



DEEPAM

Volume 22, Issue 2

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Deepam Deepamali

13010 Arbor Street, Omaha, NE, 68144

Hindu Temple



hindu temple
Omaha, Nebraska

presents

Deepavali 2013

November 2nd & 3rd

Venue: Hindu Temple



November 2nd-Saturday

Lakshmi Puja: 6.30PM to 7.15PM

Goddess Lakshmi Aarti: 7.15PM

Lord Ganesha Aarti: 7.30PM

Fireworks: 7.45PM

(Children are welcome for witnessing fireworks)

November 3rd-Sunday

Cultural Program: 4.00PM to 6.30PM

Raffle: 6.30PM to 7.00PM

Dinner: 7.00PM

Dinner sponsored by
Telugu Samiti of Nebraska

Raffle Prizes

I Prize: \$1000 in cash/II Prize: iPad(\$500 value)

III Prize: iPod(\$250 value)/IV Prize(3each): \$100 grocery

V Prize(3each): Dinner for couple/VI Prize(3each): Yoga Session

VII Prize(10 each): Ticket for a movie

Puja & Celebrations Contact:

Rakesh Singh-292 3790; Shantaram Joshi-965 9777; Gowridhar Madhu-305 7349

Sundar Chokkara-393 3484; Deepa Kashyap-932 7395; Suresh Seshadri-894 4918

Prem Arora-714 2836

Raffle Contact: Ram Bishu-202 6987; Alekha Dash-492 9707;

Anil Bhalla-333 6607; Chandrasekhar-812 5654

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Respected Devotees,

Namaste!

Aum Shri Ganeshaya Namah!

It is my pleasure to be part of one of the busiest religious season of our temple. Numerous enthusiastic devotees participated in Shri Maharudra Yagnam, Shri Ganesh Chaturthi, Navaratri pujas, Chandi Homam and numerous religious celebrations and we expect the same for Diwali festivities. On behalf of the Hindu Temple, we wish that the festival of lights bring Happiness, Peace, and contentment for all. As the holy occasion of Diwali is here and the atmosphere is filled with the spirit of joy and love, here's hoping the sparkles of serenity stay with us through the year ahead.

The temple expansion, renovation and remodeling project to facilitate the religious, spiritual, educational, cultural, and social activities of our community completed on schedule and we had busiest cultural activities season to date. Additionally, we are continuously renovating, updating and remodeling our prayer hall and outdoor facilities to provide best experience for your temple visits. More important we have initiated the preparations for Mahakumbhabhisekam 2015 (MKA2015). Though our temple is built in the best traditional design with best materials, it needs renovation or repair after some time. Such renovations are usually done once in twelve years when **Mahakumbhaabhishekams** are performed by devotees to: 1) renew and reaffirm their faith and dedication to the temple; and 2) to re-vitalize their connection to the divine.

With the grace of Lord Prasanna Ganapati, all the religious, spiritual, and educational activities are running smoothly with the help of countless volunteers, dedication of our priests, temple sevak and our spirited devotees. Most of our regularly scheduled events and classes, including Balvihar classes with highest enrollment, are currently taking place in our renovated facilities. I want to re-emphasize the significance of our volunteers; their devotion and selfless efforts that are responsible for running the daily activities of our temple. It is my earnest request again to all those who would want to get involved in volunteering, to kindly send an email to our Volunteers and Welcome Committee (htom.volunteers@gmail.com).

In addition to our regular activities, the Temple Tours and Public Relation committee conducts tours and various educational services for Groups visiting our temple. We have witnessed an enormous increase in the num-



ber of temple tours and again, despite our limited personnel and resource availability, however, with the help of our strong and dedicated volunteer group, the Temple Tours and Public Relation committee is managing it magnificently.

We aspire to reach all of our community members through electronic media and/or regular post. While our temple continues to fulfill the religious, spiritual, cultural, educational, and humanitarian needs of our community, in order to reach our community and beyond, we need to develop better communication tools. We request you to please visit our website (<http://www.htom.org/>), register yourself to receive mails and updates, and "Like" us on Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/HinduTemple.Omaha.Nebraska>).

On behalf of Hindu Temple Executive Committee, I thank all the volunteers, contributors, sponsors and our Publication Committee who helped in bringing this special issue of Deepam (Deepavali Edition). As we celebrate our festival of lights, I wish you all a very happy Diwali season. May the divine light bring peace, prosperity, health and happiness to you and yours, today and always!

I appreciate your continued support to our temple. Your suggestions are always welcome.

Always seeking the blessings of Lord Prasanna Ganapati,

Rakesh K. Singh

Dr. Rakesh K. Singh

President, Executive Committee

htom.rsingh@gmail.com

MESSAGE FROM CHAIRMAN

Aashwayuja, Krishna Paksh, Dasami
Vijaya Samvatsaram
(October 28, 2013)

Namaskar!

I am honored to be a part of Hindu Temple Administration and want to thank you all for putting your trust in me to be Chairman of the Board of Trustees this year. The former Administration did an excellent job in meeting the overall goals of the Hindu Temple in the past year especially with the construction of the new Social Hall. This needed and long-awaited project would not have been completed without the help and cooperation from you all. I would especially like to thank the President and the Chair of the Board who worked very hard in managing the operations and finances of this very important project. This progress has given us ample room for important classes to take place such as Balvihar and youth group. Our young generation can learn a lot from our volunteer teachers who are doing an excellent job in teaching children our mother language as well as our culture. This is the best time for them to learn it and now we have a dedicated place for these opportunities. Please share my appreciation for their superb work along with all the volunteers who made this possible.

I want to assure you all that I will do my best to continue these successes for this year. *With the cooperation of the President sahib, will work with our experienced and valuable Panditji so all religious activities are performed properly and will see that the relationship between Panditjis and community is good .*

We are fortunate that Rakeshji has remained as president this year. He has done an excellent job in his previous year and will keep up the same momentum. I have had the opportunity of working together with Rakeshji over the past few days and I am looking forward to the opportunity to lead the Temple Administration together with him this year. We definitely need the guidance from past Chair Joshi sahib and others to tackle some of the activities. The indianization of the social hall will be accomplished in the very near future. I would like to recognize Dr. Naresh Dewan who did a great job in managing the Fund Raising portfolio for so many years. We are excited to have Dr. Arun Sharma as this year's Fund Raising Chair. We all need to provide him our support in achieving our goal of making our Temple debt free. Everyone's help and cooperation in making us achieve this goal would be greatly appreciated. I am also fortunate that Dr. Sanjay Singh is continuing as



Chair of our Long Range Planning committee. He has been working on Vision 2020 and will set up excellent path for us.

I would like to thank everyone who was involved in the Maharudram performance during Labor Day weekend. It was performed very systematically and flawless. It was a gala success function with the help of all of the amazing volunteers. A large part of the credit goes to the Chair of Puja committee and his team, Bishu sahib and volunteers. May God bless you all for your hard work and devotion. I would like to thank everyone for making this function successful. We have another important function in 2015, Mahakumbavishakum, and will prepare to perform that function successfully as well.

In the end, I will request everyone to work together for the betterment of our distinguished Temple in the Midwest as well as in the entire United States. May God bless you all.

Prem Aurora
Chairman, Board of Trustees



COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Priest: Pundit Vidya Shankar,
Pundit Damodara Bhattar
Sevak: Chandrasekhar Karmegam

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

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Past President: **Phani Tej Adidam**
402-679-0063

COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSONS

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402- 980-2919
Finance: **VT Ramakrishnan** 402-493-2931
Education: **Rajesh Sharma**
Cultural: **Deepa Kashyap**
Mahaprasad: **Gowridhar Madu**
Facility Maintenance: **Srinivas Mallipudi**
Publications: **Babu Guda**

IT Management: **Kameswara Rao Myneni & Vitthala R**

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Volunteer and Welcome: **Sundara Chokkara**

Youth and Community Relation: **Alekha Das**

Personnel & Resource Management: **Ambika Jayaram**

Nomination: **Phani Tej Adidam**

Vedantic Center of Nebraska: **Phani Tej Adidam**

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

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Long Range Planning: **Sanjay Singh**

Past Chairperson: **Shantaram Joshi**

FINANCIAL REPORT

Hindu Temple, Omaha NE (May 2013 thru Sep 2013)

INFLOW		OUTFLOW	
Hundi collections cash	\$28,008	Operating expenses	\$56,004
Direct deposits	\$7,970	Staff expenses	\$22,175
Puja services	\$38,255	Priest expenses	\$52,321
Capital Pledge (hall expansion)	\$49,048	Towards construction project	\$204,345
Non-pledged donations	\$23,878	Other events	\$64,529
Sponsored/event donations	\$133,550	Mortgage interest	\$8,428
Other events	\$14,292	Towards Mortgage/payoff	\$47,024
From mortgage	\$100,000	Charitable contributions	\$1,525
Total inflow	\$395,001	Total outflow	\$456,351

----- Balances As of September 30,2013 -----

Balance owed on Mortgage/Short-term line of credit : \$426,846

Operating Account Balance : \$41,407

Savings (Endowment) balance : \$97,622

Social hall expansion Project cost : \$1,225,953

INTERESTED ??? Are you on the Hindu Temple e-mail mailing list ? If you would like to be included, please send an e-mail with your e-mail information to htom.reachus@gmail.com . Also please give us your current address if you have moved.

Use the pledge form here to support your Hindu Temple on a regular basis :

HINDU TEMPLE P L E D G E F O R M 2013

We offer automatic bank withdrawal. If you want to sign up for this, please attach a voided check of your bank account. We will then start an automatic process to debit your account on a monthly basis, thus making it easier for you.

Name(s): _____

Address: _____

Phone/ e-mail _____

Pledge Amount: _____ Monthly Start Date: _____

(\$200 or \$100 or \$50 or \$25 or other amount per month as per your wish)

Signature & Date : _____

Drop this form & voided check in the Temple hundi.

Or

Hand over to a Temple volunteer

Belief in Existence of God, but not Idol Worship. How to guide?

Contributed by Janakbhai R. Dave

In Hinduism idol or image worship is just initiation into the belief in a Supreme Power from which all creations emerged, exist and merge back.

It can be compared to initiating into learning by starting with the alphabets and slowly progressing as a master of the subject. There has to be a beginning for everything. One cannot join a race without following the basic principles. The question "Why follow the principles when I am ready to partake in the race?" is immature and thereby one fails to be a good athlete. When one systematically progresses in his study of scriptures, he/she will understand how significant or insignificant the idol/image worship was. In Sanatana Dharma in its highest form there is no name, form, attributes etc. But to realize this there is a long way to go by studying the scriptures carefully with attention interest and sincerity. As a youngster I too was of the mind-set, but before accepting or rejecting the concept I took the pain of understanding the principles underlying idol/image worship because even great Saints like Adi Shankaracharya, Ramakrishna Paramahansa, Swami Vivekananda, Swami Chinmayananda, Bhagavan Ramana Maharshi etc. have not talked against idol/image worship and in their teachings encouraged to start with idol worship. Moreover, idol/image worship is like the lower rung of the ladder without which we cannot hope to reach higher level in our spiritual quest.

Though idol worship as a mark & symbol to almighty as it is difficult to pray and focus on intangible/invisible/abstract. It takes time for normal/common man like us to go to higher planes and be with formless God. Our interfaces have become limited. Therefore all these mean(s) (Pooja/Vibhuti/IdolWorship/hawan etc)" are to basically generate confidence in abstract concept of God using the forms and not an end in themselves. If someone, by default, has a faith/trust/confidence in almighty or all that is felt by "sensory organs" as a

form/presence of God on sustained basis, it is much better. Therefore, I feel kids should not be forced as long as they have basic spiritual approach & values towards life.

When to follow a ritual –"Achar"- should not think what I get, what benefit I will have. It is the best foolish though. I should think what I loose when I do not follow the ritual. Rituals are the backbone of Hinduism. When I wear the sacred thread -janov- , when I apply Vibhuti, when I apply Chandan, when I wear the saffron dress, all these things, prevent me from doing even petty wrong things. Remember, Ravan appeared in front of Sita in saffron dress, rudraksha, bhasma/vibhuti, kamandalu etc., exactly in the dress of a saint/Sanyaasi. But, before Ravan forcefully took Sita, he had to come down to his own original dressings and appearance as Raakshasa. *The sacred things prevent man to commit wrong doings.*

Those who have reached at the top of spirituality, there is no idol, there is no ritual. Their life and experience itself is the ritual and worship. Sanakaracharya was and is the primary personality counted in the Bharateeya Spiritual arena Remember, Sankaracharya made a number of temples, did poojas and also prescribed the rules for that temples and a number of temples in this country. Ramakrishna Paramhansa, Swami Prabhupad and innumerable Achaaryas were idol worshipers. At one point we quote these pure souls and at other point we argue that these idols worship is not necessary. It is all waste and useless talks, especially at the present time. If one does not have any picture of an Idol in mind, his mind will definitely wander elsewhere. Those who can realize the `self' without any sign, he is a pure soul. One should make such young boys and girls understand what the Dharma will lose if we do not follow the rituals and rules.

Karma, Freewill and Desire

Contributed by Ram Bishu

"My mom, personification of goodliness, suffered for four years because of cancer before dying" "My friend (26 year old lad) told me at 6.45 PM that he should be coming at 7pm and has a fatal accident at 6.55pm" "This person, the only harmless thing he does is when sleeping, always schemes at other times is perhaps the happiest and most endowed person in the world"

Why do these happen? This perhaps is the most asked question of the contemporary saints (Amma, or Appaji, or Shri Shri Ravishanker or Paramacharya or Ramana Maharishi).

KARMA is the reply. What is Karma? The basic Hindu model is the every action you do or think is either a reaction (debit of a past credit) or an action which will be credited in your bank for a future debit

"Karma is a Sanskrit word springing from the root "Kri" - "to do" or "to make" or more simply, "action". The deeper meaning of Karma can be described as an infinite chain of the results of action that is perceived and performed. Karma is a concept of wisdom, based on the Ancient Vedas and Upanishads, which explains a system where beneficial events are derived from past beneficial actions and harmful events from past harmful actions, creating a chain of actions and reactions throughout a person's reincarnated lives.

When we talk about "Our Karma" we're talking about the actions we've "sown" or performed in the past (including our past lives) that are the cause of what we "reap" in our

current life situation. This either becomes our Karmic Burden or Karmic Baggage or our Karmic Blessing depending on whether we've performed positive or negative actions in the past

Karma is primarily of four kinds, one being overall debt while other three are different types

1. **Sanchita Karma** (Sum Total Karma or "Accumulated actions") Sanchita Karma is the vast store of piled-up Karma accumulated in the preceding and in all other previous births and yet to be resolved. In other words, it is the aggregate sum of yet unseen Karmas committed during innumerable previous existences. This is your total cosmic debt. Every moment of your every day, you are either adding to it or you are reducing this cosmic debt. It is waiting to be fulfilled in your future births. So unless and until the Sanchita Karma of a Soul is zeroed, it keeps on birthing in new physical bodies, in order to exhaust its balance Sanchita Karma.

2. **Praarabdha Karma** (Fructifying Karma or "Actions began; set in motion") That portion of the Sanchita Karma destined to influence human life in one or the present incarnation is called PraarabdhaKarma

3. **Kriyamana Karma** (Instant, Current Karma or "Being made) Kriyamana Karma is the daily, instant Karma created in this lifetime and that we create in our life because of our free actions. It refers to those which are currently in front of us to decide or act on. This contributes to our Future Karma in a big way. They can also be worked off immediately.

4. **Aagami Karma** (Future Karma) Aagami Karma is the Karmic Map that is coming, as a result of the merits and demerits of the present actions of your current birth. In other words, it is the portion of Karma that is created because of the actions in the present life and that will be added to your Sanchita Karma. "

***The above descriptions are taken from web**

Where does this leave us? If we do not subscribe to this model, then that is the end of story. However, if you contribute to this model, then you will realize that Kriyamana and Agami karma is something totally under our control and has to be dispensed with judiciously. What you see as karma today are FREEWILL of your past lives. Scripture tells us that , if we are serious, then there are

methods to do this.

Use your FREEWILL for events like selfless service, dharmic deeds etc. You have to realize that every action you do contributes or fructifies your karma. The root cause for action is your thoughts. The root cause for thoughts is DESIRE. The problem is desire can be both physical or mental. Very few people realize this.

Therefore the take home message is that to minimize desires and try to live dharmically. I am not saying you should not have ambition. Have ambition but do not be a paranoid

**God bless you all
Ram Bishu**

MAHARUDRA IS OVER. WHAT NEXT? KUMBHABHISHEKAM 2015

We have come a long way. From a janmashtami function in Aug 1992, to a small meeting in Mr. Nijahwan's house in Dec 1992 to a temple now. We have a full-fledged temple that has been the umbrella for various educational, spiritual, and social activities. We have been blessed with having right kind of people at right time and in right place to achieve the progress.

We have gone through DEVALAYA GRAHAPRAVESA in Dec 1994, MAHAKUMBABHISHEKA in June 2003, RAJAGOPURA KUMBHAAHISHEKA in 2004, AYYAPPA KUMBHABHISHEKA in 2007 and finally MAHARUDRA in 2013. We should be rightfully proud that each event has outperformed its predecessor.

What next? It is the KUMBHABHISHEKA in 2015, twelve years after inception.

"Aagama sastras ordain performance of a "Punaruddhaarana" (rejuvenation) Kumbhaabhishekhama of every temple once in twelve years. Sometimes, major repair works have to be carried out to the temple. Then it is called "Jeernoddhaarana Kumbhaabhishekam" (repair and restoration). Through unintended deficiencies

(apacharaas) while conducting poojas to the installed deities or due to deficiencies in the absolute merits and physical purity of the performing priests or in the improper pronunciation and intonations of reciting the mantras prescribed or a host of other related factors, the installed idol's omnipotence (saannidhya) gets progressively diminished and demand rejuvenation or restoration, even if there is no major repair work. "

Therefore as per the Agama sastra, we will be performing our twelfth year Kumbhaabhisheka in 2015. It is expected to be a three or four day affair. It is expected to be definitely in uttarayana (By June 20 latest). As usual in this function religious rigor will not be compromised. There will also be some cultural component to the event

Like in past we hope all of you (devotees) will make the function a great success and be enriched by blessings of Prasanna Ganapathy

**Ram Bishu
Puja Committee**

The Wedding of Bhagawan Shri Krishna and Shri Radhaji

By Sanjay P. Singh, MD

As with all my writings in the past, this is meant for the youth and the uninitiated. There are always questions raised by our community members about Lord Krishna & Radha's wedding, as is celebrated during the Radha Kalyanam. Thus I have made this attempt to clarify the issue with scriptural citations.

Lord Krishna and Radhaji's wedding is described at two places in our dharma texts. These also provide us an insight into the true nature of Radha Rani.

Shri Garg Sanhita Canto 1 Chapter 16 & Brahma Vaivarta Purana - Chapter 15

Shri Naradji spoke to saintly-hearted king of Mithila Raja Bahulashva. And I paraphrase:

'Nandji took his infant son Krishna into the Bhandir forest. By Krishna's leela the clouds got dark and a frightening weather system came upon them. Then the infant Krishna started crying. Nandji became fearful and took refuge in Lord Hari. Then there appeared brightness greater than a million suns and then Vrishabhanu's daughter the divine Radha Rani appeared. Overwhelmed by her divine magnanimity Nandji bowed to her with folded hands and said "He is the original Supreme Personality of Godhead, and You, O Radha, are His first beloved, I have heard this from Garg Muni. I also know that this boy is the infallible Supreme Personality of Godhead. I offer my respectful obeisance to You. Please protect me in this world. You are Krishna's dear most. You are beyond the modes of material nature."'

Then Radhaji asked Nandji to ask for a boon as he is a noble soul and tells him that he is indeed fortunate to have seen her divine form. Nandji then asks for bhakti at the lotus feet of the two of them for millenni-

ums. This is the most supreme blessing anyone can ask for as mentioned in the Ram-charitmanas: *where Kakabhundi is told by the Lord to ask for any boon - any siddhi, riddhi, gyan, vigyan, wealth, immortality. But KakaBhundi tells the Lord that he does not want any of these but desires that the Lord grant him that devotion of his Lotus feet, uninterrupted and unalloyed, which the Vedas and Puranas extol, which is sought after by sages and great yogis but attained by few and that too by Lord's grace. The Lord grants him his boon and also says that this is the fountain of all blessings, the greatest boon of all (Uttara Kanda; verse 83-85).*

Then Radhaji takes infant Krishna from Nandji. Nandji leaves the Bhandir forest. Then Bhandir forest turns into Goloka. Then the Lord assumes the form of a teenage Krishna and takes Radha Rani to the wedding pavilion. Then Lord Brahma himself appears to perform their wedding. Before this he pays his respects to them and recounts Radha's forms as Sita, Lakshmi, etc. He also says that when the Lord is parambrahman she is prakriti and when he is Mahat-tava, from which the universes have sprouted, she is the potency Maya. Brahma also said that anyone who recites prayers describing the divine couple will go to the transcendental abode of Goloka.

Then Brahma rose, ignited the sacred fire, and performed the Vedic wedding-ceremony of the divine couple. Brahma did the kanyadaan of Shri Radha during this divine wedding of Radha and Krishna. The Lord then asked Brahma to ask for his dakshina, Brahma being the paramgyani (having divine knowledge) asked for bhakti of their lotus feet. He was granted his wish and he left for his divine abode.

Continued

Shri Garg Sanhita Canto 3 Chapters 5-6

In chapter 5 the vrajavasis speak to King Vrishabhanu about getting his daughter married as she is now of the right age. The King then tells them about Garg Muni's words that she is the divine consort of the supreme Lord and she will get married to Shri Krishna the supreme Lord himself in Bhandir forest and the ceremony will be conducted by Lord Brahma.

In chapter 6 the Vrajavasis tell King Vrishabhanu about how wealthy he is and asked him to test and see if Krishna is that supreme godhead that Garg Muni had said that he was. So upon this request King Vrishabhanu sends ten million necklaces of giant pearls to Nandji with the proposal for his son's marriage.

Nandji & Yashoda ma seeing these necklaces got very worried as they thought "if we do not give a proper gift we will be embarrassed before everyone. Everyone will laugh at us. What should we do? What can we give on the occasion of Shri Krishna's wedding?".

Lord Krishna, the savior from distress, took one hundred of the pearl necklaces and, with his own hand, planted the pearls one by one as if he were a farmer planting grains. Shri Nandji then finds these necklaces missing. He then asks Shri Krishna if he took these 100 necklaces. Krishna told him that he had planted them in the fields, as they were farmers. Nandji while rebuking Krishna asked him to take him there so he may retrieve those necklaces. Then upon reaching the fields they saw hundreds of beautiful, tall, green-leaved pearl trees. And in them there were millions upon millions of bunches of pearls shining like many stars in the sky. Nandji sent these to King Vrishabhanu and all realized that Shri Krishna is the Supreme Lord himself. The place where Krishna sowed the pearls is the Mukta-Sarovara and donation of pearls here

is considered very auspicious.

In chapter five there is also an insightful explanation of the word 'Krishna'. So these two scriptural descriptions clearly describe the wedding of Lord Krishna and Radha Rani in Bhandir forest.

Watch your thoughts
they become words
Watch your words
they become actions
Watch your actions
they become habits
Watch your habits
they become character
Watch your character
it becomes your

Destiny

—Author unknown

Hard work
beats talent
when talent
doesn't work hard

—Author unknown

The Guru — The Gobind

Jitender Singh Deogun

“Guru” is one of the Fundamental (core) concepts, propagated by all Indian Dharmas. Advaya Taraka upanishad अदव्यतारक उपनिषद् traces the etymology of the word “Guru” in the following shloka:

गुशब्दस्त्वन्धकारः स्यात् रुशब्दस्तन्निरोधकः ॥

अन्धकारनिरोधित्वात् गुरुरित्यभिधीयते ॥

The root “gu” in guru means darkness, and the root “ru” means the dispeller of the darkness. Thus, guru means a spiritual guide who dispels the darkness. Guru Nanak says;

जे सऊ चंदा ऊगवहि सूरज चडहि हजार ॥

ऐते चानण होदिआँ गुर विनु घोर अंधार ॥२॥

If hundreds of moons and thousands of suns rose simultaneously; even with that much bright light (in the world), without (the guidance of) a Guru, there will be pitch-black darkness (of spiritual ignorance).

Scriptures are very clear about the need of a Guru for becoming self-realized. Guru Nanak says;

मत को भरमि भुलै संसारि ॥

गुर विनु कोइ न ऊतरसि पारि ॥१॥

Let no one wander in doubt in this world, without the Guru, no one can make spiritual progress and become self-realized. This idea is repeatedly propagated in Sikh Scriptures. Guru Nanak says:

भाई रे गुर विनु गिआनु न होइ ॥

पूछहु ब्रहमे नारदै वेद विआसै कोइ ॥

O my brother, the spiritual knowledge, the Supreme Truth, the knowledge of the Supreme Brahman cannot be gained without the Guru. (If you please), you may ask Brahma, Narda or Ved Vyas (you will get the same answer).

Guru plays a key role in the spiritual development of a devotee. Thus, the Guru must be well versed in scriptures, possess the transformative power, and must have attained an enlightened state, that is, must be self-realized. A devotee acquires the knowledge of the scriptures — the word (शब्द) of

the Supreme Brahman. The Guru initiates the devotee to a spiritual path, a path of devotion (भक्ति), self-realization, and pious karma. The devotee makes progress on the path of self-realization through the power of the *mantra*, contemplation and renunciation. By the grace of The Guru, the devotee is blessed with the awakening of the Spirit, self-realization, or enlightenment. Because of the different roles played by a guru, sometimes we talk about three different kinds of gurus: First, a *Shiksha* (शिक्षा) guru is a guru that provides the knowledge of scriptures; Second, a *Diksha* (दीक्षा) guru is one who imparts a spiritual initiation to a devotee; Third, a *Chaitya* (चैत्या) guru, the guru within, the consciousness, or the self, that leads the devotee towards the Grace of The Guru and thus to self-realization. It may be noted that the spiritual initiation is very different from a formal initiation into a religious order, a sampradaya, or a sect. Moreover, often temples, gurudwaras, parents and extended families, and SatSangat (the holy congregation) can and (in a practical sense) does play the first two roles of a guru. The role of these gurus is to make us aware of the inner Guru because in reality, The Guru is not a man or woman but one’s inner self, the consciousness. The person(s) playing the role of the (external) guru is not the guru but his/her instructions, or the knowledge of scriptures is the guru. Moreover, the person(s) may not be present at all points in time and space but the teachings, the scriptures may be accessible everywhere. Thus, in reality, the scriptures are the external gurus.

We can see that even though “Guru” appears to be a simple concept that we use every day. However, it is most intriguing and subtle concept. Hindu and Sikh scriptures present a unique concept of The Guru and bestow the highest honors and glories on the Guru. Guru Gita says;

गुरुर्ब्रह्मा गुरुर्विष्णुर्गुरुर्देवो महेश्वरः ॥

गुरुरेव परंब्रह्म तस्मै श्रीगुरुवे नमः ॥

The Guru is Brahma, The Guru is Vishnu, The Gurudeva is Siva. The Guru indeed is the Absolute Brahman, The NirankarPrabhu, to that Guru I pay my respects.

Sikh scriptures convey a similar message. Guru Nanak says;

गुर ईसर गुर गोरख वरमा गुर पारवती माई ॥

The Guru is Siva, The Guru is The Supreme Brahman, The Guru is Brahma, The Guru is The Mother Parvati.

The Guru Gita presents a good exposition on "Guru". Guru Gita says;

गुकारश्चान्धकारो हि रुकारस्तेज उच्यते ॥

अज्ञानग्रासकं ब्रह्म गुरुरेव न संशयः ॥

The word "gu" means darkness, the word "ru" means the dispeller of the darkness. (Therefore) there should be no doubt that The Brahman, the destroyer of ignorance, is The Guru.

Hindu and Sikh scriptures are clear that Guru is the ParamBrahm and ParamBrahm is The Guru. The scriptures say that Guru is the God. Gurubani says;

गुर गोविंदु गोविंदु गुरु है नानक भेदु न भाई ॥

Guru is Gobind, The Brahman and Gobind is The Guru, Guru Nanak says, O brother there is no distinction (what so ever).

Thus, when the scriptures talk about The Guru, it is means The Nirankar Prabhu — The Gobind, The Luminous Self. Gurubani says;

गुर की मूर्ति मन महि धिआनु ॥ गुर कै सबदि मंत्रु मनु मान ॥

गुर के चरन रिदै लै धारऊ ॥ गुरु पारब्रह्ममु सदा नमसकार ॥

Contemplate, meditate on the form of The Guru in your mind; let your mind accept The Guru's Shabad (word) as His Mantra. Enshrine The Guru's feet in your heart. Bow in humility forever before The Guru, The Supreme Lord, The Brahman.

Guru Gita has a similar shloka:

ध्यानमूलं गुरो-मूर्तिः पूजामूलम् गुरोः पदम् ॥

मन्त्रमूलं गुरोवाक्यं मुक्तिमूलं गुरोः कृपा ॥

Let the object of your meditation be The Guru's form; the object of your worship be The Guru's

feet; the source of the mantra be The Guru's word; and you shall attain the salvation by the Grace of The Guru.

An un-enlightened guru can inhibit, stop or reverse one's spiritual progress. Therefore, Hindu and Sikh Dharmas abundantly warn against "false" gurus and moreover Sikh Dharma categorically forbids a (living) person to be a Guru. Upanishads (e.g. Maitrayaniya Upanishad मैत्रायणीय उपनिषद्) and Tantras as well as Swamis like Swami Viveka Nanda warn about false gurus. After leaving home, Mahatma Buddha hopped from one guru to another for more than six years. Each guru gave him some knowledge of scriptures he had and would tell him that now he is liberated because he knew everything there is to know. However, Buddha was not happy and felt that he was still missing something. The (real) Truth still eluded him. Later, he found another guru who after finishing his instruction of scriptures, told him: "I have taught you all I know, now you are of your own and you have to seek and discover The Truth by your own Sadhna..." Buddha was very happy, thanked this guru and started on his own path of self-realization and ultimately discovered The Truth. It is therefore important for a seeker of The Truth, a Sadhak, a devotee to try to awaken the spirit, the consciousness in order to establish a connection, a contact with The Guru within. We have to chart our own path to self-realization with a study of scriptures that includes reading, understanding, and acting upon the message to lead a life of Truthful living. Truthful living is a path of meditation/devotion (जाप, सिमरण, भक्ति, कीर्तन); and pious, desireless Karma (निष्काम कर्म). Truthful living leads to the purification of mind. When the mind is purified, it leads one to The Guru within and the mysteries of The Brahman, starts to unfold before one's eyes. It was this inner Guru that Buddha discovered. Therefore, always bow to The Guru within. Gurubani says: आदि गुरे नमह ॥ जुगादि गुरे नमह ॥

सतिगुरे नमह ॥ श्री गुरुदेवे नमह ॥

I bow to The Brahman, The Primal Guru. To The Brahman who is The Guru through the Yuga's, I say Namaskar. I bow to The Brahman, The True Guru. I bow to the Great, Divine Guru.

Sabarimala Sri Dharma Shastha

By Meera Nair

The Sabarimala Temple is located in the Sahyadris at an altitude of 4135 feet above sea level, surrounded by lush tropical forests and 18 other hills. This is the place that Ayyappa (Sri Dharma Shastha), the prince of Panthalam, meditated after abandoning all of the luxurious amenities of the king's palace.

Long time ago, the demon Mahishi, the sister of Mahishasura, was granted the boon from Brahma that she could be killed only by Vishnu and Shiva's son. After receiving this boon, Mahishi started menacing the world to avenge her brother's death. Meanwhile, another demon called Bhasmasura, wanted to become even more powerful. So, he asked Shiva to grant him the boon that whoever he pointed to would turn into ash. Shiva, not understanding the vicious plans Bhasmasura had in his mind, granted the boon to him. Once receiving the boon, Bhasmasura wanted to test out his new powers. So, he tried to turn Shiva into ashes, first. Shiva started running away, trying to save himself from Bhasmasura. Vishnu saw what was going on, and so, incarnated into Mohini, a very beautiful lady, and went to Bhasmasura. Bhasmasura immediately fell in love with Mohini's beauty, and when Mohini started dancing, he danced with her. At the end, Mohini posed with one of her hands pointing at her head. Unknowingly, Bhasmasura posed the same way too, and was turned into ashes. Shiva felt very thankful, and fell in love with Mohini. Lord Ayyappa was born as the divine child of Shiva and Mohini. The childless King of Pandalam found this divine baby during one of his hunting expeditions. Ayyappa was taken by the king to the palace and was raised to be the future king. However, the queen soon had her own child. When the time came near for the crowning of Ayyappa as future king, the

queen was manipulated by the cunning minister to pretend to be sick with a sickness that could only be cured with the milk of a tigress, not an easy item to get. Ayyappa volunteered to do this risky assignment and headed to the forests surrounding Sabarimala. Here he met the demoness Mahishi and slayed her. Then, he brought the tigress and her cubs to Panthalam to help cure his foster mother, the queen. Everyone realized then that Ayyappa was god himself. After completing his task of fetching the milk, he gave up his crown and luxuries and went back to Sabarimala, where he meditated and attained the state of eternal bliss.

Millions of devotees visit Sabarimala during the Mandala season that starts in mid-November and ends in mid-January. There are 18 steps to the temple on Sabarimala where Ayyappa meditated. Only those who keep their mind and body pure and clean during the 41 days can reach Ayyappa's temple by climbing the 18 steps. These 18 steps signify the overcoming of worldly attachments to reach the lotus feet of Sri Dharma Shastha. When we climb the 18 steps, we overcome ignorance and finally reach the holy feet of Lord Ayyappa.

Happiness is when

what you think

what you say

and what you do

are in harmony

-Mahatma Gandhi

Mandala Kaalarambha Puja for Lord Ayyappa

This year's Mandala season at Sabarimala Sri Dharma Sastha Temple starts on 15th November. Mandala season is observed for 41 days starting on the first day of the month of Vrishchikam/Karthika (November-December) and culminating on the eleventh day of Dhanu/Margazhi (December-January). Ayyappa devotees observe vrutham (austerities) during these 41 days by leading a simple and pious life, with a clean body and pure mind. The Hindu Temple, Omaha will observe the start of Ayyappa Mandala kaala puja on Saturday November 16th starting with Ganapathi Homam at 8:30 am. This will be followed by bhajans, and kalasha abhishekam for Lord Ayyappa. See the description below on the rele-

vance of Kalasha puja. **Devotees are encouraged to sponsor kalasha puja for \$101.** Following Kalasha abhishekam there will be a ratha yatra accompanied by thalappoli. Children and Ladies are invited to participate in the thalappoli during the ratha yatra. The participants should wear traditional Indian dress. Ladies and girls will carry their thalam with flowers and a lighted diya during the ratha yatra. Girls under the age of 8 can use electric lamp/candle instead of oil lamp for safety purpose. Boys can also join the procession, but they will not carry a thalam. **The thalappoli participants except boys should bring the thalam (plate) , some flowers and the small lamp to keep in the thalam.**

Kalasa Abhishekam for Lord Ayyappa

Water in a pot (Kalasha-gold, silver, brass, copper or even earthenware), sanctified by invoking the names of seven sacred rivers of India namely Ganga, Yamuna, Godavari, Saraswathi, Narmada, Sindhu, Kaveri, is used for worship. After the Kalasha puja, the content of all the kalasas are used for the Abhishekam of Lord Ayyappa

amidst the chanting of Sharana Ghosham and the Vedas.

Praying to Lord Ayyappa during this Kalasha Abhishekam with devotion will help one attain the fruits of bathing in these sacred rivers besides getting the Lord's blessings for happiness and well-being.

Thalappoli for Srebhuthabali (Seeveli)

In temples like Guruvayoor, the utsava murthy is taken outside the sanctum sanctorum for ritualistic procession with the accompaniment of panchavadyam, decorated elephants and thalappoli. This practice is known as seeveli or sreebhuthabali. The thalappoli is carried by young girls and ladies and it

involves the carrying of a thalam either brass or silver with flowers and a lighted lamp in it. Thalappoli is also done to bring prosperity to the community. For the Ayyappa puja, the thalappoli will accompany the Ayyappa utsava murthy's ratha yatra (procession).

Share a smile
and make the
world a better
place
Learn from
yesterday,
Live for today,
& Hope for
tomorrow.

Worry is like a
rocking chair;
It gives you
something to
do,
But doesn't get
you anywhere.
-- Author
Unknown



SREE PRASANNA GANAPATHAYE NAMAH



HINDU TEMPLE
13010 Arbor Street, Omaha, NE 68144
MANDALA KALARAMBHA PUJA
SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 16TH, 2013 8:30 AM- 1:00 PM



Bhootha Natha Sadananda Sarva Bhootha Dayapara
Raksha Raksha Maha Bhago Sastrey Thubhyam Name Namaha

8:30 – 9:00 am	Ganapathi Homam
9:00 – 10:00 am	Sankalpa, Kalasha puja, & Abhishekam
10:00 – 10:45 am	Alankaram, Bhajans, & Ratha yatra with Thalappoli
10:45 – 11:15 am	Ayyappa Ashtothara Namavali & Sharana Ghosham
11:15 – 12:00 pm	Padi puja, Ayyappa Namaskaram, & Deepa Aradhana
12:00 – 1:00 pm	Mahaprasadam

Devotees are encouraged to sponsor Kalasha Puja for \$101.00.
Signup sheets will be posted at the Temple or contact one of
the following volunteers:

Panditjis – 402-697-8546, Suresh Seshadri – 402-894-4918, Ram Bishu – 402-421-1541,
Shantaram Joshi – 402-965-9777, Rakesh Singh – 402-292-3790, Alekha Dash – 402-492-9707,
Ambika Nair – 402-330-1390

Swami Sharanam Ayyappa Sharanam
HariHara Suthan Ayyan Ayyappa Swamiye Sharanam

NEWS AND EVENTS

MARK YOUR CALENDAR:

2-Nov	Saturday	Deepavali/Lakshmi Puja	
3-Nov	Sunday	Temple Deepavali Celebration	
16-Nov	Saturday	Ayyappa Mandala Commencing	Sri Ayyappa Abhishekam
23-Nov	Saturday	Skanda Shasti	
1-Dec	Sunday	Temple Janmothsava Puja	
15-Dec	Sunday	Sri Radha Krishna Kalyanam	
		Ayyappa Mandala	
22-Dec	Sunday	Completion Puja	Sri Ayyappa Abhishekam
1-Jan	Wednesday	New Year Puja 2014	

It is our distinct pleasure to bring this special issue of Deepam for Diwali. This has been an exciting year for our temple. The newly renovated social hall has generated enormous activity and the community's use of the class rooms, social halls and kitchen is in full swing. Please continue to help the temple to grow by giving your precious time, effort, constructive criticism and generous financial support.

Please provide us with your feedback regarding Deepam. Your suggestions are most welcome. We welcome advertisements or announcements for donation of \$201 or \$101 for a full or a half page, respectively, Also, we seek sponsorships (\$501) to cover partial cost of Deepam publication. If you are interested in any one of these, please contact us at omahaDeepam@gmail.com.

We would like to thank our advertisers for their support. Special thanks to friends and family members for their support and help in publishing this issue. Please forgive us for any unforeseen or unintended mistakes in this publication.

WISH YOU A VERY HAPPY DEEPAVALI

Babu Guda & The Publication Committee

Taste of India

By Omaha Tamil Sangam

Omaha Tamil community members have coordinated this event lead by Omaha Tamil Sangam at the temple on Sep 29th 2013 Sunday. About 400-500 attendees were seen supporting the event!! All the members worked enthusiastically like bumble bees and kids were pitching in happily. Several food stations were set up presenting authentic delicious Tamil Nadu food!! Sambar vadai was a hit and sambar volume was a demand!! Mouth watering pongal with chutneys ran out! Rose milk quenched the

thirst! Soft iddlies made an impact! Members were creative in making crispy dosas in cone shapes served with potatoes!! Teen volunteers met the challenge by selling all the snacks including mysorepakku! Overall it was a success and brought out the community spirit, and the event was filled with Joy!! Omaha Tamil Sangam will donate the total of 5001\$ to Hindu temple!!! We would like to thank everyone for their support!!!





Kids - Youth Corner



Diwali (दिवाली): The Festival of Lights

Diwali, the Hindu festival of lights, is the most popular of all the festivals from South Asia. It is also an occasion for celebration by Jains and Sikhs. Usually Diwali falls between mid-October and mid-November. In India, the festival of Diwali extends over five days. Diwali is the festival that is well enjoyed by all as it has fun activities like the lights, fireworks, sweets and gifts. Diwali is celebrated outside India in countries- Nepal, Sri Lanka, Myanmar, Mauritius, Guyana, Trinidad & Tobago, Suriname, Malaysia, Singapore, Fiji, United Kingdom, Canada, and USA.

There are different mythological interpretations of why Diwali is celebrated but most commonly, it is associated with the victory of good over evil, light over darkness and knowledge over ignorance, although the actual legends that go with the festival are different in different parts of India. Common mythological stories for Diwali are:

1. Diwali commemorates the return of Shri Ramachandraji, Shri Sita Devi, and Shri Lakshman from 14-year-long exile and victory over the demon-king Ravan. In joyous celebration of the return of their king, the people of Ayodhya, the Capital of Kingdom of Kaushalya, illuminated the kingdom with earthen *diyas* and by bursting firecrackers.
2. The festival starts with Dhanteras on which most Indian business communities begin their financial year.
3. The second day of the festival, Naraka Chaturdasi, marks the vanquishing of the demon Naraka by Lord Krishna and his wife Satyabhama.
4. *Amavasya*, the third day of Diwali, marks the worship of Lakshmi, the goddess of wealth in her most benevolent mood, fulfilling the wishes of her devotees. Lakshmi Puja marks the most important day of Diwali celebrations in North India. Hindu homes worship Lakshmi, the goddess of wealth, and Ganesh, the God of auspicious beginnings, and then light lamps in the

streets and homes to welcome prosperity and well-being. Amavasya also tells the story of Lord Vishnu, who in his Vamana incarnation vanquished the Bali, and banished him to Patala.

5. On the fourth day of Diwali, Kartika Shudda Padyami, that Bali went to patala and took the reins of his new kingdom in there.
6. The fifth day is referred to as *Yama Dvitiya* (also called *Bhai Dooj*), and on this day sisters invite their brothers to their homes.

Diwali marks the end of the harvest season in most of India. Farmers give thanks for the bounty of the year gone by, and pray for a good harvest for the year to come. Diwali celebrations with regional variations-

- ♦ **Andhra Pradesh** - In Andhra Pradesh, Diwali (దీపావళి) is celebrated for two days. The First day is Naraka Chaturthasi, Deepavali Amaavasya. The festivities start out at the crack of dawn and carry on well into the night. Most people visit local temples along with their families to seek the blessings of their respective Gods. The night sky is lit up with a scintillating array of noisy fireworks. Diwali is one of the seven most important festivals of Andhra Pradesh. It is very popular with children who celebrate Diwali because of the excitement of bursting firecrackers. Special shops to sell firecrackers are set up in all towns, cities and bigger villages.
- ♦ **Bihar, West Bengal and Assam** - In West Bengal and Assam, Diwali is celebrated as Kali Puja. It is light-up night in Bihar, West Bengal & Assam, this is corresponding to the festival of Diwali (pronounced *Dipaboli* in Bengali, in Maithili, it is known as Diya-Baati) where people light diyas and candles in memory of the souls of departed ancestors. The goddess Kali is worshipped for whole night on one night during this festival. This is also a night of fireworks, with local youth burning sparklers and firecrackers



Kids - Youth Corner



Diwali - Festival of lights -- continued

throughout the night. Both the traditions of worshipping the Goddess Kali as well as Goddess Lakshmi and Lord Sri Ganesha is prevalent in these States.

- ◆ **Goa and Konkan** - In the States of Goa, and Konkan, Diwali is celebrated as Divali. Celebrations begin in Konkan and Goa on the day of Naraka Chaturdashi. People clean their houses and decorate them with kandeel (lantern), lamps, mango leaves, and marigold flowers. The utensils are made to shine, filled with water, and decorated for the holy bath the following morning. On this day, paper-made effigies of Narakasura, filled with grass and firecrackers symbolizing evil, are made. These effigies are burnt at around four o'clock in the morning the following day and firecrackers are burst, and people return home to take a scented oil bath. Lamps are lit in a line and the women of the house perform aarti of the men, gifts are exchanged, a bitter berry called *kareet* is crushed under the feet in token of killing Narkasur, symbolizing evil and removal of ignorance.
- ◆ **Gujarat** - Gujarati's celebrate Gujarati New Year the day after the festival of Diwali (દિવાળી), which occurs in mid-fall – either October or November, depending on the Lunar calendar. The Gujarati New Year is synonymous with *sud ekam* i.e. first day of Shukla paksha of the *Kartik* month -, which is taken as the first day of the first month of Gujarati lunar calendar. Most other Hindus celebrate the New Year in early spring. Gujarati community all over the world celebrates the New Year after Diwali to mark the beginning of a new fiscal year.
- ◆ **Karnatka** - In Karnatka, Diwali is also celebrated as Deepavali (ದೀಪಾವಳಿ, deepa + aavaLi = light + abundance). It is celebrated on the previous and next day of amavasya (No moon day) as naraka chaturdashi (before no-moon day) resembling Satyabhama's victory over narakasura and as balipadyami the first day of kaarthika

masa; inviting the greatest emperor of times Balichakravarthi to each and everybody's homes. The entire house is cleaned and new clothes are purchased for the entire family which is followed by lighting of oil lamps around the house and bursting firecrackers.

- ◆ **Kerala** - In Kerala, Deepavali (ദീപാവലി) falls on the preceding day of the New Moon in the Malayalam month Thulam (October–November). The celebrations are based on the legend of *Narakasura Vadha* - where Sri Krishna destroyed the demon and the day Narakasura died is celebrated as Deepavali. Deepavali commemorates the triumph of good over evil. It's celebrated with more enthusiasm in the southern parts of Kerala compared with northern Kerala. Firecrackers are burst and Ottamthullal performances are hosted. Exchanges of gifts and dresses are usually held. Especially on the 4th day of celebration, the ladies are invited to their father's house on the 4th day after the 'Deepavali' and given dress and money as gifts.
- ◆ **Maharashtra**- In Maharashtra, Diwali (दिवाळी) begins with *Vasubaras* which is the 12th day of the 2nd half of the Marathi month Ashvin. The day is celebrated by performing an Aarti of the cow and its calf - which is a symbol of love between mother and her baby. Following day Dhana Trayodashi is celebrated which is of special importance for traders and business people. It is also considered an auspicious day for making important purchases, especially metals, including kitchenware and precious metals like silver and gold. On the third day, Naraka Chaturdashi is celebrated when people get up early in the morning and take their bath before sunrise while stars are still visible. Bathing is an elaborate process on this day with abundant use of 'ubtans', oils and perfumes, and is preceded by an Aarti performed on the person by some lady, usually mother or wife. The whole process is referred to as 'abhyanga-snaan'. Following which Lakshmi pooja is performed and Padwa



Kids - Youth Corner



Diwali - Festival of lights -- continued

(पाडवा) on the first day of the new month- Kartik in the Hindu calendar.

- ♦ **Marwar**- Marwar celebrates Marwari New Year on the day of the festival of Diwali, which is the last day Krishna Paksha of Ashvin month & also last day of the Ashvin month of Hindu calendar.
- ♦ **Orissa** - In Orissa, Diwali (ଦୀପାବଳୀ) is celebrated with great joy. People light rows of oil lamps, candles adorn the thresholds of all houses, firecrackers are burst, sweet meals are relished and distributed. Some people also worship family goddess. Tarpanam is done in the morning of Diwali. All the members of the household gather together just after dusk. A rangoli (Muruja) of a sailboat is made on the ground. Beside the rangoli, a mortar and pestle and a plough are also kept and worshiped. After the puja and offerings, the family celebrates Diwali festival by bursting firecrackers.
- ♦ **Tamil Nadu** - In Tamil Nadu, Diwali is known as Deepavali (தீபாவளி, meaning garland of lights). It commemorates the death of Narakasura at the hands of Lord Sri Krishna. It is believed that Narakasura, a wicked demon, tortured common people and they prayed Lord Sri Krishna to defeat him. The people then celebrated narakasura's defeat with sparkles, lights and crackers. The day begins with an early morning oil bath, wearing new clothes, bursting of crackers, visiting Lord Sri Ganesha, Lord Sri Vishnu/Siva temples. The exchange of sweets between the neighbors, visiting the relations, preparing Deepavali special sweets are tradition of the day.

Diwali is celebrated in different regions of India in various ways; however, the essence behind Diwali is the same – to rejoice in the Inner Light (Atman) or the underlying Reality of all things (Brahman).

In the United States, Diwali is being recognized as an important festival because of increase in visibil-

ity. Diwali was first celebrated in the White House in 2003 and was given official status by the United States Congress in 2007. President Barack Obama is the first president to personally attend Diwali at the White House in 2009. Indians in the US celebrate Diwali in different parts of the US, just as in India. In Omaha area, Indian families celebrate Diwali in their homes in personal ways. As a community, Diwali is celebrated at the Hindu Temple. Diwali celebration prayers are lead by Hindu Temple priest and the community is entertained by cultural programs performances by the community members. BalVihar celebrates Diwali by introducing students to hands- on craft activities like- making diya, lanterns, and rangoli. These activities are used as great opportunity to share with students mythological stories and communicate to them the essence of the festival.

Contributed by:

Rajesh Sharma

(Education Committee Chair)

Work for a cause,

not for applause.

Live life to express,

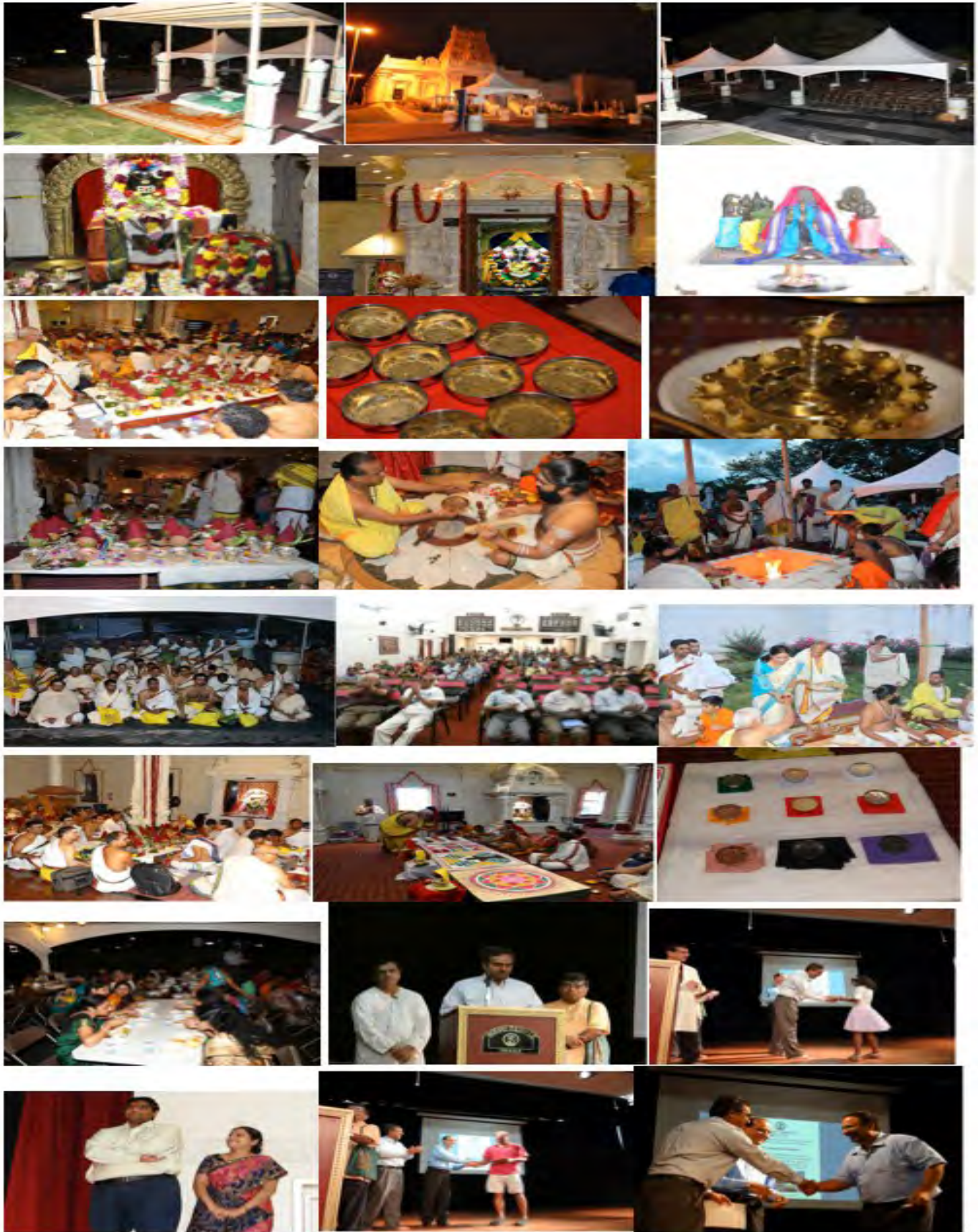
not to impress.

Don't strive to make your presence noticed,

just make your absence felt

-Author unknown

Maharudram Pictures—September 2013



2013-Puja Pictures



2013-Event Pictures



Lord Shiva

Trident represents the three powers of knowledge, desire and implementation

Drum symbolizes sound which represents the words of the Vedas, the holy scriptures given by the Lord to guide us through life.

Serpents on neck signify the ego which once mastered can be worn as an ornament

Rudraksha beads denote purity. The mala or rosary in the right hand symbolizes concentration.

Face on head represents the Ganges, the holy river, signifying the flow of scriptural teachings passing wisdom from one generation to the next.

Moon on forehead symbolizes that the Lord is the master of time and is himself timeless.

Large oval dot on forehead is the third eye of knowledge which, if opened, reduces to ashes the person in its vision. It is a symbol of the Destroyer of evil and ignorance.

Wearing a tiger skin Shiva is said to be fearless.

HAPPY DIWALI

BHAVANA AND RAKESH SINGH

JANAKBHAI DAVE



From
**Usha, VT, Praveen, Madan
Lauryl and Sabina RAMAKRISHNANs**



WISHING FRIENDS AND FAMILY
A VERY HAPPY DEEPAVALI

Dr. CHANDRA & MRS LIN PONNIAH
PAREENA AND NISHYIA PONNIAH
NORFOLK, NEBRASKA



May this Deepavali bring most Happiness, Peace and
Prosperity to you all

SMITA & ALEKHA DASH
DEBALEENA & ROHAN DASH



from

SREE AND AMBIKA NAIR
VENU, JACKIE, ISABELLA, SURYA AND SINJIN NAIR
SANJAY, VEENA, AJAY RAVI AND
ANIANA SREE VERMA



**HAPPY DIWALI
AND
BEST WISHES FOR A HEALTHY, HAPPY AND
PROSPEROUS NEW YEAR**

NIJHAWANS:

Jagdish and Swaroop
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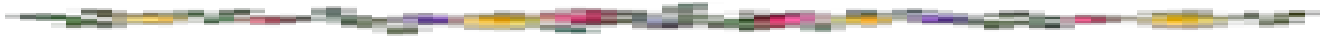
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VOLUNTEERS NEEDED



Namaskar,

The temple needs volunteers in the following areas:

- ◆ In giving temple tours
- ◆ On special puja days (help with arrangements for pujas)
- ◆ In ironing deity clothes.
- ◆ In cooking mahaprasadam on special occasions.
- ◆ In serving lunch and post lunch cleanup of social hall.

Please respond to htom.volunteers@gmail.com, if you wish to volunteer, so that we could add your name in our database.

Name: _____ Email: _____

Contact number (best time to reach): _____

Mention the area: _____

Thanks,

Volunteer Committee