

Thousands of Revelers Partake In 21st Annual Phagwah Parade In Jersey City

Source

JERSEY CITY, NEW JERSEY, March 30, 2013 (The Jersey Journal): Thousands of people descended on Lincoln Park in Jersey City this afternoon for the 21st Annual Phagwah Parade and Holi Hai Day festivities, a colorful Hindu spring harvest tradition that is celebrated by revelers who playfully shower each other with various colors of powder.

”The biggest significance of this is that everybody becomes a myriad of colors,” said Dayanand Mangru, an executive with the United Hindu Association, adding that on such a holy day there are no racial distinctions. “There is no brown, black, or white.”

The parade began around 11:30 a.m. at Audubon Park at the intersection of Kennedy Boulevard and Stegman Parkway as ten decorated floats blaring traditional Indian dance music made their way down Kennedy Boulevard to the fountain in Lincoln Park where the festivities continued into the afternoon.

”The focus is to bring all together in unity,” said Gireeraj Beggs, president of The United Hindu Federation of New Jersey which led the organizing efforts for the parade. “As Hindus we believe in the unity of all people.”

• [Email to a friend](#) •

Raising A Hindu Kid In New York

Source

NEW YORK, NEW YORK, March 26, 2013 (New York Times, by Shivani Vora): How do you teach your children about religion, particularly your own? Are the parents responsible for this vital task, or should they call in some outside help? It’s a question I faced when I became a parent almost five years ago. I am a Hindu who was born in New Delhi and lived in India until I was 8, before immigrating to the United States with my parents and younger sister. Throughout my childhood, Hinduism wasn’t something I formally learned; it was a natural part of my everyday life.

My parents did pujas (prayers) with my sister, Aditi, and me every evening in front of the makeshift mandir (temple) on top of their bureau in their bedroom. We celebrated all the major holidays, including Diwali and Holi, with parties and more elaborate pujas. Aditi and I spent Saturday mornings in India watching episodes of the Mahabharata and Ramayana on TV and listened intently to bedtime stories from our mother based on Indian mythology.

Following this tradition became more challenging as I grew into adulthood and got married. My husband, Mahir, who is from

Mumbai, and I live in New York City, where we have never been starved for an Indian community. But, perhaps like many Indians who came to the United States as children, our careers and mainstream life took precedence over our religion as we grew up.

This slipping away of an integral part of my roots didn't bother me at all until I gave birth to my daughter, Meenakshi. Sometime in her first year of life, I started feeling urgently that she should learn all about her religion. Mahir and I started doing a short puja with her before she went to bed, but we felt inadequately equipped to be her sole source of learning and wanted something more.

When it comes to kids' classes in New York City, there are almost too many options, whether it's gym, music or art. That's not the case with those on the Hindu religion - I could only find three for kids. We picked Bal Vihar, one of the most popular offerings in the area. Part of the Chinmaya Mission, a religious group founded in 1953 in Mumbai by Swami Chinmayananda, the school is focused on teaching the age-old philosophy of Advaita Vedanta. The school came to the United States in the early 1970s, according to Runjhun Saklani, the secretary of the New York mission, when a handful of parents said they wanted an organized way to teach their children Hinduism.

Bal Vihar started in 2002 in the New York City area in a small way: four or five children met in apartments, where volunteer teachers taught them devotional songs and prayers and

the names and meanings of the gods and goddesses. By the time we enrolled Meenakshi in Bal Vihar classes in 2011, there were classes around the country, and Ms. Saklani estimates that more than 5,000 children attend Bal Vihar in the United States today.

Ramayana Now In Polish Language

Source

WARSAW, January 14, 2013 (Hindustan Times): The Ramayana, the great Indian epic, is now available in the Polish language, courtesy of Janusz Krzyzowski, an Indologist in Poland who has translated the monumental work. Though a few episodes of Ramayana were translated into Polish in 1816, these were mere translations of Western writers.

Krzyzowski collected the material from dozens of books and presented in a coherent manner so that a reader could sustain his interest while going through different chapters. The original was penned by Maharishi Valmiki in Sanskrit. "My main purpose was to translate this epic into many chapters in a story format so that laymen and particularly Polish children could enjoy the book as well as they should be aware of the great Indian mythological tradition.

"Ramayana and Mahabharata are two great epics which cannot (be) compared with other epics. Even Greek epics come out as pale shadows when we see the canvas of the Indian epics. They are almost unique in the history of mankind," Krzyzowski told IANS.

Krzyzowski is the president of India-Poland Cultural Committee since its inception in 2004. He has been a prolific writer on India since 15 years. His love for India has roots since his university days when he enrolled for a master degree in philosophy after a medical degree. This interest turned him into an automatic Indophile

Water, Milk For The Gods — Now Being Conserved In Temples

Source

INDIA, March 31,2013 (Hindustan Times): An astrologer and social activist has turned the religious practice of offering water and milk in temples into a unique way of water conservation. Pandit Purushotam Gaur, known as Guruji, has developed water harvesting infrastructure in more than 300 temples in Rajasthan over the past 13 years.

Gaur is harvesting the millions of gallons of water offered by devotees in Hindu temples

that earlier used to literally go down the drain. Gaur said that he had started his Jalabhishek campaign in 2000. "I used to notice that the water offered by devotees in temples is completely wasted as it goes into the drain. So, an idea to use it in recharging the increasingly depleting groundwater level struck me," the 41-year old astrologer told IANS.

He started channelling water from temples (especially Siva temples) through several filter chambers before it drained into the ground and recharged the ground water level. As part of the project, several tanks and bore wells were constructed in each of the temple with the help of the people, Gaur added. "I was delighted when several scientists and groundwater experts joined forces with me and came up with an institution called Shiksha Samiti. The institution has calculated that the city, with more than 3,000 temples, daily has at least 45 million liters of water poured on the deity of Lord Siva and other deities during the Hindu holy month of Shravan (July-August)," Guar explained. About 300 temples have been covered by the campaign.

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