organisations with representatives from a cross section of multicultural communities of India who work together in harmony to ensure the seamless running of **DOTS**, including the Brahma Kumaris. This year the same was true and this time DiL took up the challenge to create something special, in keeping with the present time of reflection. The theme for this year reflected the times we are moving through: Care, Compassion and Gratitude. Live messages were shared by many spiritual leaders throughout the afternoon. With **Sister Jayanti's** message beginning the programme there followed at various moments messages from ISCKON, Oshwal, Art of Living, Sai School, Chinmaya Mission, Brahmin Society of North London, Telagu Association of London, BAPS Swaminarayan, and VHP Ilford, as well as the Metropolitan Hindu Police Association.

Live Opening at Brahma Kumaris can be seen at 32:00 – 42:00 W0taQkxonIU&feature=youtu.be or diwaliinlondon.com link

The online event began at Global Cooperation House, and was held in keeping with present rules in the UK. **Sarita Menon** of The Art of Living hosted and introduced the live Opening Ceremony there. **Sister Jaymini**, as Chair of DiL Committee for 2020 opened proceedings and noted: *This year is a time to remember great successes and contributions over many years of Diwali on the Square. We honour this year the theme 'Compassion, Care and Gratitude' and how we can take these attitudes forward into our lives and our world...*



Sarita then introduced **Sister Jayanti, European Director of Brahma Kumaris**. Her message included: *Many have said that we won't go back to the same norm, and I hope we won't. My vision is that this Diwali will help us understand what it is we truly need to do in our lives. We have been cleaning our homes to invoke Sri Lakshmi but this year we will clean out our hearts, so they are filled with compassion, not just for our nearest and dearest, but for everyone. This year we will make sure we light the lamp of care for every human being. Also for all the living creatures of the earth and nature itself. Our hearts are filled with gratitude, a feeling of deep appreciation and thanks for what The Creator has blessed us with and what we can share with each other.*

BK UK Trustee, BK Mahesh Patel shared a message for this year saying: *This a different era, a changing time and a different way of celebrating. The event is the same but the way has changed to online. Let me thank the Mayor of London and the DIL committee and the various volunteers who have given time to make this a success. What does Diwali really mean...it is a victory of enlightenment over darkness. We have to see how we can really improve ourselves and bring more light.....and bring love and harmony to all..*

The candles were then lit simply in a royal way with the 2020 theme of Care, Compassion, Gratitude written on the candle with 3 wicks. Sister Urvashi, having led the stage production at DOTS for so many years then lighted a diwa followed by Sister Dipti who has coordinated the Glimpses of the Goddesses Zone, and Sister Toots, who has coordinated the Yoga and Meditation Zone, to complete the ceremony and then hand back to the online host.



Later in the afternoon, a special message was shared by **The Mayor of London, Mr Sadiq Khan**. *'I am delighted that Diwali in London (DiL) Committee are putting on a virtual event to celebrate the festival of lights. Diwali is a special time of year for many Londoners of different backgrounds and an opportunity to celebrate the triumph of light over darkness. So while it is disappointing that we can't unite in Trafalgar Square as we normally would, it's great that we can join together in an online celebration. As the winter nights draw in and we continue to face the challenges of the coronavirus pandemic, Diwali's unifying message of friendship and hope is more important than ever.'*

Mayor of London's message can be seen at 1:59 – 2:02 mins [W0taQkxonIU&feature=youtu.be](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W0taQkxonIU&feature=youtu.be) or diwaliinlondon.com link

Later on in the afternoon, Sister Jaymini introduced a short video, 'Make it Happen' honouring the life and work of the late **Dadi Jankiji, Spiritual Head of the Brahma Kumaris**, who passed on, on March 27th 2020. Sister Jaymini shared: *Dadi's inspirational powerful way of being, which embodied so much care, compassion and gratitude, throughout her life touched people across the globe and uplifted so many. 'Make it Happen' tribute to Dadi Janki can be seen at 2:03-2:08 mins on: [W0taQkxonIU&feature=youtu.be](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W0taQkxonIU&feature=youtu.be) or diwaliinlondon.com link*

The online afternoon was hosted by a series of 8 different leading committee members, who focused on different aspects of the festival over the years. And uniquely to this online event, many of those who coordinate areas of the event were interviewed and shared their perspective of their involvement, as well as sharing many visuals of each area: such as the extraordinary coming together of the dances on the square for the Opening Ceremonies; and the many areas around the square: DIL culture zone, the Children's zone, the Sari zone, the Dance zone, the puppet theatre, the Glimpses of Goddesses zone, and the Yoga and Meditation zone. And of course the main stage itself and all that happened there over the years. Viewers were taken backstage for the first time and both **Shivali of Sai School**, and **Urvashi of Brahma Kumaris** shared their perspectives of organising the logistics of so many acts coming on and off stage each year, and their memorable moments.

The event concluded with the final host **Dr Milen Shah**, from Chinmaya Mission, introducing footage of past Aarti's on the Square followed by a beautiful Aarti video created by **BK Girish Wadwhani** and team, especially for 2020.

BK Aarti video can be seen at 5:12 – 5:18mins on [W0taQkxonIU&feature=youtu.be](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W0taQkxonIU&feature=youtu.be) or diwaliinlondon.com link

The DIL team extended their thanks to everyone for watching and wishing all a safe and peaceful Diwali and light through these times.

