

# New York Tartan Week Parade 2017 – the Swamibapa Pipeband



The Swamibapa Pipeband marching down Sixth Avenue in the 2017 Tartan Week Parade

There were many pipe bands on Saturday in New York City taking part in the Tartan Week Parade, but this one in particular stood out for us. The Swamibapa Pipeband has a most interesting history.



In 1970 the religious leader Muktajeevan Swamibapa, who is the founder of Maninagar Shree Swaminarayan Gadi, toured the UK, the first and only leader of the Swaminarayan religion to travel abroad.



This was for him a religious pilgrimage, but now his followers understand that by founding a pipe band he found a way for them to cross cultures.

Hersh H. Patel the band's spokesman explained to us : "First of all there were disciples in London who set up a band and travelled to Secaucus New Jersey where another band was formed in 2003.

"We began with zero knowledge of the bagpipes, but a few older members taught themselves learning each of the notes.



"We started off using recorders, then practice bagpipes, and when we were all old enough, we went onto the bagpipes proper. For the children in the band it was a way to connect to our roots as well as become accustomed to crossing cultures and meeting new people.

✘ “We perform at Memorial Day Parades, Indian Independence Day Parades, 9/11 Memorial Services, and various charity events. Over the years the band has created a foundation not just in the Temple but has been a foundation for all members in their professional lives also.

“We have people in every professional field and in every sector of the professional workplace. The one constant in our lives has been that band has provided us all a way to stay close to home, while reaching out to those far away from it.”

✘ The band’s main Drum Major, Tarkesh A. Patel explained why they were part of the event on Saturday : “We always do charity events and patriotic performances but this was the first time that we had performed in a Tartan Week Parade.

“Most people who see our band are somewhat flustered but as we march closer and people see the display of cultures crossing through music, we automatically become synonymous with every event we perform at. Other bands that we interacted with were amazed at our uniforms and even somewhat surprised that we were able to finish the parade!”

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