

DEEPAM



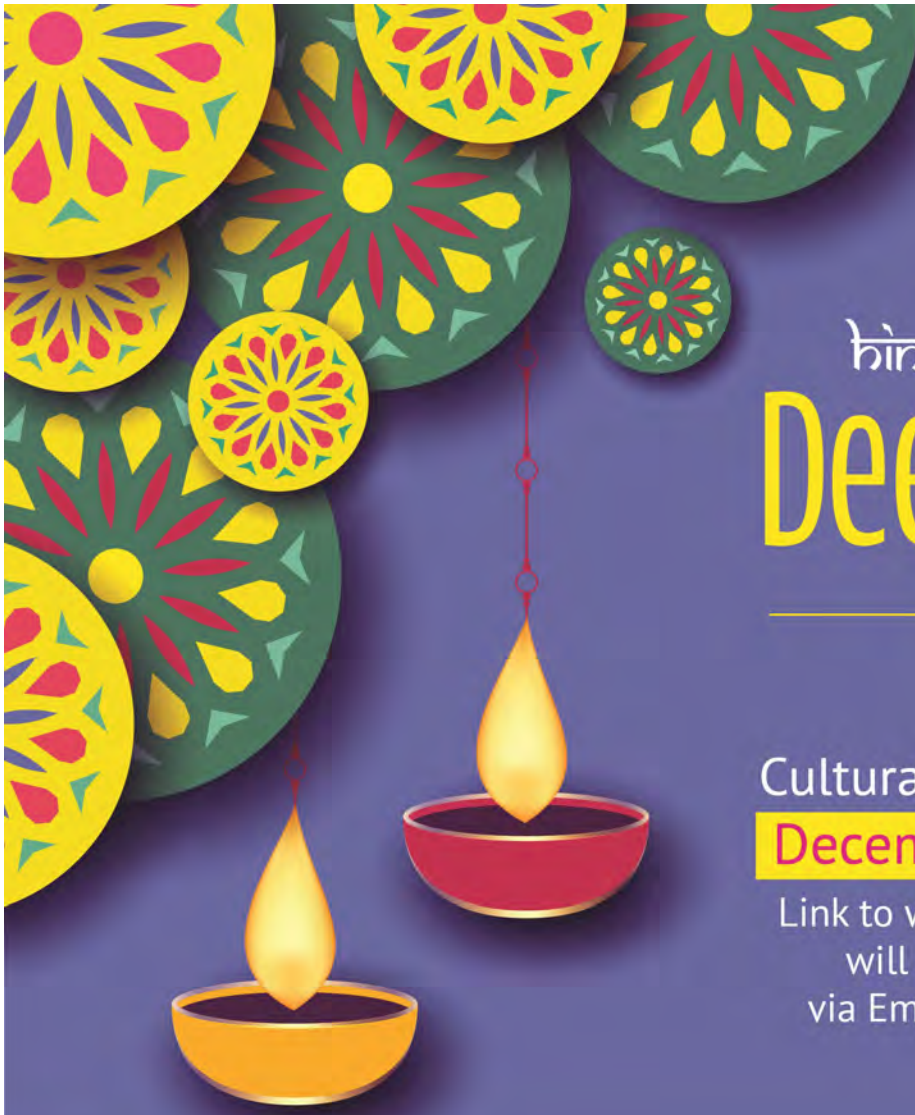
HAPPY DEEPAVALI AND PROSPEROUS NEW YEAR

Volume 30, Deepavali Special Issue 1
December 2020



Hindu Temple

13010 Arbor Street, Omaha, NE, 68144



hindu temple
Deepavali
2020

Cultural Virtual Event
December 5 • 4pm

Link to watch the program
will be announced
via Email and Facebook

RAFFLE TICKET \$10

Prizes include \$1000 Cash, 65" TV (\$700), Vitamix Blender (\$350), Indian Grocery (3 for \$100 each) and Restaurant (6 for \$50 & 10 for \$15 each) Gift Cards!

Raffle Contact:

Shantaram Joshi 402 965 9777 • Alekha Dash 402 492 9707 • Anil Bhalla 402 333 6607 • Deepa Kashyap 402 932 7395 • Chandrasekhar 402 812 5654

Cultural Program Contact cultural@htom.us



Hindu Temple Limited, 13010 Arbor Street, Omaha, NE 68144, (402) - 697-8546

hindu temple
Omaha, Nebraska

Deepavali
Sree Maha Lakshmi Puja

Saturday November 14th, 2020
06:30 PM – 07:45 PM



Program Details

06:30 PM – 06:45 PM

Sankalpam

06:45PM – 07:45PM

Sri Mahalakshmi/Dhana Lakshmi Puja

Shodasa upachara Puja, Ashtottaram, Archana

Event Sponsorship

Full Event: \$31

Archana \$21

Note from Temple:

All devotees must follow strict CDC Guidelines i.e masks compulsory, social distancing, families sitting on cross signs while ongoing puja

For More Information

Web www.htom.org Email: htom.puja@gmail.com

Ph: 402-697-8546

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Priest: **Pandit Nagabhat Vidyashankar**
Pandit Pandit Badari Narayana
Pandit Laxmikant (Amol) Kulkarni
Sevak: **Chandrashankar Karmegam**

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

President: **Srini Nedunoori**

Vice President: **Ketan Patel**

Secretary: **Sai Krishna Yeluri**

Asst. Secretary: **Krishna Chaitanya**

Treasurer: **Meera Kashyap**

Asst. Treasurer: **Jeyanthi Vishwanathan**

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Member (19-21): **Sivamani Somasundaram**

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Member (20-22): **Nageswara Rao Athota**

Member (20-22): **Kalyan Karpagavinayagam**

COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSONS

Pooja & Religious: **Srikant Madduri**

Finance: **Venkatesh Bettadapura**

Education: **Purnima Singh**

Cultural: **Shital Kontamwar**

Mahaprasad: **Surendra khandavalli /**

Vidya sagar

Facility Maintenance: **Srini Mallipudi /**

Sujeet Reddy

IT Management: **Ratheesh Nair**

Publications: **Dr. Nagendra Chaturvedi**

Temple Tours/Public Relation: **Natasha keshawani**

Volunteer/Welcome: **Nageswarao Atota / Ganesh Naik**

Nomination: **SrinivasRao Mallipudi**

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

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

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Member (20-22): **Kranthi Adidam**

Fund Raising: **Dr. Alekha Dash**

Long Range Planning: **Dr. Phani Tej Adidam**

Past Chairperson: **Vandana Singh**

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Namaskaram All!

Om Ganeshaaya Namaha!! Om Sree Matre Namaha!! Om Sai Ram!!
It is my great pleasure and honor to be part of this great temple. With the blessings of Lord Prasanna Ganapathi, I hope you all are staying safe. On behalf of entire Executive Committee and its sub committees, I want to wish you all Happy Deepavali and Happy New Year.



With the divine grace of Lord Prasanna Ganapathi, all the religious activities are running smoothly. We have successfully performed all major events – Jagannadha Rath Yatra, Ganesha Chaturthi, Janmastami, Guru Purnima, Navarathri, Dasara and Deepavali. I want to thank our Puja committee, Priests and facility manager for their commitment and executing all these events safely. Due to the current situation, based on the puja events, we are restricting the number of devotees inside the temple. For your safety and the safety of our priests and facility manager, we request you to have face mask throughout your temple visit. We encourage devotees to schedule an appointment before entering the temple.

I am glad to share, during this time of COVID and unemployment crisis, our temple was able to support the community that we live. With the support of our congregation, we donated Food Bank, sponsored thanks giving meal to Open door mission and distributed food at Stephen Center. I want to thank you all who donated generously for the sake of changing a life. Thanks to the donors who helped with renovation of the social hall. We want to thank all the donors who reacted to our appeal to support temple due to COVID.

Balvihar classes are conducted remotely. I want to thank education chair and all Balvihar teachers for their determination to teach our next generation. I want to thank our finance team for doing a marvelous job on keeping finances intact. They helped us procure PPP loan. The Communication team is actively involved in sending communication to the community. During the time the temple was closed for public, our communication was actively sending communication to the congregation, broadcasting temple events on Facebook. I am very thankful to our cultural chair and her team for their dedication and commitment to make Deepavali Cultural event happen virtual. As an honor to all doctors, our cultural chair chose the theme of this year's Diwali as blue. I hope you will like the event. I want to thank our publication team for an excellent job in bringing the Deepam magazine. There is lot of hard work and coordination involved behind this wonderful magazine. I am fortunate to be supported by a great EC team that brings the best to the temple.

Due to COVID, we had about 35% drop in private pujas compared to last year. This had shown an impact on our in-flow revenue. I want to appeal to all devotees to sign up for ACH. You can sign up any amount you can afford. This provides fixed revenue to the temple

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. I appreciate all patrons to your continued support to our temple. Always at the service of Lord!!

May Lord Prasanna Ganapati bless you all with the best of health and happiness!!

Best Regards

Srini Nedunoori

President, Executive Committee



MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRPERSON

Dear Devotees,

Sri Ganeshaaya Namah!

It is an immense pleasure and honor to be writing this message. I feel very humbled to have been chosen as the Chairperson of the Board of Trustees for this magnificent temple for fiscal year of 2020-21.

At the outset, I wish to wholeheartedly applaud and commend our outgoing Chairperson, Mrs. Vandana Singh, for her commitment and leadership that she exhibited during the past year. As you all know it was a challenging year. Past Board & EC have left our temple in a much better state than before what they received. I know that you all will join me in thanking all these Sevaks for their time and energy.



At the beginning of 2020, we couldn't have predicted the dramatic ways in which the world would change. As we continue to closely monitor the evolving situation with the global pandemic, the health and safety of our Devotees, Community and Staff remains our top priority.

With the grace of Lord Prasanna Ganapati, since its inception in 1993, Hindu Temple has been serving the spiritual needs of the Hindu Community in and around Nebraska (and beyond). This is reflected by the religious and language teaching classes in Balavihar, as well as the numerous Spiritual Discourses by scholars and distinguished guests through the Vedantic Center of Nebraska. We are committed to extending full support to these activities.

We are in the middle of building Sant Sadan (Hall of Saints) in the Community Center of our Hindu Temple at Omaha, Nebraska, USA. The idea is to celebrate the lives of our prominent saints and Maharishis, this will serve to educate our next generations of Indian Americans about these saints and their contributions to Sanatana Dharma (Hinduism). Happy to report this project is 90% complete and will be ready for utilization from the beginning of next year.

Do you ever wonder how everything is always in its place within our Temple? While we may not consciously realize it (sometimes taking it for granted), the wonderful and organized disposition of the Temple is the result of numerous hours of selfless service carried out by our Sevaks. I want to ask the community to join me in thanking these individuals who tirelessly support the Temple.

On behalf of the Board of Trustees, I kindly request all devotees to continue to support the Temple through generous donations. In these unprecedented times, running Temple with no to minimum Hundi collections is a challenge. Executive Committee is reviewing every single expense, and running the Temple at bare minimum cost. More than before it is very important now for devotees to generously support Temple. Finance and Fundraising committees are going to reach out to all of us for monthly recurring donations.

Please accept our heartfelt appreciation for your incredible support, and I look forward to our continued development of our beloved Temple in the years to come.

May the Lord Prasanna Ganapati bless us all.

Muralidhar Chintapalli
Chairperson, Board of Trustees (2020-21)



Sincere Appeal to the Entire Congregation of the Hindu Temple

Alekha K. Dash

Dear Friends,

Happy Diwali/Deepavali to you and your family. At this unprecedented time many changes are happening to us, around us and in our wonderful world. All of us are concerned about the impact of COVID-19 pandemic. On a personal level, we are worried about the health and safety of our friends and families, on a community level on the wellbeing of our community and on a professional level we are worried about our organization and colleagues. No doubt this virus has generated a great deal of concerns, uncertainty in our daily lives. However, as our health officials and scriptures have advised, this is not a time to panic but a time for prudent strategies to mitigate the effects of this pandemic and seek spirituality and wellness of our body and mind. This pandemic has debarred us to meet our friends and families at religious events at the temple at this difficult time of uncertainty. One thing which has not been affected during this pandemic is our Temple has never closed its door. Our dedicated priests have kept the temple door open entirely during this period for our religious and spiritual needs. Community is very thankful for their sacrifice and generosity. However, restriction on temple visits of our members due to public safety concerns have tremendously affected the financial wellbeing of our Temple. At this critical juncture, Temple needs your support more than in the past to keep its doors open and meeting the religious and spiritual needs of our community. Temple management appeals to all congregation members to join to help in this crisis.

Temple is planning many innovative ways of fundraising to meet the temple's dire need since we will not be able to do any fundraising physically during this COVID19. Some of the plans are out lined below for your participation and help.

- **CARES Act (Coronavirus Aid, relief, and Economic security Act, March 27, 2020) allows a temporary universal charitable deduction for all taxpayers up to \$300.** We appeal to all our members to take advantage of this onetime cash donation to our temple.
- As you all know, it costs around **\$1200/day** to open the doors of the temple. This boils down to a total cost of **\$438,000 per year**. Temple is initiating a "**Cloudfunding**" initiative to raise this within a year.
- Dollar a day campaign (**ACH campaign**) has already been in place and we appreciate more participation in this ongoing program.
- Temple will be appealing to all our patrons to extend their **annual pledges** that is going to be completed this year or in December 2021 for additional years of support.

Charity sees the need not the cause. Giving and sharing are not only rewarding opportunities, but also a part of our daily lives. Thank you in advance for your support. May GOD bless us all.

Please Support Your Temple by Buying the Deepavali Raffles Tickets! The details of prizes are provided below:

Ticket No: _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Ticket No: _____

hindu temple

Annual Deepavali Raffle 2020

DECEMBER 5 | 4PM

1st Prize: \$1000 in cash
2nd Prize: 65" TV (\$700)
3rd Prize: Vitamix Blender (\$350)
4th Prize(3 each): \$100 Indian Grocery Gift Card
5th Prize(6 each): \$50 Indian Restaurant Gift Card
6th Prize:(10 each): \$15 Indian Restaurant Gift Card

\$10

HAPPY DEEPAVALI AND PROSPEROUS NEW YEAR WISHES



From:

**PURNIMA AND BABU GUDA
RAHUL AND REEMA**

A Call For Hindu Activism: by Sean Bradrick

Sanatana Dharma represents the world's most ancient continuously practiced, indigenous spiritual and philosophical tradition, which focuses on inner knowledge over outer belief and finds its basis in timeless truths and natural law. These truths have been recorded in our scriptures throughout the ages. The wisdom of the Vedas comes from the ancient rishis, nagas and yogis who observed nature and the mind in various states of consciousness, including the state of samadhi or super consciousness. Sanatana Dharma is also an intellectual and multi-cultural tradition attached to sophisticated schools of philosophy, its own system of medicine and psychology, architecture, astronomy, physics and metaphysics, mathematics and various art forms.

Hinduism has survived well over 1000 years of persecution, including but not limited to 600 years of Muslim rule, followed by 200 years of colonial rule, which attempted to divide social classes and make India a Christian country. Muslims first invaded India, in what is now Pakistan, in the 7th century. They were held at bay for many years. When they invaded what is currently India in the 12th century, they used kidnapping and sexual maltreatment of women as a weapon, practiced forced marriages and forced conversions, killed 80 million



men, women and children and destroyed 10 thousand Hindu temples, schools and libraries. This was the cause of much impoverishment. Prior to this, India was one of the world's most wealthy countries. Eventually, Muslims gained control and ruled India and its Hindu majority from 1526-1707. Though Hindu resistance, their plight and fight continued throughout. After Islamic rule, British colonialism ruled India from 1612-1947. 20 million Hindus died of starvation during colonial rule.

We still see great opposition, oppression and exploitation. We see religious and cultural appropriation on a massive scale. We see corrupt, deceptive and unethical conversion efforts on a massive scale. We see a massive amount of bigoted misconceptions and distortions created by Christians, Muslims, academics, politicians and the media.

The Hindu Sanatana Dharma and its adherents are under attack. Hindus have become one of the most persecuted groups of people in the history of the world. We have become known as the doormat of the religious world, which is unwarranted. Unfortunately, many of us have become apathetic and passive to the point of our own detriment.

Dharma must be preserved, protected and projected out into the world in an accurate, mature, organized and intelligent manner. There is much in Hindu thought which could benefit humanity, society and the health of our planet. There is much in Hindu thought which offers benefits to the physical, mental and spiritual health of the individual.

We must learn how to counter the avalanche of false, bigoted and stereotypical information being spread to a bewildered world. We must counter misinformation with facts. We must become able to explain the reality behind false narratives. We must learn to correct popular, yet false notions regarding the so-called "caste system", and so-called "idol worship". We must become able to explain why we revere cows and why we revere nature. We have to become able to offer a brief and simplified explanation of Hindu theology. We have to become able to discuss Hindu monotheism, polytheism, pantheism, animism, panentheism and atheism. We have to become able to explain such concepts as Brahman, Atman, ishvara, karma, sadhana, tri-deva or tri-murti, tri-guna and moksha. We have to be able to explain that Sanatana Dharma is not a religion in the modern sense of the word, but a scientific spiritual tradition connected to profound philosophies and steeped in a phenomenal multi-culture. We should be able to offer an accurate description of Hindutva or Hindu/dharma nationalism and be able to describe its potential benefits for Indian society, for Hindus and Muslims alike. We must counteract the accusations that it is an authoritarian movement.

Continued to the next page.....

We must explain that Sanatana Dharma is not a single organized religion, but a complex of many diverse groups of people, sharing a variety of beliefs, practices and schools of thought. We have to be able to explain what yoga really is. We have to be able to explain what appropriation is and why it is so wrong and offensive. We have to become able to explain the reasoning behind what others see as superstition.

Christians and Muslims want to sell us on their gods, religious dogmas and doctrines. Hindus do not recognize or worship their deities and for whatever reason, this makes them angry. They not only want to glorify their paths, but also seem to enjoy ridiculing ours. Missionaries go through a good amount of training. They are taught to use scare tactics, bribes, threats and grand promises. They are taught to defame, ridicule and poke holes in Hindu ideologies. They are taught how to make straw-man arguments and how to debate. For this reason, Hindus must also educate themselves about Christian and Muslim dogmas, superstitions and nonsense. We must educate ourselves on misogynistic, intolerant and violent Biblical and Quranic verses. We must educate ourselves on the abundant atrocities involving Christianity and Islam throughout history.

Our treatment of others needs to be a reflection of the way they treat us. We should never resort to divisive, fanatical, elitist, dishonest, unethical or adharmic behavior. We should respect others as much as they respect us. If they believe that we deserve to go to an eternal hell because we are Hindu, then they deserve absolutely no respect whatsoever.

One of the hallmarks of the Hindu Dharma is its diversity and plurality. This, however, may also be the cause of some lack of unity. In order to effectively protect, preserve and promote Hinduism, Hindus worldwide must find some organization and common ground. We must come to understand the Hindu fundamentals most agree on, and we must all make a choice to become intellectual warriors.

We must arise and defend dharma, as Hindus have been doing for well over 1000 years. Monotheistic Persia first invaded India in the 4th century and they weren't the first by far. The Indian Hindus have always fought back against invaders, Abrahamic and otherwise. They didn't just lay down and surrender due to the law of ahimsa, as some may think. There was also over 1000 years of resistance against Islam and colonialism. This warfare was the longest conflict involving indigenous-pagan people the world has ever seen. It has been the cause of much unnecessary suffering, poverty and strife, as it left India in a feeble state and it's people devastated.



Many Hindus and Hinduism itself have a victim and/or a loser mentality and image, because many think Hindus just allowed themselves to become enslaved by Abraham-ism without a fight. Quite the opposite is true. Muslim invaders had great zeal, fighting in the name of Allah, religious supremacy and dominance. While Western Asia, North Africa and Spain fell victim to these Abrahamic invaders, Indian Hindu warriors countered these attacks and successfully resisted or dispelled such hoards for 550 years. Hindus have never lacked bravery or the resolve to fight back and defend themselves, their heritage and way of life. The Hindu warrior believes in karma and reincarnation, so is therefore not afraid of death.

Hindu armies fought off invaders to a great extent and won many battles. Many foreign armies were kept at bay or expelled. While modern day India holds an 80% Hindu majority, other Pagans populations worldwide were easily defeated by Abrahamics and either became extinct, or dwindled into an insignificant and oppressed minority.

In a period from 336-327 BC, Alexander the Great conquered Anatolia, Syria, Phocnicia, Judea, Gaza, Egypt, Mesopotamia, Persia, Bactriam. In 326 BC, he and his army of approximately 45,000 soldiers invaded India. In 325 BC, they were defeated by a Hindu army of approximately 35,000. Alexander and what was left of his army retreated and left India, never to return. I implore modern-day Hindus to also take up this cause, and to become defenders of dharma. I implore you to become intellectual warriors, advocates and activists of truth.

Combating COVID-19: The Geeta way

By Mahesh Pratap Singh

The World is in crisis. Coronavirus is taking its toll and the human race is facing an unprecedented, awesome and dreadful situation. Humanity is searching for some hope to cope with this onslaught. People across the globe are experiencing depression and the economic growth of the masses has melted away. Unemployment is ruling the roost and our starving sisters are giving birth to their children in harsh, hostile and extreme environments. This covid-19 created calamity can be neutralized if turn-around happens in our brains and the fear evaporates.

More than 5,000 years ago, at the battlefield of Kurukshetra, when Arjuna, the great warrior, saw his own kits and kins, his gurus and elders arrayed against him in the war. He was struck with fear and decided not to fight. He was overwhelmed with grief and put his weapon The Gandiv bow with arrows aside in disgust. Lord Krishna, his charioteer and guide, the eternal master, and the management guru, convinced him that elimination of the evil forces and protection of the righteous souls was the need of the hour.

The teachings of Lord Krishna, the master strategist, the yogic philosopher, the mystic lover, the divine artist, the universal teacher, transformed Arjuna from worrier to warrior. He fought and won the war.

The piercing and distilled wisdom of thousands of years watered down to us in the form of Shree Bhagavad Geeta the perennial philosophy the divine song the celestial song the supreme song.

The present scenario, of fear, despair, despondency and defeat at the hands of Covid-19 can vanish and the advancing tornado of destruction and deluge induced by the insidious Coronavirus will be sucked away if we take refuge in the commandments of the Godhead.

I have taken eighteen shlokas, one from each chapter, from 'Bhagavad Gita' which will work as strands for strengthening the filament of devotion forever. You can hear me recite them on the following Youtube link:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=enDLV89uDzA>.

Chapter 1- verse 28 arjuna uvaca drstvemam sva-janam krsna yuyutsum samupasthitam sidanti mama gatrani mukham ca parisusyati	Chapter 2- verse 37 hato va prapsyasi svargam jitva va bhoksyase mahim tasmad uttistha kaunteya yuddhaya krta-niscayah	Chapter 3- verse 39 avrtam jnanam etena jnanino nitya-vairina kama-rupena kaunteya duspurenanalena ca
Chapter 4- verse 38 na hi jnanena sadrsam pavitram iha vidyate tat svayam yoga-samsiddhah kalenatmani vindati	Chapter 5- verse 29 bhoktaram yajna-tapasam sarva-loka-mahesvaram suhrdam sarva-bhutanam jnatva mam santim rcchati	Chapter 6- verse 8 jnana-vijnana-trptatma kuta-stho vijitendriyah yukta ity ucyate yogi Sama-lostrasma-kancanah
Chapter 7 - verse 28 yesam tv anta-gatam papam jananam punya-karmanam te dvandva-moha-nirmukta bhajante mam drdha-vratah	Chapter 8- verse 14 ananya-cetah satatam yo mam smarati nityasah tasyaham sulabhah partha nitya-yuktasya yoginah	Chapter 9- verse 11 avajananti mam mudha manusim tanum asritam param bhavam ajananto mama bhuta-mahesvaram
Chapter 10- verse 3 yo mam ajam anadim ca vetti loka-mahesvaram asammudhah sa martyesu sarva-papaih pramucyate	Chapter 11- verse 34 dronam ca bhismam ca jayadratham ca karnam tathanyan api yodha-viran maya hatams tvam jahi ma vyathistha yudhyasva jetasi rane sapatnan	Chapter 12- verse 7 tesam aham samuddharta mrtyu-samsara-sagarat bhavami na cirat partha mayy avesita-cetasam
Chapter 13- verse 23 upadrastanumanta ca bharta bhokta mahesvarah paramatmeti capy ukto dehe 'smin purusah parah	Chapter 14- verse 22 sri-bhagavan uvaca prakasam ca pravrttim ca moham eva ca pandava na dvesti sampravrttani na nivrttani kanksati	Chapter 15- verse 20 iti guhyatamam sastram idam uktam mayanagha etat buddhva buddhiman syat krta-krtayas ca bhārata,
Chapter 16- verse 21 tri-vidham narakasyedam dvaram nasanam atmanah kamah krodhas tatha lobhas tasmad etat trayam tyajet	Chapter 17- verse 15 anudvega-karam vakyam satyam priya-hitam ca yat svadhyayabhyasanam caiva van-mayam tapa ucyate	Chapter 18- verse 16 tatraivam sati kartaram atmanam kevalam tu yah pasyaty akṛta-buddhitvan na sa pasyati durmatih. <i>pasyaty akṛta-buddhitvan na sa pasyati durmatih</i>

Financial Update: Hindu Temple Omaha

Hindu Temple, Omaha NE (Jan 2020 thru Oct 2020)

INFLOW		OUTFLOW	
<i>Hundi collections cash</i>	\$41,890	<i>Operating expenses</i>	\$111,338
<i>Direct deposits</i>	\$36,319	<i>Priest & Staff expenses</i>	\$98,517
<i>Puja services</i>	\$38,324	<i>Priest/Staff Housing</i>	\$0
<i>Donations</i>	\$165,563	<i>Temple Renovation</i>	\$62,637
<i>Sponsored/event collections</i>	\$82,221	<i>Sant Sadan Construction</i>	\$17,952
<i>Raffle (after prizes, expenses)</i>	\$0	<i>Sponsorship & Events</i>	\$5,954
<i>Pledged Donations</i>	\$72,406	<i>Devotee Loan & Mortgage Int</i>	\$50,022
<i>From Mortgage</i>	\$0	<i>Towards Mortgage/payoff</i>	\$32,490
<i>Federal Grants</i>	\$4,000	<i>Towards Housing/payoff</i>	\$15,622
Total Inflow 2020 (YTD)	\$440,723	Total outflow 2020 (YTD)	\$394,532

----- Balances As of October 30,2020 -----

Balance owed on Federal loans: **\$172,983**

Balance owed on Devotee loans: **\$850,101**

Balance owed on Short-term line of credit : **\$399,180**

Balance owed on priest/staff housing mortgage: **\$271,310**

Operating Account Balance : \$154,481

Savings (Endowment) balance : \$566,298

Interested in donating your appreciated securities (stocks)? It's very easy to transfer to your Temple! Please supply the following info to your brokerage firm.

Receiving Firm Name: **TD Ameritrade**

Receiving Firm DTC number: **0188**

Receiving Account title: **HINDU TEMPLE OMAHA**

Receiving Account Number: **868591259**

NOTE: This is subject to change and hence please check with Temple for the latest account information.

Then, email htom@htom.omhcoxmail.com with the details about your donation and contact information and with the subject line "Securities Donation" so that we can follow up to ensure a successful transfer. We generally consider the closing price of the stock on the day we have received to value your contribution. It's that easy!!

TRACK YOUR DONATIONS – We track your donations as complete as possible and send annual donation amounts to your address or email. For any changes please keep us updated with your latest email and physical address by e-mailing to htom@htom.omhcoxmail.com so that we can send financial communications to your latest email / address.

Please Sign up AmazoneSmile to Support our Hindu Temple

Welcome to AmazonSmile!

Thank you for supporting **Hindu Temple Ltd.**

Remember, always start at smile.amazon.com
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See your AmazonSmile impact

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Make it easier to return to smile.amazon.com

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Share AmazonSmile with your friends:



Please see <https://smile.amazon.com/about> for program details.

Wishing You All Very Happy Deepavali and New Year



From:

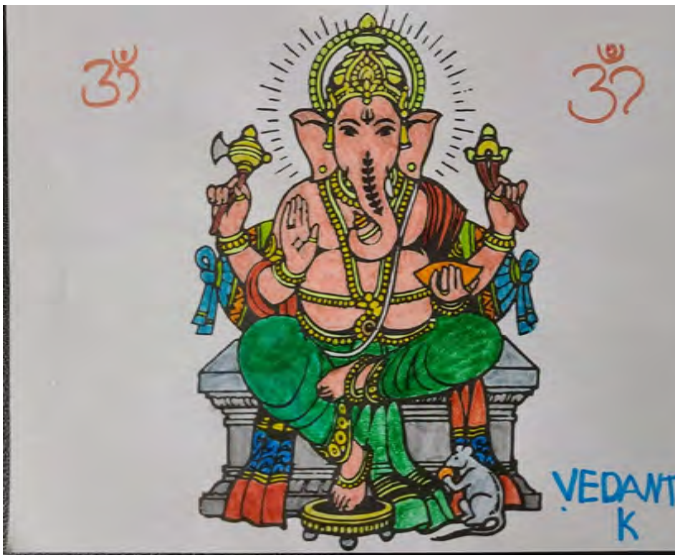
Jagdish and Swaroop Nijhawan

Vinay, Angie, Adam and Luke
Nijhawan

Dave, Anita, Andrew and Erik
Haggstrom

Bal Vihar Activities: Virtual & Remote Learning





**Balvihar Activities
by Kids**

Balvihar Message

Balvihar Omaha has been paving the way to cultural and spiritual awareness for our young generation since 1970's. Children (First-twelfth grade) are introduced to Yoga, chanting Prayers, Gods –Goddesses and Hindu Epics (Ramayana-Mahabharata). We discuss the symbolism of various Hindu rituals and festivals. Students also learn about great Saints of India and their contribution to Indian Heritage. This is only feasible because of our dedicated volunteers in teaching, supportive parents and committed community.

This is pivotal as we are not only introducing them to Hindu concepts and philosophy but also encouraging them to become tomorrow's torch bearers of Hinduism. Balvihar provides a place to our kids to get together with their peers in an inviting environment that introduces, encourages and fosters habits based on Hindu teachings. We feel appreciated and encouraged when our graduates share how they are benefiting from Balvihar learnings-

- Sense of Indian community
- Expose to Indian culture traditions and Hindu religion and spirituality
- Temple is a sacred place to practice Indian and Hindu beliefs
- Sets up to connect with Indian heritage, grand parents and other relatives till living in India
- Allows them to get their questions regarding India and Hinduism answered
- It offers place and opportunity to give back to community by volunteering in different activities while learning about their Indian roots
- Place that allows to expose other members of Omaha and Nebraska community to visit and get introduced to India and Hinduism by means of tours
- Provides platform to kids to expand their interests in extra curricular activities like- prayers/shlokas, dancing, plays, Hindu mythology, and volunteering

Balvihar 2020-2021 started online due to COVID-19, therefore we planned and executed our curriculum accordingly in Prathama, Dwitiya, Tritiya and Youth group. In spite of students being overwhelmed with the grade school commitment, twenty nine students registered for Balvihar this year. We will be delighted to welcome many more in the future. As we all know that 2020 has been filled with all kinds of challenges, Balvihar under the guidance of Hindu Temple leadership and Balvihar volunteers has adapted to continue to provide services and support our mission.

Purnima Singh, Balvihar Coordinator

Deepavali Article by Rakshith

தீபாவளி ஏன் கொண்டாடுகிறோம்? தீப ஒளி திருநாள் பற்றிய சுவாரச்ய தகவகள் !

தீபாவளி பண்டிகை என்பது பல புராண மற்றும் இதிகாச கதைகளுடன் தொடர்புடைய சிறப்பு மிகு பண்டிகையாக விளங்குகிறது.

பதினான்கு ஆண்டுகள் வனவாசத்தை முடித்த இராமன், இராவணனை வதம் செய்து மனைவி சீதை மற்றும் தம்பி லட்சுமணனுடன் அயோத்திக்கு திரும்பிய நாளை தீபாவளி பண்டிகையாக நாடு முழுவதும் கொண்டாடுகின்றனர்.

கிருஷ்ண பரமாத்மா நரகாசுரனை வதம் நடைபெற்ற நாளின் அதிகாலை எழுந்து

தலையில் நல்லெண்ணெய் தேய்த்து குளித்து, வீடு முழுவதும் தீபங்கள் ஏற்றி,

பட்டாசுகள் வெடித்து தீபாவளி பண்டிகை கொண்டாடப்படுகிறது.

ஸ்கந்த புராணத்தின் படி, சக்தியை சிவபெருமான் தமது சரிபாதியாகக் கொண்டு

அர்த்தநாரீஸ்வரர் அவதாரம் எடுத்ததை போற்றும் விதமாக தீபாவளி கொண்டாடப்படுகிறது

தீபாவளி மகாலட்சுமிக்கு பிரசித்தி பெற்ற தினமாகும். சுத்தமான வீட்டிற்குள் லட்சுமி வருவாள்

என்ற நம்பிக்கையால் தீபாவளிக்கு முன்னதாக வீடுகளை சுத்தம் செய்து செல்வத்தை வழங்கும்

மகாலட்சுமியை வரவேற்கிறோம்

தீபாவளி என்பது 'தீபம்' + 'ஆவளி'. 'தீபம்' என்றால் விளக்கு, 'ஆவளி' என்றால் வரிசை என

பொருட்படும். வாழ்வில் இருளைப் போக்கி ஒளிமயமாக்குவதே தீபாவளியன்று விளக்குகள் ஏற்றி வைக்கக் காரணமாகும்.



**Wishing You All Very Happy Deepavali and
New Year**



From:

**Dharmistaben and
Hemant Desai
Kajal and Akah**



Happy Diwali

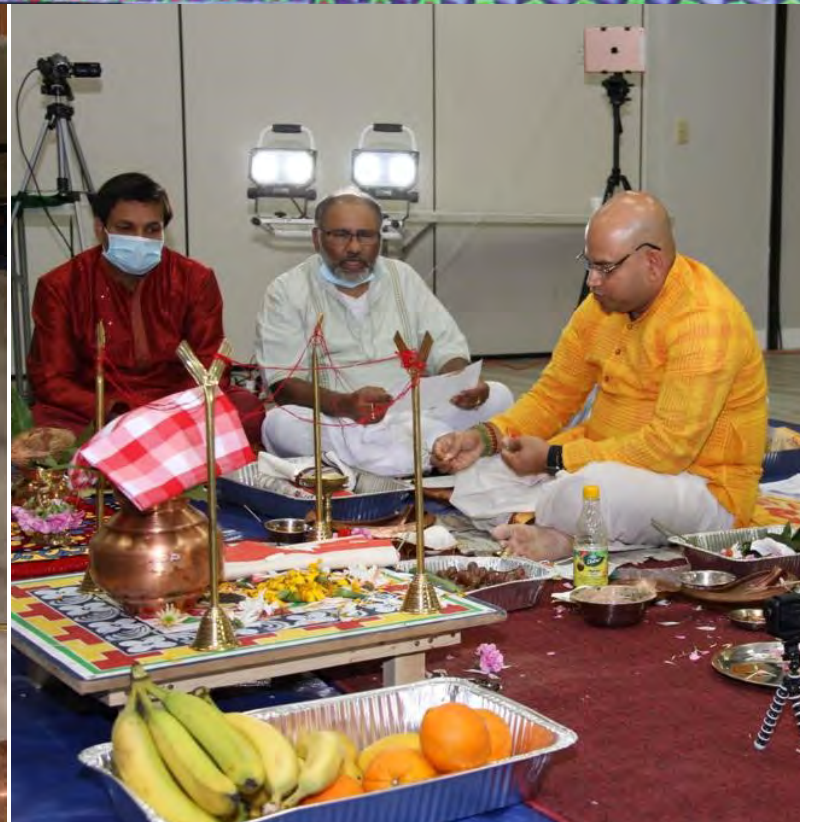
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Happy Deepavali and Prosperous New Year

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Diwali during Covid-19 Pandemic

Jitender Singh Deogun

Diwali, the festival of lights, is the most celebrated and the most ancient Indian festival that signifies and commemorates the triumph of righteousness (Dharma) over evil. It consists of five days of religious festivities, celebrations, gourmet foods, variety of delectable sweets, and devotional worships. It is a major religious festival celebrated by people of most religions of Indian origin including Hindus, Sikhs, Jains, and Buddhists. This year, in excess of a billion people will be celebrating Diwali all over the world. Diwali does not only celebrate the victory of good over evil but also teaches us to propagate peace and goodness among fellow citizens.

This Diwali—the Diwali 2020 is different. This Diwali has been eclipsed by Covid-19 (also called novel coronavirus) pandemic that has become a devastating global health threat. After starting in Wuhan, China the Covid-19 pandemic quickly spread across the whole world. It is believed that the Corona virus may have jumped from bats to the humans through an intermediate host like pangolin. The year 2020, the first year in the Chinese zodiac cycle, is known as the *Year of the Rat*. The Year of the Rat, in Chinese mythology, is considered to be an auspicious year that brings wealth and abundance. However, for the people not only in China but all over the world, the year of the Rat became a *bad year of the Bat*. In the space of last seven months preceding Diwali, the Corona virus has wreaked a multidimensional havoc on the entire humanity.

If it were not for the dark days of Kaliyuga, if it were not for the killing power of the novel coronavirus pandemic, the doors of the Temples would have never closed, the free Guru Ka Langar (free kitchens) of the Gurudwaras would have never stopped. The wrath of the global Covid-19 pandemic has brought death, misery, economic crunch, hunger, and mental health crisis. This may be the first Diwali we would be celebrating all alone in our homes. This Diwali may be not for dressing-up in traditional attires or loading up

on the best jewelry, this Diwali is not for having big parties and stuffing yourself on a variety of sweets. This Diwali is about realizing the human frailty in the wake of the Covid-19. This Diwali is more about following CDC and WHO guidelines for keeping social distances, this Diwali is about giving up one's inhibitions and wearing a mask, this Diwali is about washing your hands, and this Diwali is not about partying but being with the family and staying home. For the next several months life may still be full of hardships but as several covid-19 vaccine and treatment breakthroughs are on the horizon better days of normal life may not be far away. This Diwali is about having faith and being hopeful that a future with a healthy and happy normal life is really not far off.

The effect of Covid-19 disease varies widely from person to person, is not yet well understood, and is unpredictable. Moreover, its asymptomatic and presymptomatic transmission and persistent or late symptoms makes it an especially dangerous disease. This Diwali therefore is about staying safe, staying home and praying. This Diwali is about trying to understand the deeper meaning of Diwali. Diwali is not just a festival that we celebrate every year for a few days, but it is a continuous process of goodness winning over evil. Diwali is not even a yearlong event, it is the lifelong personal struggle to spread, to propagate, and to contribute to goodness so that collectively the humanity can win over the evil. This Diwali is about asking, "What can we learn from a little earthen lamp (दिआ, दीए) commemorating Diwali?" The answer comes from one of Rabindernath Tagore's poems in Bengali:

कैल्यौबे मोर कार्या, कहे संधिआरौबि
- शुनीआ जगत रहे निरुत्तर छौबी
मात्र प्रदीप छिलौ; से कहीलौ, स्वामी,
आमार जेतुकु साध्यौ कारीबो ता आमी

The poem narrates a conversation between the Sun and a small earthen lamp, and can be translated as follows:

Continued to the next page.....

The Sun was about to set and wondered what would happen when he retires for the night. The entire world heard it but was speechless. A mere little earthen lamp said, "(Don't you worry!) Sir, I shall brighten the world within my own ability."

Like a little lamp can lift plenty of darkness, make the life much easier for many a people and make the world much more livable, we can also contribute to the world within our own individual capacities by spreading a little love, a little light and a little goodness. We can see the earthen lamp in spiritual dimension in the following lines from a verse of Guru Nanak:

बिनु तेल दीवा किऊ जलै ॥१॥ रहाऊ ॥
पोथी पुरण कमाडीअै ॥ भऊ वटी हिनू तनि पाडीअै ॥
सच बूझणु आणि जलाडीअै ॥२॥
हिहु तेलु दीवा हिऊ जलै ॥
करि चानणु साहिब तऊ मिलै ॥१॥ रहाऊ ॥ (SGGS page 25.)

The essence of this verse of Guru Nanak is that without lighting the spiritual lamp, it is impossible to meet (to have Darshana (दर्शनः) of the Nirankar Prabhu when one is surrounded with the darkness of Maya (माया). It is impossible to lead a happy, healthy and meaningful spiritual life when we are engrossed by Maya (माया). In the above lines from the verse, Guru Nanak tells us how to light the spiritual lamp that dispels the darkness of ignorance and enlightens our lives. The first line is a question: How one light the spiritual lamp. The following four lines answers that question. First line describes the three parts of the lamp, earthen oil holder, the wick, and the oil. First, study and understand scriptures, then mold your life to truthful living as ordained by scriptures. In another verse, Guru Nanak says:

सचहु औरै सभु को उपरि सचु आचारु ॥(SGGS page 1188.)
Everything is below The Truth, that is, The Truth—The Brahman, is The Highest of all, yet higher still is *the truthful living*. The truthful living is the oil. One's mind and body make the earthen lamp that would hold the oil and love and devotion of the Supreme Lord is the wick. Now the lamp is ready to be lighted, light the lamp with knowledge of the Truth. Guru Nanak says,

I have described how to put together the spiritual lamp and how to light it. Once it is lit, the devotee will have the Darshana of the Supreme Lord. We can start on the path of *truthful* life by following the scriptures. Bhakti of the Supreme Brahman, Naam Japna—meditation on the Naam of the Supreme Lord, Kirtan, and Nishkam (selfless/desireless) Karma are the most important pillars of truthful living.

In the above verse, Guru Nanak tells us about the instruments we need for illuminating our path to the Darshana of the Supreme Lord. However, among all the necessary instruments and conditions leading to liberation Bhakti, or Divine Love alone is the greatest. Shandilya Bhakti Sutra (SBS) as well as Narada Bhakti Sutra propagate that Bhakti is supreme,

त्रिसत्यस्य भक्तिरेव गरीयसी भक्तिरेव गरीयसी ॥ NBS ११ ॥
Among the three paths (truths) (Karma, Gyan, and Bhakti Yoga) Bhakti, Devotion, or Divine Love alone is the supreme, indeed Devotion alone is the greatest. Narada Bhakti Sutra further declares that

यज्ञध्वा पुमान् सिद्धो भवति अमृतो भवति तृप्तो भवति ॥NBS4 ॥
A devotee who has found (gained) the supreme devotion, attains perfection, immortality and ultimate fulfillment. Similarly, for Guru Nanak, Bhakti of Brahman alone is the supreme,

नानक कै घरि केवल नामु ॥४॥४॥ SGGS pp. 534
Guru Nanak's philosophy teaches only Bhakti, Devotion, and Love of Brahman. Again,

नानक नाम अमोल ॥१॥ (SGGS page 265)
Guru Nanak says Bhakti of Brahman is Supreme. For Guru Nanak, Brahman is Divine Love,

घटि घटि बसंत बासुदेवह पारब्रह्म परमेसुह ॥ जाचति नानक
क्रिपाल प्रसादं नह विसरति नह विसरति नारायणह ॥ (SGGS pp. 1356)
The Supreme Brahman, The Transcendent, The WaheGuru, dwells in each and every heart. Guru Nanak prays for the blessing that by The Grace of The Merciful Lord, we may never forget, never ever forget Narayanh.

Acknowledgements: In addition to study of Hindu and Sikh Scriptures, the author benefited greatly from reading books and articles by many authors.



From:

Madhuben and Arvindbhai Patel
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Om Sri Muruga

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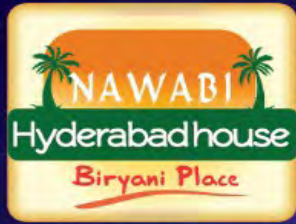
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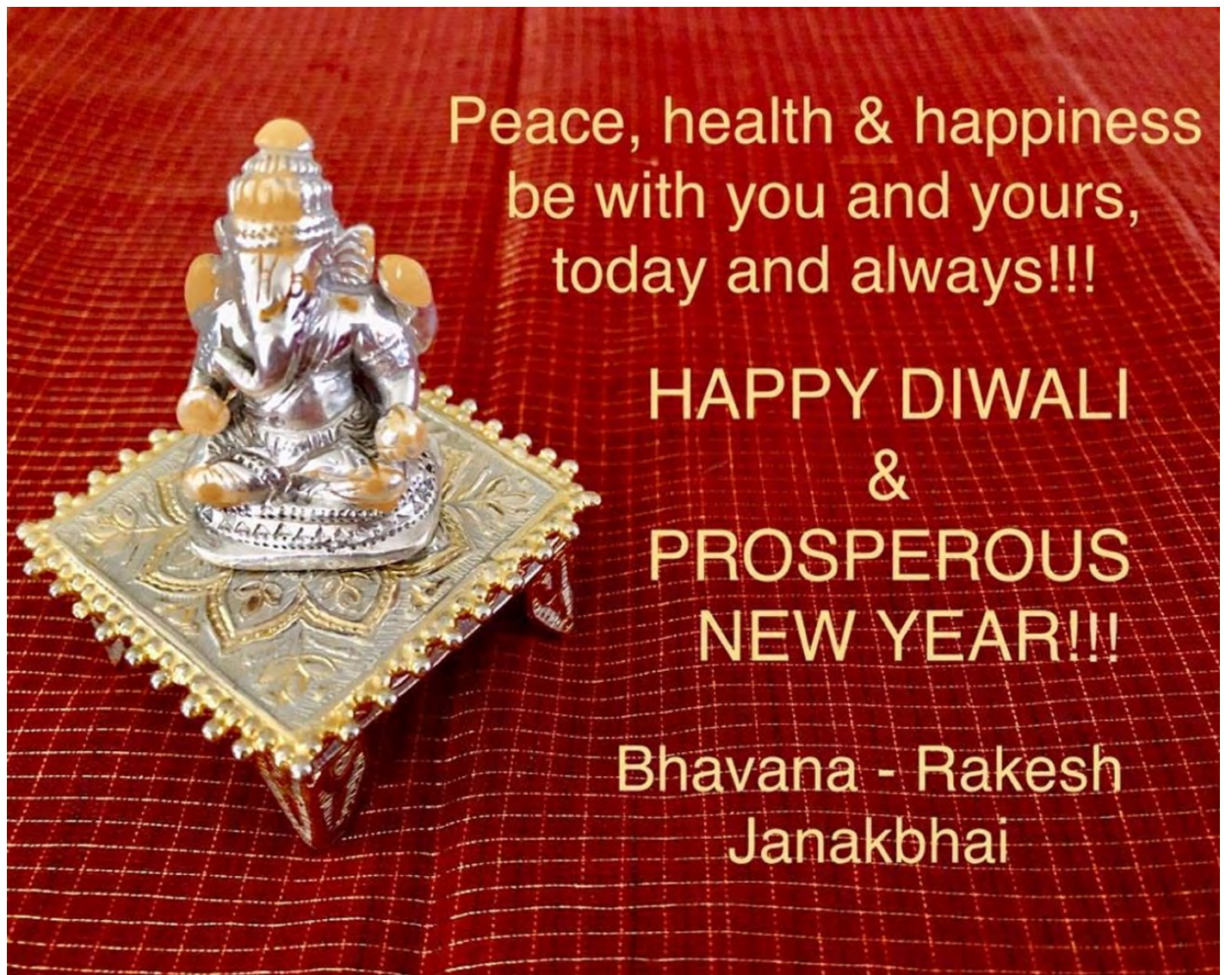
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And Deepa and Nikhil Kumar

Yashaswini K. Joshi & Family



**Our best wishes for a very
HAPPY DEEPAVALI to all**

**We pray for everyone's safety and
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Editor's Corner

"It is my great pleasure to bring the 2020 Deepavali special issue of Deepam to you all. We have included the useful updates and details of the major events such as Deepavali Puja, messages from our leaders, Deepavali greetings from our community members, a brief reports on Bal Vihar activities and upcoming major events/pujas of 2020. We thank all the devotees for their continued support of Deepam.

In this special issue, we have included an updated donors list as of December 31, 2019, including donors who have donated over \$1,000 donation to the temple since its inception. We sincerely thank all the donors for their generous contribution. If there is any error in the amount we have listed, please contact Shri Venkatesh Bettadapura or Shri Srini Nedunoori. Please help temple to grow by giving your precious time, effort, constructive criticism and generous donation.

We also want to thank all the advertisers for their support of this publication. We invite you all to consider contributing articles for publication in the quarterly Deepam issues. Articles from young adults are also welcome and I request the parents to encourage their children to contribute their articles. I look forward to your suggestions to improve the Deepam.

I also take this opportunity to thank the members of Publication Advisory Committee for their help in bringing this special issue. We also want to thank the Printing Facility, Creighton University for this publication.

Wishing you all a **"Very Happy Deepavali and Prosperous New Year 2020"**

Nagendra Chaturvedi, Editor

on behalf of Publication Committee

Hindu Temple

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From:

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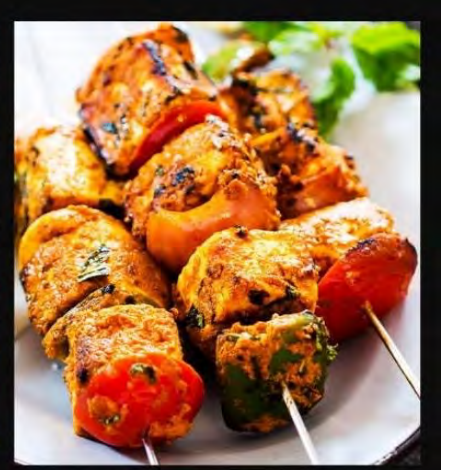
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