

Samarpan

an offering....

Hindu Samaj Temple of Minnesota

March-April 2015

President's Note

Namaste to All!

Welcome to the Spring edition of Samarpan! How appropriate that we Celebrated Holi, our Spring Festival, to coincide with the arrival of Spring in Minnesota. It was a Grand success and transported me to the Melas in India. The sight of people dressed in colorful clothes and jewelry, the stalls selling jewelry and clothes, the smell of food in the air and the chatter of people mixed in with a background of Hindi Film songs, were all so reminiscent of home. For a few short hours we recreated a piece of India- for those of us who have experienced it and for those whom we want to share it with. We had more than 200 adults plus children, four vendors - each offering food, clothes and jewelry for sale. It was a first for all and I can tell with confidence that everyone had a great time. We hope to repeat it in the future as we have several requests from you all to host similar events to bring the community together.

On a more serious note, our New Temple construction has to be delayed until Spring of 2016. Olmsted County is widening the road near our land and is requesting a portion to be used for the project. We are in the process of negotiating with the county as it is greatly affecting our ability to build as planned. We will be unable to build Phase 3 as described in the initial plans and maybe not at all as we see it now. We are hoping to keep phase 1 and 2 intact, so that we can have a Temple and Community center as we envisioned. We are in the final stages of planning and redesign, and hope to have it completed in the next few months. The County has been very considerate of our efforts and is working with us to achieve the best solution for both. With this behind us, we hope to have the Bhoomi Pooja in Spring 2016 and start construction immediately. If all goes as planned with no more delays, we will be in our New Temple for Diwali 2016.

Thank You,

Santhi Subramaniam

President, Hindu Samaj Temple.



Editor's Note

By Rajani Sohni

Hello Readers:

We are off to a good start in Spring after the relatively mild winter that was a pleasant surprise. I hope everybody had a wonderful time at the Holi Mela held on April 18th. We have included some pictures of the event in this issue of *Samarpan*.

Featured in this issue are poems submitted by Shanthi Siva and young Prabhav Kaginele. Both poems are based on memories made in India and are a delight to read, stirring your own nostalgia if you either grew up in India or have visited there.

The annual *Kalyana Utsavam* was held at the Temple on April 19th and our Priest, Sri Hari Krishna Ji, has submitted an article outlining the meaning of this celebration, an annual occurrence at our Temple in Spring.

In the previous issue of *Samarpan*, a couple of high school graduates from our community shared their first-time college experiences. In this issue we have an article submitted by Pranita Kaginele sharing her thoughts and experience about her first year at Washington University.

In addition, Dr. Mohandas Bhat from Maryland, a cousin of one of our community members – Mrs. Neeta Pai, has written about the millions of Gods of Hinduism, providing a good perspective on the worship of many Gods and Goddesses as manifests of one supreme God. We have an article by Alisha Bhagia on Mahatma Gandhi and his fight to liberate India, and one submitted by Chandu Valluri with valuable tips on parenting. Read and share your opinion on the article submitted by one of our editors, Anantha Santhanam!

We welcome submissions from all of you, children as well as adults. Please email your submissions to editors@histemplemn.org for publication in a future issue of *Samarpan*. Best wishes from the *Samarpan* Team.

Editorial Team:

Forrest Dailey, Jyothi Muthyala, Anantha Vijay Raghavan Santhanam

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Priest's Column - Kalyana Utsavam – The divine marriage of Lord Venkateswara. (Sri Balaji) By Sri Hari Krishnaji

Kalyana Utsavam is a special ritual where we derive pleasure in conducting the wedding for the Lord Himself. A *Kalyana Utsavam* celebration blends the application of Vedic traditions and spiritual leanings.

Sri Venkateswara Swamy Kalyanam with the Devis, Sri Sridevi and Sri Bhoodevi, is an inspiration to all mankind to follow the principles of marital life. When humans are married it's a memorable event, when the marriage is for the Lord Himself it has great significance and hence called *Kalyana Utsavam* - The celebration of marriage. The divine marriage is performed for the benefit of humankind - *Loka Kalyanam*.

The varieties of acts provide a wide canvas for the mind to rest. Our attention is centered on the Lord and His consort for the entire duration of the *Kalyana Utsavam*. It enables the mind to develop single-pointedness (*ekaagrata*). A prepared mind becomes the right vehicle to absorb the teaching (*gnyaana*) and attain realization (*moksha*).

May the Lord Sri Venkateswara Swamy and His Divine Consorts, who enjoy eternal bliss and who are always full of auspiciousness bless the community involved in this *Kalyanam Utsavam* celebration at the Hindu Samaj Temple with all good things in every aspect of life.

We celebrated Sri Venkateswara Kalyana Utsavam in our temple on Sunday, April 19th 2015. We invite all devotees to utilize this excellent opportunity and take part in this annual event.

Sarve jana Sukhinobhavanthu-samastha san-mangalani bhavanthu
Let all people beget happiness; let them all beget auspiciousness.



MY INDIA

India is an awesome place to go.
You can say Namaste instead of hello.
I have friends waiting for me to play.
I say "Let's play cricket without delay."
I see my grandparent houses.
I visit my uncles and their spouses.
There is a lot of traffic.
Still the country is fantastic.
I love to visit my country,
it makes me feel cozy and homely.



By Prabhav Kaginele

The Tamarind Days

By Shanthi Siva

Red soil covered feet, dark skinned, naïve smile
 school books in a tattered basket on one hand
 greasy hair
 tied in braids,
 sandals mended many times
 worn out clothes sewed in patches
 a buddy or two by the side for company and adventure
 She stopped by the tamarind tree.

It was a giant
 looking at the children like a fond grandfather
 the branches swaying softly
 creating gentle breeze.

Children stoned the tree for ripe fruits
 and were happy to pick up
 the first fruit that hit the ground.

She scanned the ground for *gems*,
 the semi ripe fruits.

They were unique like her
 smooth, dark skinned, simple and elegant
 neither too sweet nor too tangy
 just the perfect mix.

They were golden nuggets, a perfect snack of the poor.
 firm yet easy to peel,
 lemon green flesh delicate and sweet
 at the first bite, infusing tanginess
 with each drop of saliva
 taste lingering for the rest of her life



Editor's Note: *Shanthi Siva recently spoke at the Rochester Public Library sharing her experience of writing in English and how she uses her native language, Tamil, as an aid to communicate clearly in English, choosing words and synonyms from another language to convey the true meaning.*

Shanthi has Master's and M.Phil. degrees in English, specializing in American Literature. Poetry is her favorite genre.

My First Year at College

By *Pranita Kaginele*



My Indian heritage has always played a large role in my life. I always had my “school” friends and my “Indian” friends. I would talk about my school’s gossip with my “school” friends and the latest Bollywood news with my “Indian” friends. The two never really converged, until I went to college. When I arrived at Washington University in St. Louis last fall, I didn’t know what to expect. I thought life would continue on like high school, except for the fact that I would be living in a 20x20 room five hundred miles away from my parents. I realized right away how wrong I was. There were more Indian students my age there than I had ever seen, having lived in Rochester for most of my life. Not only that, I saw students of all sorts of different cultural backgrounds. The diversity astonished me.

We have to take language courses at Wash U, and as I was perusing through the course catalog for my first semester classes, I came across the Hindi department. I had always wanted to know Hindi, and what better opportunity than this? As a smaller, discussion-based class with topics I am genuinely interested in, Hindi quickly became one of my favorite classes and I grew close to many of the students I met there. I am now considering a minor in South Asian Studies, which will allow me to take more courses to explore my heritage, including courses about South Asian culture and history. During Navrathri time, students from Wash U made their way over to Saint Louis University for the Garba night. The enjoyable night consisted of prayers and a lot of dancing. Very soon into the year, posters and flyers for the annual Diwali show became apparent all over campus. Diwali is one of the largest cultural programs at Wash U, which the South Asian group puts on for two days in November. Filled with dancing, singing, and skits, it brought back memories of the hours I have spent preparing and performing in the Diwali shows in Rochester in the past.

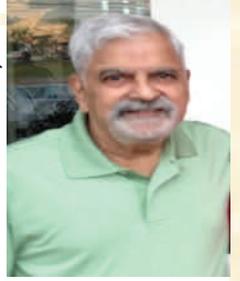
They say, “Absence makes the heart grow fonder” and it wasn’t until my first year at college that I realized the truth behind this statement. Of course, I missed my family and my friends from Rochester, but these activities truly helped me feel at home at Wash U. Maybe it was because we were so far away from our families, or maybe we were just brought up in a way that made us continue to do these things, but it amazes me that college students have the ability and motivation to put together these programs celebrating our cultural backgrounds. Through the year, I have been to other cultural programs as well, such as celebrations of Jewish holidays, the Lunar New Year festival, Christmas parties, etc., and it is amazing how it all comes together. Now, I can talk about Hindi homework with the same students I talk about my chemistry homework. I can talk about the college gossip with the same friends I talk about the latest Bollywood news. My two worlds have finally converged, and I couldn’t be happier.

Holi artwork by Sreyoli Bhattacharjee



330 Million Gods of Hinduism

By Mohandas Bhat



Introduction:

There is a well-known legend in India about a Hindu man who spent his entire life traveling throughout India as a kind of theistic census taker. He went from village to village, house to house, occupation to occupation, caste to caste inquiring at every location in which gods were worshiped. In India, in addition to the great national deities worshiped throughout the country like Vishnu or Shiva, every clan, every occupation, every caste sub-grouping (jati), all have their own particular gods who are worshiped and feared. So this man traveled throughout India and recorded the names of all the deities who were worshiped. Eventually, he compiled a list in a great book; the number is generally believed to have been 330 million. When the weary traveler finally returned to his own home village, exhausted and in his 93rd year, he was asked to count how many gods were in his book. He spent 7 years counting the gods and at the end of the book he wrote the grand total: One. There is "One God worshiped in India." (Ref 1)

This story underscores the classic problem in Hindu Theology. On one hand, the major philosophical traditions clearly posit that there is one ultimate reality, the Supreme Being Brahman. On the other hand, on the ground, popular Hinduism seems to have no end to the number of gods who are worshiped and adored.

The number 33 crore or 330 million gods and goddesses may have another explanation. Rig Veda states that Hinduism has "33 Koti Devas" which has been variously interpreted as 330 million or 33 crore (1 koti = 1 crore= 10 million) gods or 33 categories of gods since "koti" in Sanskrit also means "category". The 33 Devas mentioned in the Rig Veda are – eight Vasus, eleven Rudras, and twelve Adityas, plus Indra and Prajapati. (Ref 2 & 3)

In Hinduism, the impersonal Absolute is called "Brahman". According to this pantheistic belief, everything in existence, living or non-living comes from it. Therefore, Hindus regard all things as sacred. We cannot equate Brahman with God, because if God is describable, this takes away from the concept of the Absolute. Brahman is formless or "nirakara", and beyond anything that we can conceive of. However, it can manifest itself in myriad forms, including Gods and Goddesses, the "sakara" form of the Brahman. (Ref 4)

The relationship between the many manifest deities and the un-manifest Brahman is rather like that between the sun and its rays. We cannot experience the sun itself but we can experience its rays and the qualities, which those rays have. And, although the sun's rays are many, ultimately, there is only one source, one sun. So the Gods and Goddesses of Hinduism amount to thousands, all representing the many aspects of Brahman. (Ref 5)

God Vs Devas

Hindus call the deities they worship as Deva (male) or Devi (female) or collectively as Devathas, rather than Gods. Western scholars have misinterpreted the word 'Deva' as meaning 'God', which is obviously erroneous. The term derives from the Sanskrit root div to shine or emit light. Hence, the most accurate translation of Deva would be 'Shining One'.

Rig Veda has described Devas as celestial beings that control forces of nature such as fire, air, wind, etc. They are not to be confused with the One and the Supreme God or His personal form, Saguna Brahman who can be visualized in various forms. The Supreme Brahman (the Supreme Spirit) is the ultimate controller. In Hinduism, it is often said that Brahman is the only Ultimate Reality, and all Devas are simply mundane manifestations of Him.

It is believed that there are several astral planes (Deva lokas), which are inner planes, parallel to our earthly plane of existence, where Devas live. Devas are said to constitute the ranks or orders of celestial beings who compose the hierarchy that rules the universe under the supreme deity. Their numbers are vast and their functions are not all known to mankind, though generally these functions may be said to be connected with the evolution of systems and of life. Thus, some authors suggest that each of the 330 million Devas function as controllers of some aspect of nature. There are various levels of control like in a government hierarchy. Thus, Devas have specific functions and powers. (Ref 6, 7 & 10)

The editors of "Hinduism Today" have similar elegant explanations for the many Devas in Hinduism: "Hindus believe in many gods who perform various functions like executives in a large corporation. These should not be confused with the Supreme God. These divinities are highly advanced beings that have specific duties and powers - not unlike the heavenly spirits, overlords or archangels revered in other faiths. Each Hindu denomination worships one supreme God and its own pantheon of divine beings". (Ref 8)

Discussion:

One may ask: "why an omniscient, omnipresent and omnipotent supreme God needs helpers". This question may be valid, but impossible to answer, as we cannot read God's mind. A more relevant question to ask is: does such a supreme God have helpers? The answer is a resounding yes, based on Vedic literature cited here and on empirical evidence based on deities worshiped by Hindus. To give just one example, consider Lord Ganesh, also known as Vigneswar or "Remover of obstacles in a devotee's path". Lord Ganesh is a minor, albeit powerful Deva, who is worshiped for this reason. In fact, no religious ceremony, such as weddings, major pujas, or starting of major ventures such as building of temples, factories and schools in India is done without first invoking Lord Ganesh. He may very well be the most widely worshiped Deva by Hindus of all sects. Some Buddhists and Jains also worship Lord Ganesh. Even skeptics, who question the need for God's helpers, are likely to worship Lord Ganesh, on specific occasions, if they are devout Hindus. Thus, philosophical doubts, generally, evaporate when rubber meets the road. (Ref 9)

"Truth is one but the wise speak of it in many ways", Rig Veda

330 Million Gods of Hinduism

By Mohandas Bhat

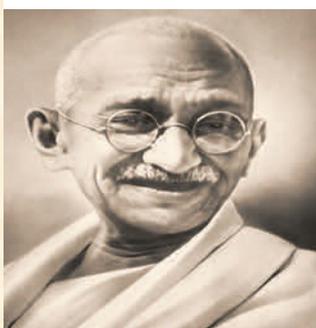
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Editor's note: Dr. Mohandas Bhat is a cousin of one of our community members, Neeta Pai. He has published earlier in *Marg*, the newsletter of the MARG Foundation in Gaithersburg, Maryland.

Mohandas Gandhi and the Fight for Freedom

By Alisha Bhagia



<http://www.greatthoughtstresury.com/author/mahatma-gandhi-fully-mohandas-karamchand-gandhi-aka-bapu>



Gandhi once said, "Non-violence is the greatest force at the disposal of mankind. It is mightier than the mightiest weapon of destruction devised by the ingenuity of man," ("Mohandas Gandhi"). The idea of non-violence was embodied by Gandhi throughout his various protests to fight for freedom for Indians. Within his many movements, Gandhi illustrated the immense power and potential of non-violence. These non-violent protests revolutionized the world, eventually bringing about India's independence on August 15, 1947. Gandhi impacted the world by demonstrating the power of peaceful protest to create freedom, especially by setting a precedent for equality in Indians in South Africa, his work with the Satyagraha revolts, and the Salt March.

By using this tool of non-violence, Gandhi helped set Indians free in South Africa. After getting a job in South Africa, Gandhi started hearing about how poorly Indians were regarded there. He was actually kicked out of a train because he was traveling first class, although he did have a ticket for the first-class carriage. Gandhi felt the need to help his fellow brothers and sisters in South Africa. He created an "Association of India Settlers" to unite all of the different groups of India (Wilkinson 30). Gandhi also started working as a lawyer in Durban, Natal, to help Indians by fighting for them in cases. In 1896, Gandhi returned to India in order to bring back his family to live with him (Wilkinson 29-30).

After he came back, a white gang ambushed Gandhi. They beat him terribly and threw items at him. This gang chose to do this because they didn't want Gandhi to achieve freedom for Indians. However, the brutal attacks that he endured did not stop him from his goal. He wrote to newspapers, spoke at meetings, and fought in court to help Indians gain freedom. Despite knowing that many were against him, he continued on. Gandhi understood that the rulers of South Africa did not want change, yet this only caused the great man to pursue his nature as a catalyst for the better. The publication "Indian Opinion" was founded by Gandhi in order to continue fighting for Indian rights (Wilkinson 31). Lastly, in 1901, when Gandhi and his family went to India, they received many gifts. Gandhi made sure that these presents were given away to collect funds for the Natal Indians campaign. In these ways, Gandhi helped the Indians living in South Africa achieve freedom (Wilkinson 30-31).

Gandhi also used Satyagraha, a method that he made, to fight for Indians' rights. In 1903, Gandhi moved to another South African state, Transvaal. The government there had established many laws to discriminate against Indians. Due to the severe discrimination, Indians had to register in the government and pay an unusual tax. Also, traditional Hindu marriages were not recognized. Therefore, Gandhi developed a different kind of protest, called Satyagraha. This consists of two words which mean "truth" and "force" (Wilkinson 32). Through this, Indians would oppose injustice, but never using violence (Wilkinson 32).

There are two parts that make up Satyagraha. The first part is "civil disobedience" ("FAQs / Myths about Mahatma Gandhi"). This consists of breaking the law and being thrown into prison for it. By doing this, Gandhi wanted to show that he cared so much that he was even willing to be imprisoned for it. The second part to Satyagraha is "non-cooperation" ("FAQs / Myths about Mahatma Gandhi"). Gandhi explained this to the world when he said, "I believe that no government can exist for a single moment without the cooperation of the people, willing or forced, and if people suddenly withdraw their cooperation in every detail, the government will come to a standstill," ("FAQs / Myths about Mahatma Gandhi").

Mohandas Gandhi and the Fight for Freedom

By Alisha Bhagia

In 1908, many Indians, along with Gandhi, were imprisoned for not following the registration law. Gandhi met with General Smuts, who said that if most Indians registered, he would get rid of the law. Gandhi did what he said, but Smuts was not true to his promise. Soon after, a complete Satyagraha campaign had begun, in which Indians defied the laws. Therefore, the government took back these discriminative laws in 1914. After receiving justice in South Africa, Gandhi returned to his homeland, India (Wilkinson 33).

In western India, Gandhi founded the "Satyagraha Ashram" (Wilkinson 37). Later, Gandhi invited some "untouchables", the lowest in the Indian caste system, to live there (Wilkinson 38). He wanted them to be accepted by society (Wilkinson 37-38). Gandhi also fasted for the "untouchables" in 1931 ("Mohandas Gandhi"). This fast caused chaos among Gandhi's followers. However, this eventually helped to make changes within the Indian community ("Mohandas Gandhi").

In 1930, Gandhi planned a protest in which he would break one of the most despised British laws. This law said that only the "British government" could collect and trade salt (Wilkinson 50). On March 12, 1930, Gandhi went to the sea and took some salt. Once people found out about this, they began to do the same. This became known as the Salt March. Thousands were thrown into prison, along with Gandhi. People all over the world learned about Gandhi fighting for India's independence from this march (Wilkinson 50).

People collected salt all over India's shoreline, which is 3500 miles long. Even Indian women, who barely ever took part in protests at the time, went to the beach and gathered salt (Severance 88-90). The Salt March lasted from March to April 1930, and within this time, Gandhi and his followers walked 240 miles. About 60,000 people were arrested during the march, and Gandhi was imprisoned on May 5. Despite Gandhi not being there, the acts of Satyagraha continued ("Salt March").

Since Gandhi was in prison at the time, Mrs. Sarojini Naidu lead a march to take over the Dharasana Saltworks. When they reached there, they were attacked by many policemen. They did not even protect themselves due to the practice of Satyagraha. This was a true act of non-violence (Severance 92-93). This march occurred on May 2, and there were over 2500 marchers on this day. The march to the Dharasana Saltworks resulted in people all over the world fighting for India's independence ("Salt March").

By setting an example in South Africa, and through his work in India, Gandhi helped India become independent. He fought very hard by using Satyagraha for Indians to be treated fairly in South Africa. He also used Satyagraha in India, trying to gain India's independence. Furthermore, he initiated the Salt March, which really made an impact on the freedom of India. Through these efforts, India became independent on August 15, 1947. Gandhi also changed the world with these acts of non-violence. Many leaders, such as Martin Luther King Jr., only knew about the teaching of non-violence because of Gandhi. Essentially, the work of Gandhi influenced many leaders' thoughts on non-violence and the way we think of freedom today.

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You are not alone! But do not be left behind!

By Anantha Vijay R Santhanam

Disclaimer: All opinions and information presented in this article are those of the author only. Regardless of your opinion of the article, either stupid or brilliant, the author is interested to hear your comments and can be reached at savraghavan@gmail.com.

One of my critics pointed out that I am getting old in thoughts, and I do not connect with the *Junta*. In the past, I have quoted from *Ramayana*, *Bhagavad Gita* and the *Upanishads*. As an author, I have to quote, and for this article, my inspiration is Bollywood. All I wanted to convey through this article has been conveyed through the song depicted below by Amitabh Bhattacharya.



मेहरबानी नहीं तुम्हारा प्यार माँगा है
तुम्हें मंजूर है तभी तो यार माँगा है
गैरों के डर से तेरे शहर से
है कसम रिश्ता तोड़ूँ ना
तेरा रास्ता मैं छोड़ूँ ना
तेरा रास्ता मैं छोड़ूँ ना

Translation

I have not asked for a favor, but your love..
Since you agree, that's why only I have asked..
Just because of the fear of others,
With your city, I'll not break my relation, I swear..
I'll not let you go...
I'll not let you go...

Amitabh Bhattacharya, *Chennai Express*

Now you may be wondering - why did I write this article in *Samarpan*? If you are reading this issue of *Samarpan*, including my article, I would like to extend my heartiest appreciation and acknowledgment for the same. The team of *Samarpan* is unique; we did not come together because we wanted to show our writing/editing talent, rather we want to use the print/online media and bring this community together. In this process, we do convey the goals and objectives of the Hindu Samaj in Rochester, and bring everyone under one roof, i.e., our Temple. The theme of this article has been resonating in the minds of many Editorial board members as well. I felt that there is no right or wrong way to present the crux of the matter, and hence I decided to voice my opinion (please read the Disclaimer).



You are not alone! But do not be left behind!

By Anantha Vijay R Santhanam

कब तक छुप बैठे, अब तो कुछ है बोलना
कुछ तुम बोलो, कुछ हम बोले, ओ ढोलना

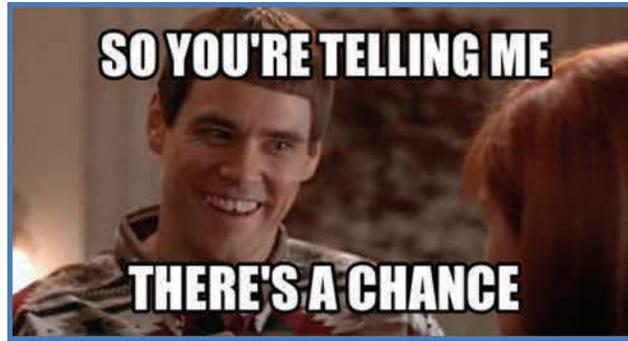
Translation

How long should we sit quietly, it is time to speak up
You say something, let me say something; (let's discuss!)

Anand Bakshi, *Dil to Paagal Hai*

Let me get to the core of this article.

What is the biggest expectation that every one of the devotees has while stepping in to our temple? I think, for most, the expectation is to connect with the Lord in the same way he/she connected in their youth or during any stage of their realization of the Supreme. Some were inspired by their parents' devotional service, some were transformed by Lord Venkateswara at Tirumala, some underwent fasting or other penances to distance themselves from the material body, while some others simply embraced God for GOD. However, it is my opinion that most of the devotees in our temple feel that they are not getting the vibes, as they were in their favorite Indian temples. This raises an important question: How should I approach the Gods in this temple so as to make the connection to my GOD? If you have had such a question in your mind, I would like to assure that **YOU ARE NOT ALONE**. Now, the answer: **FALL IN LOVE**. Just as you would have to keep trying to woo the significant other, you need to do the same here. However, I would like to take this opportunity to suggest that please participate. If you stop trying, the gap will widen. But if you keep trying, you will see the change soon.



Jim Carey, *Dumb and Dumber*

As mentioned before, this issue has resonated in *Samarpan's* discussion forum. This is what we tell each other. While some of our religious/spiritual preceptors in India have abstained from going out of their temples to pray to their respective Gods, we are not in a position to do so. We have stepped out from one home to another home. We are like the *bahus* in *saasu-ma ki ghar* (daughter-in law in the territory of the mother-in-law). Eventually, this field will turn out to be comfortable. Now, why would I say that?



You are not alone! But do not be left behind!

By Anantha Vijay R Santhanam

Now, I would not be surprised if people in our community question the regional dominance of the deities in our temple. Is it true that our temple is a South Indian temple? **The short answer is NO.** This is where the challenge of building a temple comes in. The practices in designing a deity are still intact in South India, and so most of the deities come from there. So, the challenge that exists in our temple is this: **how do we make all devotees see their Gods in the existing deities? How do we overcome the prejudice that gets built in the opinions of the visitor?**

A possible solution to this complex issue could be obtained by including different methods of devotion to be practiced in our temple. I am not suggesting that the existing practices be changed; rather I request devotees to practice devotion in the same way that they would be doing in their favorite temple. Some of my suggestions are:

Dress in the same traditional way, as you would in India or wherever you are from;

Sing *shlokhas* in your language (after the Priest is done with his service);

Bring your favorite *Prasaad* to share;

More importantly, bring your friends who share your way of praying. This will strengthen the *Bhakti*.

Please write in *Samarpan* about your way of worship. The entire community will understand the principles behind each practice.

Take leadership role in organizing the entire *Puja* for your favorite God on your favorite auspicious day. The temple board is always ready to help.

Come to the temple regularly. You will be noticed, and you will make the change.

In my humble opinion, I want all devotees to embrace the existing deities as Their Old Friend/Guru/Mentor/Guide/Strength/God in whatever form you want to associate with Him/Her.



शीशे के ख्वाब लेखे, रातों में चल रहा हूँ
टकरा ना जाऊँ कहीं, आशा की लौ है रोशन, फिर भी तूफान का डर है
लौ भुज ना जाए कहीं, बस एक हाँ की गुज़ारिश
फिर होगी खुशियों की बारिश

Translation

Taking along dreams made of glass, I'm walking in the nights,
I hope I don't collide somewhere..
Although the flame of hope is lighted, I fear a storm..
I hope the flame doesn't get extinguished..
Just one request for your yes, then there will be a rain of joys..

Prasoon Joshi, *Ghajini*

Please participate.

You are not alone! But do not be left behind!

Sathya Sai Parenting

By Chandu Valluri

“When there is righteousness in the heart,
There is beauty in the character.
When there is beauty in the character,
There is harmony in the home.
When there is harmony in the home,
There is order in the nation.
When there is order in the nation,
There is peace in the world.” - Sri Sathya Sai Baba



The primary responsibility of parents is to mould the character of their children. Character is something that is taught on a day to day basis. Character determines who and what type of person we are. It is the fibre of one's personality and involves the development of the child's conscience. Developing character takes place by teaching through example. Parents must set this example. It is about practicing what we all preach.

Words that are not enforced by the ropes of discipline fall away. To build character, children need love-arguably tough love, enough of it to allow them to realize the consequences of their actions. As parents we must walk the fine line of law and love. Fathers cannot be like Dhritarashtra who accepted anything that his children did. Unintelligent affection and indiscriminate freedom are very dangerous. Correcting children and having them understand their mistakes is essential. From the time they are born until they mature parents are their conscience. The sooner they learn to trust our judgment, the more cooperation we may have.

As children begin to toddle, their words and actions begin to challenge and test us more. It's a battle between our conscience and their desires. Our will against theirs. The sooner we let them know who's in charge, the easier our job in the future will be. Inconsistency allows them to think they can have their own way. The more we give in, the more they will test. Inconsistency gives them greater control. Our job becomes harder each time we give in. We need to be consistent. Both parents must stand united. Repetition habituates the behavior.

Due to increased pressures, more and more parents seek to be friends with their children. Some parents even fear establishing rules for their children. It is common for parents to give free rein to their children instead of establishing ground rules. Some children control their parents. It is not uncommon for parents to say: "I'm with my child so little that I don't want to spend it disciplining them. I'd rather be their friend; I want to spend our quality time doing something together that is fun. It takes too much time to correct my child and enforce discipline. I'm too tired to deal with it"

This type of behavior can lead the child to control us. A child is not our peer. We are their guardians entrusted by God to see to their physical, spiritual and moral development. Parents must be guarded in sharing their feelings with their children. Too much sharing and openness can result in the loss of power.

“Too much freedom should not be given out of excessive affection. Children should be taught to exercise self-restraint and observe discipline in their daily life. If parents are negligent in bringing up children in their most tender years, it will not be easy to correct them later on”

Many argue that our society has lost its moral fibre due to an emphasis on enhancing our material well-being. More toys, more videogames, newer cars, bigger homes more things to please ourselves and fulfill our desires. It's about keeping up with the Jones. Excessive physical comforts have pampered our children into indolence. They only want more. Me Me Me... Why? We have not taught ourselves or them how to apply the brake of self-discipline. As a result, it has cheated and impaired their spiritual character. Spoiling them materially has made them weak morally. We buy items to tell our children how much we love them. We reward them with gifts if they study well, do a chore or correct a negative behavior. We are controlling them with rewards. As materialism increases, morality goes down. It's not always about giving. Children need to appreciate and value what is given. They need to be taught to earn by hard work the things that they seek. Simple living high thinking is most critical.

A major barrier to our growth lies in the tendency to compare oneself with others. This is very wrong. No two things are completely identical. Even twins grow in distinct ways of life. Furthermore, we are also in the habit of justifying our faults, rationalizing our errors and avoiding the responsibility of facing them squarely and correcting for them. We need to change this in ourselves and in our children.

Are we teaching our children that their actions are the building blocks of integrity, responsibility, honesty, honor, respect and humility? If children do not learn to accept the consequences of their actions and live with the expectation that parents will cover up their mistakes they will be spiritually stagnate. This lesson begins from birth and needs to be emphasized in childhood. If parents wait until they are teenagers, we may be trying to control a loose cannon.

The task of raising children has become increasingly more complex due to the influence of peers, strangers, television the internet etc. Many of these spheres of influence do not necessarily uphold household values. When children reach puberty, parents do not always know what is happening in the life of their teenager or college kid.



Sathya Sai Parenting

By Chandu Valluri

So what can be done?

Minimize Television, Computer and Video Games. Television is a type of poison. Teach them to embrace healthy habits. Embrace these habits together as a family. Read books. A good book makes for a good mind. Remember Family rules apply to everyone, not just them.

ABC-Avoid Bad Company. It was Einstein who said "Tell me your company and I will tell you who you are."

Know their Friends and become friends with their parents. Once they see you interact with their friends and socialize with their friend's parents you all become further connected. This is a great way to know what is going on and keep a pulse in your children's lives.

Have them find mentors and other good role models. Every now and then they need to hear what you have to say from others.

A family that prays together stays together. Have faith in the Divine. Without faith nothing can be achieved. Engage the family in noble pursuits like community service. Hands that pray are holier than lips that pray. This needs to be a regular family affair.

Have Gratitude. Be grateful for all that is received.

Let them learn about their heritage. Show them India. Let them get a sense of appreciation of their ethnicity and life in a developing country. They need to be exposed to the realities of life and make connections with family and friends as a process to finding their place in the world.

Eat as a Family. Have conversations. Keep the channel of communication open.

Give them your Time. Time is a very precious commodity. Once lost, it can never be regained. Make sure they know that they always come first.

They should not need to book a time to meet with you.

Seek to raise a well-rounded individual. It's not just about getting into professional school and making a living. Cultivate Good Values and encourage them to lead purposeful lives.

For additional information please refer to:

Sathya Sai Parenting Volume 1 and 2 by Rita Bruce

I remember my mother's prayers and they have always followed me. They have clung to me all my life.

Abraham Lincoln

A suburban mother's role is to deliver children obstetrically once, and by car forever after. ~Peter De Vries

The phrase "working mother" is redundant. ~Jane Sellman

A man loves his sweetheart the most, his wife the best, but his mother the longest. ~Irish Proverb

Any man can be a father. It takes someone special to be a dad. ~Author Unknown

The greatest thing a FATHER can do to his children, is to love their mother.

- Anjaneth Garcia Untalan





Holi Mela Pictures





Holi Mela Pictures



Quiz

By Aanmehan (Father of Bhaskar Iyengar)

One of the fundamental contributions from the Indian Continent is the concept and practice of Yoga. And one of the eminent texts – the Bhagavat Gita – contains elaborate expositions on Yoga. The following Quiz is intended to familiarize us with yoga and Bhagavat Gita.



1. Who composed Bhagavat Gita?

- VYASA
- KRISHNA
- ARJUNA
- NARADA

2. Who told Gita to whom and where?

- Krishna to Arjuna on the Battle Field
- Narada to Prahlada in the forest
- Vashishta to Rama in Ayodhya
- C .Narayana to Narada in Vaikunta



3. In what language is the Gita composed?

- Hindi
- English
- Tamil
- Sanskrit

4. Who translated Gita in English?

- Bernard Shaw
- Arthur Arnold
- Annie Besant
- Vivekananda

5. The quint-essential verse from Gita selected by Ramana Maharishi is:

- Aham Atma ... (I am the atma ...)
- Yatra Yogeshwara Krishno ... (Where ever Krishna is)
- Karmanyeva Adhikaaraste ... (You have the obligation to rightful action ...)
- Paritranaaya Saadhunaam ... (To save mankind ...)



6. Yoga is

- Influenced by planets
- Opportunity in life
- Joining of soul with God
- Physical poses

7 Bhakti Yoga is

- To love your personal deity
- To love God is to love all
- To worship idols
- To see God in humans

If you would like to contribute to this column please email

editors@histemplemn.org

with the title "Food for Thought". Contributions should reach 45 days in advance of the issue being published.

The first correct respondent will receive a movie gift card.

8. Karma Yoga is

- Service to humanity
- Physical service to God
- Service as duty
- Detached actions

9. Gnaan Yoga is

- Realizing God through reasoning
- Seeing God as self in all
- Understanding through spiritual arguments
- To uplift oneself from ignorance





Quiz

By Aanmehan (Father of Bhaskar Iyengar)

- 10. Raja Yoga is
 - Kundalini Raising through spinal centers
 - Doing Pranaayaams
 - Doing Om Saadhana
 - Vedanta technology practices

Sheela Seetamsetty is the winner of a gift card for Wehrenberg theatres. Congratulations!!!

- 11. Kriya Yoga is
 - A breathing exercise involving inhaling and exhaling
 - Hastening evolution by a shortcut method
 - Discovered by Babaaji
 - Taught in the US by Yogananda



- 12. God is defined as
 - God is All (visvam)
 - Known as God (kesava)
 - All Pervasive (vishnu)
 - Lord (prabhu)

Lighter side of life

By Unni



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