



**HAPPY DIWALI AND PROSPEROUS
NEW YEAR**



DEEPAM

**Volume 24, Deepavali Special Issue 2
November 2015**



Hindu Temple

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Deepavali 2015



November 14, 2015

Hindu Temple (13010 Arbor Street, Omaha, NE 68144)

Cultural Programs: 4.00pm to 6.30pm

Raffle: 6.30pm to 7.00pm

Dinner: 7.00pm onwards

Dinner Sponsored by Telugu Samiti of Nebraska

Raffle Ticket: \$10 only

Raffle Prizes

Ist Prize: \$1000 in cash/IIInd Prize: Nikon Camera (\$750)

IIIrd Prize: 55" Television (\$600)/IVth Prize: Kitchen Aid Hand Mixer (\$250)/ Vth Prize(3each): \$100 Grocery/VIth Prize:(4 each):

\$50 Indian Restaurant Gift Card/VIIth Prize(4each): \$25 Indian Restaurant Gift Card/ VIIIth Prize(4each): Santhi's Threading & Ayurvedic Spa/IXth Prize(10 each): \$15 Movie Gift Card

Celebrations Contact:

Murali Deshpande- 402 570 1342

Shantaram Joshi- 402 965 9777

Sashi Bhatia- 402 399 9283

Deepa Kashyap- 402 932 7395

Keerthi Ranjith- 402 319 8868

Raffle Contact:

Alekha Dash- 402 492 9707

Anil Bhalla- 402 333 6607

Chandrasekhar- 402 812 5654

Ram Bishu- 402 202 6987



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Pandit Damodara Bhattar
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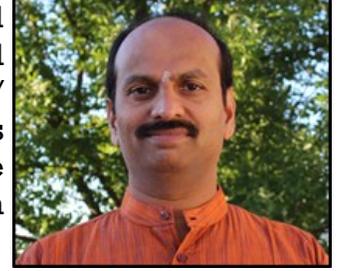
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MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Devotees,

Wish you and your family a Very Happy Deepavali, and a Happy & Prosperous New Year-2016. We are in the midst of a busy festival season, and I feel blessed to be associated with the festival activities in our Temple. The Temple recently celebrated major festivals such as Ganesha Chaturthi, Navarathri/Vijayadashami and Durga Puja. Hundreds of devotees visited the temple during this time and took part in the celebrations seeking the blessings of the Lord Prasanna Ganapathi.



Diwali/Deepavali is one of the major festivals celebrated all over the World by Hindus, Sikhs, Jains and others. Deepavali is celebrated for various reasons, one of them being the victory of Lord Ram over Ravan in Ramayan. Every reason for Deepavali celebration signifies the victory of Good over Evil. As the name itself suggests, Deepavali is the Festival of Lights. Philosophically in Hinduism, Light signifies Knowledge. We pray to god for "Thamasoma Jyothirgamaya" which means to "lead us from Darkness to Light", i.e., ability to discriminate between good and bad, and make us better human beings.

At this time, on behalf of the Hindu Temple Executive Committee, I would like to thank all the volunteers, sponsors, contributors for their help in bringing out the Special issue of Deepam on the occasion of Deepavali and New Year. Let this Deepavali and the New Year-2016 bring Health, Happiness, Peace, and Prosperity to all.

Let us pray to the Almighty to shower his blessings upon all of us.

Namaskar,



Murali Deshpande
President, Executive Committee
(2015-16)

**Be an Active Participant of the Temple
Activities**

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRPERSON

Dear Friends,

The Splendor of the season upon us is the biggest, the brightest i.e. celebration of Diwali or Deepavali meaning the festival of lights. Amongst other meanings, this festival epitomizes triumph of good over evil, overcoming darkness of ignorance with light of knowledge, beginning of the new and bright year, rekindling and strengthening old, current and new positive human relationships by investing in family and friends and nurturing our enlightened spirituality.



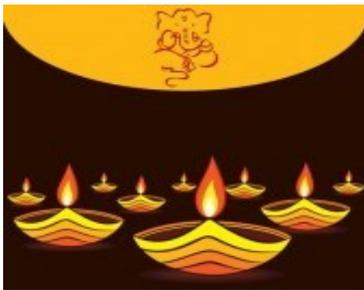
Grace of Goddess Lakshmi is upon us. She has bestowed prosperity and wealth on all of our Hindu community patrons that continues to grow and be prosperous. The Executive Committee and its component subcommittees continue to work harmoniously to maintain daily functioning of our Temple, make efforts to meet the religious/spiritual needs of our community. The Board of Trustees continues to work to actualize Vision 2020.

As we celebrate Deepavali we are mindful of needs of the poor and the disadvantaged, need for more space for the temple for our growing and prospering Hindu Temple community. I would personally urge you to support Hindu Temple by generous and regular donations and commitment of funds. Only with your support we can meet some of our past and emerging future goals.

My sincere thanks are to our wonderful, hardworking and generous volunteers who are corner stone of success of all our Hindu Temple operations. They truly embody generosity of spirit for all of us. I would also like to thank our Pandit-jis for their continued support to meet the religious needs of our patrons.

I will end my message with gratitude, warmth and best wishes for this festive season by communicating this to you all:

Lakshmi ka Hath ho, Sarasvati ka Sath ho, Ganesh ka niwas ho, Aapke Jeevan main Prakash hi Prakash ho.



Sincerely,

Shashi K Bhatia

Chairwoman, Board of Trustees



Hindu Temple, Omaha NE (Aug 2015 thru Sep 2015)

INFLOW		OUTFLOW	
<i>Hundi collections cash</i>	\$11,105	<i>Operating expenses</i>	\$18,953
<i>Direct deposits</i>	\$4,570	<i>Staff expenses</i>	\$4,623
<i>Puja services</i>	\$25,559	<i>Priest expenses</i>	\$13,199
<i>Donations*</i>	\$14,525	<i>Priest/Staff Housing</i>	\$2,936
<i>Sponsored/event donations</i>	\$6,698	<i>Other events*</i>	\$15,993
<i>Raffle (after prizes, expenses)</i>	\$0	<i>Mortgage interest</i>	\$2,516
<i>Priest/staff housing mortgage</i>	\$0	<i>Towards Mortgage/payoff</i>	\$10,968
		<i>Towards Housing/payoff</i>	\$1,662
Total inflow	\$62,457	Total outflow	\$70,853

----- **Balances As of September 30,2015** -----

Balance owed on Mortgage/Short-term line of credit : \$355,588

Balance owed on priest/staff housing mortgage: \$297,514

Operating Account Balance : \$97,362

Savings (Endowment) balance : \$17,324

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@htom.omhcoxmail.com Also please give us your current address if you have moved so that we can send financial communications to your latest address.



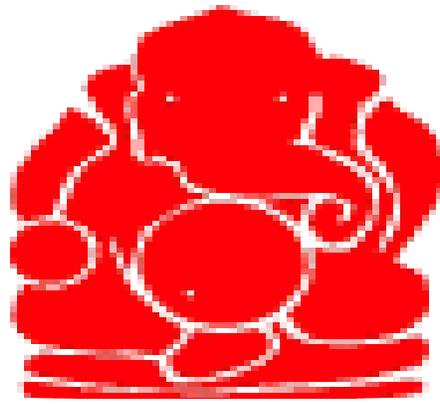
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STEP UP TO DONATE



Hindu Temple Automatic Monthly Donation Program: An easier way to make a difference...

1. A complimentary Archana will be performed for your family members on a Special Day of your choice and Prasadam will be mailed to you.
2. The desired amount of donation will be automatically debited from your bank account around 15th of every month.
3. All contributions are tax exempt. You will receive a receipt for your total annual contribution in January of the following year.
4. Funds from this program will be earmarked for the Operational Expenses of the Temple.



**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**



Happy Diwali Wishes

From:

Nayanaben and Thakurbhai Patel
& Krupa, Meera, Sunil



With best compliments from:

CHANDRA PONNIAH AND FAMILY

Happy Diwali



Prison - A School

Until God Realization does not take place, all 'jivas' (beings) are prisoners. You all should not think that we are very lowly. We are all children of God! Just as you have come to this prison against your will, you have not come here out of your own independent will, in the same way, we have all come to this world on becoming dependent, and after coming here, we are experiencing the fruits of our past deeds. So long as a man, subject to his 'karmas' (actions), enjoys its fruit, till then, he remains a prisoner.

Human birth is the only birth, in which one can realize the God, the Supreme Reality. We can become independent once and for all, dependence will be wiped out entirely, and for this itself this human body has been received. In this, there is two kinds of sense experiences - pleasure and pain. Man thinks he has become independent, while occupied in enjoying pleasures, and while suffering pain, he thinks he has become dependent. But this is a misunderstanding. If we were independent in enjoyment of pleasures, then we would only enjoy pleasures and pleasure all the time, and not suffer pain. But this is not in our hands. He has to undergo both pleasure and pain.

There is one exceptional point in suffering pain – in enjoyment of pleasures, our merits are decremented, but in undergoing pain, our sins are destroyed! You have come here to wipe out your sins. Man is imprisoned due to some sin or the other taking place. On staying in prison, till his prison time, the sins are destroyed, and when sins are wiped out, he becomes purified. Therefore, now, you, I and all of us should want to be free of pain and sorrows, not to do any work that is sinful, unjust, wrongful conduct, mis-demeanor and against scriptural injunctions.

You are getting an opportunity to learn this over here, in the form of work. This prison is a school. Here you get the education, that henceforth, I will not commit such sins. The pain that one feels from all the dis-pleasures in world such as from illness, suffering great financial loss, being insulted, receiving criticism, that pain is for teaching, that sometime or the other we have sinned, and this pain is the fruit of those sinful acts. Therefore, henceforth we will not commit any sin – one must learn this lesson. On suffering the consequences of past sinful deeds, the sins are destroyed. With the annihilation of sins, one becomes pure, free of any blemishes.

When the favorable situations come, when money comes, it is a payback for our virtuous deeds. The unfavorable situations that come, when man suffers financial losses, someone dies, when he falls sick – it is all a fruit of sins. Man goes to heaven, and enjoys the pleasures of his virtuous deeds. With the enjoyment of pleasures, the merits are decremented, and once again he falls down to the 'mrutyulok' (the abode of death-world).–

‘क्षीणे पुण्ये मर्त्यलोकं विशन्ति ।’ (गीता ९ । २१)

Ksine punye martyalokam visanti (Gita 9/21)

Meaning: Their merit is exhausted, they return to the mortal world. Sins are destroyed through experiencing adversities, and merits are destroyed through gratification of pleasures.

Janak Dave



Volume 24 Issue 2



LORD AYYAPPA

SWAMIYE SARANAM AYYAPPA

Lord Ayyappa is the son of God Siva and God Vishnu (God Vishnu in a delusory enchanting form as Mohini a bewitching beauty). God Siva succumbed to the charm and beauty of Mohini and as a result of their union, Ayyappa was born on the auspicious day of Makara Sankranthi, when the star Uttrarn was on the ascendance. Lord Ayyappan is also known as Hari Hara Putra - Hari (Vishnu), Hara (Siva), Putra (son). God Ayyappa is regarded as the third son of God Siva, the other two being God Ganesha and God Muruga. Lord Ayyappa's mortal life was to annihilate Mahishi (buffalo faced asura).

The demons (asuras) Mahishi and Mahishasura, sister and brother underwent severe penance and obtained boons from Brahma the Creator. As per the boons obtained, Mahishi could only be killed by a son born to Lord Shiva and Lord Vishnu. Since this was an impossible prospect Mahishi deemed herself to be indestructible and became very proud, aggressive and arrogant. She unleashed terror in all three worlds. The killing of Mahishasura by Durgadevi fanned the flames of arrogance. Mahishi became unstoppable.

Though confident in the God's powers, all wondered how a son will be born to two males, God Siva and God Vishnu. What they did not understand was that "Adwaita Brahma" was beyond such sectarian considerations.

On two occasions, God Vishnu had taken the form of Mohini (Enchantress). The first was during "Amrithamanthana". Through the combined effort of all living beings the Sea of Milk was churned. This was necessitated by the urgent need of obtaining Amrith (Devine Nectar) to cure the gods of aging, forced on them by a curse from the irrepressible sage Durvasa. After prolonged hard work when Amrith separated, the asuras took it away. God Vishnu set off to recover it from them. For this purpose the God transformed himself into a maiden of dazzling beauty. Mohini, the alluring damsel appearing at that time to entice the asuras resulted in recovering the nectar from the asuras.

The second occasion when God Vishnu took the form of Mohini was with the urgent purpose of saving God Siva from Bhasmasura. The asura Bhasmasura obtained a boon from Lord Shiva in that whoever he (Bhasmasura) touched on the forehead with his hand would be turned into ashes. To test the efficacy of this boon, Bhasmasura tried to touch the head of God Shiva Himself. The frightened Shiva sought help from Vishnu. In order to distract Bhasmasura, Vishnu appeared as the seductress Mohini in front of Bhasmasura. Bhasmasura lost control of his senses and asked Mohini to be his consort. Mohini agreed to his request on one condition: that he should promise her by touching his forehead that he would not take another wife. Bhasmasura readily agreed to this condition and promised her by touching on his forehead. Immediately, the boon given to him by Shiva became effective and Bhasmasura was reduced to a heap of ashes.

Birth of God Ayyappa

Shiva was enticed by the charm and beauty of Mohini (God Vishnu in the form of a beautiful damsel) and as a result of their union, Lord Ayyappa was born. Siva is known as the God of destruction and Vishnu the God of sustenance. These two powers are said to be combined in Ayyappa. Lord Ayyappa stands for constructive destruction which is a combination of Vishnu and Siva. He protects our spiritual wealth and grace by maintaining the thought of godliness and destroys all other thoughts pertaining to worldly infatuations. He is the symbol of unity among all sects of Hinduism. He destroys the low (tamasic) negative tendencies and promotes the pure cohesive (satvic) nature in the worshipper.

Shrine on Top of Sabarimala

Hindu shrines are usually situated near river banks, sea shores or mountain top to help pilgrims meditate and to give a sense of peacefulness. The shrines to be found on hill tops are especially enthralling, not only because of their religious appeal but also due to its approachability.

The hill shrine of Sabarimala and its deity Lord Ayyappa is matchless in Hindu religion and unique to Kerala State in South India. Sabarimala (Mount Sabari - about 3000 feet above sea level) is the most favorite and significant temple in Kerala. This forest abode of Lord Ayyappa is in the Western Ghats of India. Built on a plateau about 40 feet high, the Ayyappa temple commands a lofty view of the mountains and valleys all around. The deity is a beautiful idol of Lord Ayyappa in panchaloha, an alloy of five metals, about one and a half feet tall. The eighteen steps leading to the sanctum has great significance.

Lord Ayyappan is a symbol of religious unity and communal harmony. Sabarimala temple is open to all, irrespective of caste, creed, religion, social status or nationality.

Pilgrimage to Sabarimala

Pilgrimage to this temple symbolizes the journey to heaven. The journey of spiritual candidate to Sabarimala is difficult and adventurous. The pilgrims observe severe austerities, wearing rudraksha or tulusi beads strings in the neck and trek up the forest to reach the temple. The feeling of delight and spiritual elevation one gets when devotees have the darshan (when devotee sees) of the deity is remarkable and significant. The magnetic charm is so high, it makes any devotee, who undertakes the yatra (pilgrimage) once, to revisit the shrine every year in quest of spiritual solace. By observing stringent vruthams (austerities), the Ayyappa devotees purify their body, mind and intellect and achieve the ultimate sanctity to make pilgrimage to Sabarimala carrying on their head the "Irumudi" containing the Pooja items, to climb the 18 holy steps and have the Darsan of Lord Ayyappa.

The 18 Holy Steps

The 18 Holy steps are the holy pathways for the Jeevaatma to reach the Paramaatma. Jeevaatma has to cross the 18 virtues to merge with paramaatma. The first 5 steps signify the five indriyas or senses, the next 8 the ragas, the next 3 the gunas, followed by vidya and avidya. Crossing these would take the devotee closer to self-realization. The Holy steps 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 represent the 5 Panjendriams: (Smell, Hearing, Sight, Taste and Touch). The Holy steps 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, and 13 represent the 8 Ashtaragas: Kamam, Krodham, Lobham, Moham, Madam, Matsaryam, Thanbha and Asuya. The Holy steps 14, 15 and 16 represent 3 Gunas: Thamas, Rajas and Satva. The Holy step 17 represents Vidya and the Holy step 18 represents Avidya.

The shrine at Sabarimala is open only during specific period in a year. It is open from Mid-November to Mid-January and for first five days of every Malayalam month. The latest assessment indicates that more than Million Devotees visit Sabarimala annually. It is believed that Sabarimala receives the largest annual collection of devotees visiting on a single day (on Makara Sankranthi).

SWAMIYE SARANAM AYYAPPA

Ambika Nair



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Wishing You All
A Very Happy Deepavali

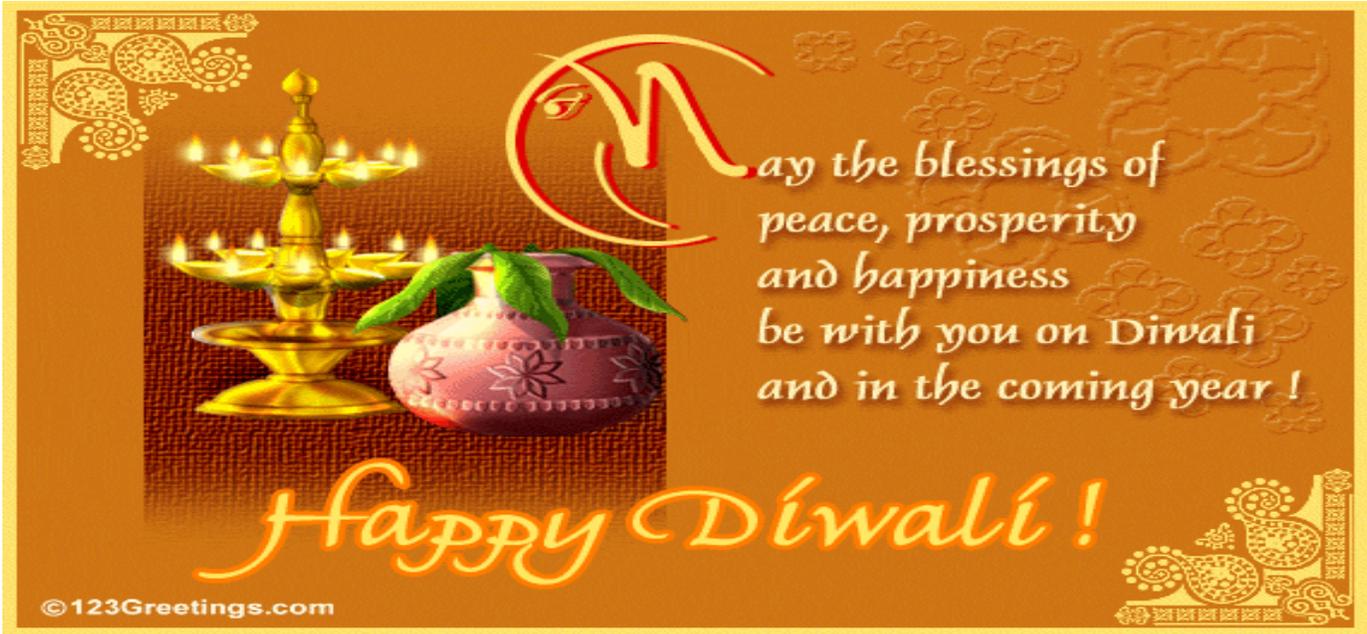
From:

Jitendra Deogun and Family





With best compliments from:
 Niranjnanaben and Ashwinbhai Patel
 Rupalbhai Patel
 Wayshalee and Brian McCabe
Happy Deepavali
and Prosperous New Year



Self-Realization

Jitender Singh Deogun

The concept of Self-Realization (अपरोक्षानुभूतिः) has its origins in the Advaita philosophy. It establishes the highest spiritual goal propagated by Hindu and Sikh Dharmas. Swami Yogananda, the founder of Self-Realization Fellowship (SRF) in USA defines Self-Realization as follows:

"Self-Realization is the knowing—in body, mind, and soul—that we are one with the omnipresence of God; that we do not have to pray that it come to us, that we are not merely near it at all times, but that God's omnipresence is our omnipresence; that we are just as much a part of Him now as we ever will be. All we have to do is improve our knowing."

Self-Realization is both the process and goal of recognizing that our true nature is the same as that of the Brahman—the Nirankar Prabhu, the Supreme Truth or Reality. The goal of Self-Realization is to free the human beings from the bondage of Maya and uplift them to a life of truthful and virtuous living and the state of Eternal Bliss. Self-Realization alone can free us from the bondage of Maya. The Advaita philosophy teaches us that servitude of Maya arises from our ignorance (अविद्या) of our true nature. Accordingly, the knowledge (ज्ञान) of our true nature brings the liberation. To understand Self-Realization, we must first understand the True Nature of Brahman and the concept of Maya. Then we can understand how Maya enslaves the humans and how fetters of the bondage can be broken to free the human spirit.

Brahman: Adi Shankracharya in Viveka Choodamani (VC), describes the nature of the Brahman in the following shloka:

अतः परं ब्रह्म सद्वितीयं विशुद्धविज्ञानधनं निरञ्जनम् ।
प्राशान्तमाधन्तविहीनमक्रियं निरन्तरानन्दरसस्वरूपम् ॥ VC 237
Therefore, whatever is manifested is the Supreme Brahman Itself—Real, non-dual, extremely pure, the essence of Knowledge-Absolute, taintless, supremely peaceful, without beginning or end, beyond all activity, and always of the nature of Bliss Absolute. Shankracharya further describes

that the Brahman transcends all diversities created by Maya. In the Sikh Scriptures, Sri Guru Granth Sahib (SGGS), Guru Nanak says,
सप्त दीप सप्त सागर नव खंड चारि वेद दस असट पुराणा ॥
हरि सभना विचि तूं वरतदा हरि सभना भाणा ॥ SGGS PP. 84

Guru Nanak says, O' Brahman, in Seven island, in Seven seas, in Nine divisions (of earth), in Four Vedas, and in Eighteen Puranas, you pervade and permeate in all, and all love you. The Brahman is the One Singular Reality that is Indivisible, Immeasurable, and Immutable. In Hindu Dharma, Brahman is represented by the sacred symbol ॐ. In Patanjali Yoga Sutras (PYS), Patanjali says,
तस्य वाचकः प्रणवः ॥ PYS 27

He (The Brahman) is represented by the sacred symbol ॐ Om, called Pranava. However, in the Sikh Scriptures, to emphasize the very Singularity and Unity of Brahman, Guru Nanak represents Brahman by an extension of the Om symbol. He places digit "1" before Om and the new symbol in Gurumukhi script is ੴ which is pronounced as Ek Onkar. This singular reality is Nameless and Formless, is the essence of all joy and is Pure Consciousness. The Brahman is Eternal, Unmanifest, and Self-effulgent. Guru Nanak says,
बंने नदरि करे जा देखा दूजा कोई नाही ॥
ऐको खि रहिआ सभ थाई ऐकु वसिआ मन माही ॥१३॥ SGGS PP. 463
As I cast my look around and see, I see there is none other. One, Singular Reality, The Brahman pervades all the places and dwells in all the hearts.

Maya (Illusion): Maya is an integral part of the nature of the creation, i.e. the phenomenal world. आपीनै आपु साजिओ आपीनै रचिओ नाऊ ॥

दुयी कुदरति साजीओ करि आसणु डिठो चाऊ ॥ SGGS PP. 463
Maya, therefore is something that The Brahman created Himself. The word—*maya* is derived from the Sanskrit roots, *ma* means not *ya* means that, *Ya ma samaya*, what is not there, that is Maya. Thus, Maya is illusory, it conceals the Brahman—the Ek Onkar, and the Unity appears as MANY and the unreal appears as real. This effect of Maya is called द्वैत, duality. However, the Advait

philosophy of Hindu and Sikh Dharmas' clearly state that Atman (self) and Brahman (Self) are one and the same. Sankaracharya says:

ब्रह्म सत्यः जगत् मिथ्या जीवो ब्रह्मो नपरः

The world is illusory, Brahman—Ek Onkar is the only singular reality. The Atman is not separate from Brahman. This line of Shankaracharya captures the basic underpinnings of Hindu and Sikh Spiritual philosophy. The empirical universe is not-real and the Pure Consciousness, the Brahman, the sub-stratum of creation is the only Singular Reality. This principle defies comprehension by ordinary human perception. This is because it is anti-intuitive and challenges our very existence, our existence and this empirical universe appears to be 'real' but it is NOT. To understand this seemingly paradox, we have to step aside and think of our existence beyond the mortal body and try to see the big picture. We have to awaken from the sleep of Maya. Maya obscures the Brahman such that His existence/presence is not apparent to normal human perception. Second, Maya projects the phenomenal universe as the reality. However, scriptures say that Brahman, Ek Onkar is the only One Singular Reality, everything else is illusory. Illusion means that ordinarily it is not possible to ascertain whether universe is real or not. Inability to decide whether it is real or unreal is Maya.

Self-Realization: From the definition by Swami Yogananda, it is clear that for Self-Realization *all we have to do is improve our knowing*. Guru Nanak says,

मन तू जेत सरूप है अपना मूल पहचान ॥ SGGS PP. 917

Oh my mind, know thy intrinsic nature—that the Divine Light, the Effulgence of The Brahman illumines you. We must know that our true nature, the innermost essence is the same as that of the Brahman. Mundakya Upanishad (Mu) says,

स यो ह वै तत्परमं ब्रह्म वेद भवति ब्रह्मैव भवति ॥ Mu. 3.2.9

One who knows Brahman becomes Brahman. Guru Nanak propagates similar philosophy,

जिनी आत्म चीनिआ परमात्म सोई ॥ SGGS PP. 421

Those who know Atman become Paramatman.

जन नानक बिनु आपा चीने मिटे न भ्रम की काई ॥ SGGS PP. 684

Guru Nanak says, that without knowing Self, the moss of delusion of duality cannot be eradicated.

Hindu and Sikh Advait philosophy clearly and emphatically propagates Bhakti Yoga as the best path for knowing the Brahman and thus breaking the bondage of Maya and liberating the human spirit. Shankaracharya in Vivekachudamani says,

मोक्ष कारणसामग्र्यां भक्तिरेव गरीयसी ॥ V.C. 31
Among all the necessary instruments and conditions leading to liberation Bhakti, Devotion, or Divine Love alone is the greatest. Narada Bhakti Sutra (NBS) propagate the same idea,

त्रिसत्यस्य भक्तिरेव गरीयसी भक्तिरेव गरीयसी ॥ NBS 81
Among the three paths (truths) (Karma, Gyan, and Bhakti Yogas) Bhakti, Devotion, or Divine Love alone is the supreme, indeed Devotion alone is the greatest. Narada Bhakti Sutra further declares that

यद्ब्रुवा पुमान् सिद्धो भवति अमृतो भवति तृप्तो भवति ॥ NBS 4
A devotee who has found (gained) the supreme devotion, attains perfection, immortality and ultimate fulfilment. For Guru Nanak, Brahman is all but Divine Love,

नानक के घरि केवल नाम ॥४॥४॥

Guru Nanak's philosophy teaches only Bhakti, Devotion, and Love of Brahman.

मिलि सखीआ पुछडि कहु कंत नीसाणी ॥

रसि प्रेम भरी कछु बोलि न जाणी ॥

When friends meet and ask me, say, what is the mark of the Lord. He is all Love, other than Divine Love, He is indescribable, He is imperceptible. As Brahman is not an object of perception, then how can we know Him. We go back to Mundakya Upanishad that says, *One who knows Brahman becomes Brahman*. Therefore, to know Brahman, we have to become Brahman. Starting with Jap, meditation on Brahman's Naam and virtuous and socially responsible living we need to develop Devotional Love and a personal relationship with the Brahman. Guru Nanak Says, सचहु औरि सभु को ॥ उपरि सचु आचारु ॥ SGGS PP. 1188

Everything is below The Truth (Brahman), Brahman is The Highest of all, but Guru Nanak says that higher still is the Truthful Living. A life of truthful living, Jap, meditation, and devotion helps us overcome the sense of ego. This ultimately leads to dissolution of mind, once the mind is dissolved, the Brahman appears by Itself.

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Happy Diwali

From:

Madhuben and Arvinbhai Patel

Megan and Samip

Emily and Sachit



Happy Diwali

From:

Sumitaben and Bhaskarbhai Patel

and

Sejal, Samir & Amit





Best Wishes Happy Diwali

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DEEPAVALI

Dr. GS Shivarudrappa (GSS), one of the National poets of India (Rastrakavi) from Karnataka has beautifully narrated the purpose of lighting a lamp in his Kannada Poem "Hanate hachuttene nanoo"- meaning "I too light a lamp". It's only a short summary of this poem and few stanzas are given below to know the exact purpose of lighting a lamp. The poem starts with the wish of poet to light a lamp on the eve of Deepavali.

"I too wish to light a lamp on every Deepavali,
Not with an illusion that I can evade darkness completely
Because darkness swallows the lamp's light
As the darkness is greedy at night
In order to come out of darkness in life
Decorated it with light of sacred literatures enough
But darkness never seems to be satisfied
Cannot be controlled and it gets gathered around
Even then I continue to light the lamp
Not with an illusion to rule the dark in a lump
But with only a wish to see your face
At least to the time till the lamp glows
Once the light goes off and darkness rules
You cannot see my face and some yours".

Let's go from darkness towards light – is the message in a single phrase in sankrit as "*Tamasoma Jyotir-gamya*". Knowledge is the light and power. All Hindu festivals are designed with a hidden message in them, but we hardly ever celebrate the true essence of the festivities. Though a lot rituals are required to be observed, it's not wise to depend completely on them. Hindu religion is so flexible, to the extent that, it can accept any change in ritual, if one happens to be conscious of purpose. Unlike other festivals, due to its extensive observance in India and abroad as well, many facts and significance that are associated with Deepavali are:

It is the birthday of Lakshmi, Goddess of wealth. She came along with many other auspicious things when the great churn of Mandara Mountain on new Moon day of Karthik month. Also this day happens to be the day of marriage of Lakshmi with Vishnu with lights lit around.

In Bhagavat Puran it is explained that Vishnu took the incarnation of a dwarf man to control the King Mahabali. Though demon king Bali was strong but cruel to gods, had to surrender to the words given to dwarf man Vamana. To keep up the promise, he was drowned to below the sea bed. But he will be treated with respect by his subjects on the day of Deepavali.

During Deepavali, Naraka, another demon who was tyrannical in heaven and earth, was destroyed by Lord Vishnu and released 16,000 imprisoned women.

In Mahabharat, Pandavas returned to Hastinavathi on Karthik Amavasya from their banishment of dice game and celebrated Deepavali. The great hindu epic Ramayana describes how Lord Rama conquered Ravana and brought his wife Seetha to his capital Ayodhya and celebrated the event by lighting lamps all over his kingdom.

Vikramaditya, the legendary Indian king was coroneted on the day of Deepavali. This great monarch had extended his kingdom to the areas like modern day Thailand, where even today Deepavali is being observed with all fame and grandeur.

Just like Lakshmi Pooja being observed during Deepavali, Kali Pooja is also in practice in areas like West Bengal. This fierce form of Parvathi, was controlled by Lord Shiva, when she was about to kill anyone who came her way.

India being a vast country with vivid culture and pooja systems, Deepavali stands unique by its special rituals and three and half day long observance. This happens to be one of our National Festivals and enjoyed by one and all regardless of faith.

Let Deepavali bring happiness in all of us!

Shankara Ajjampura



**Happy Deepavali
and Prosperous New Year
Prema and Shankara Ajjampura
Ramya and Naveen Canumalla**

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





Upcoming Pooja Events (November – December 2015)

Date	Day of the Week	Puja/Festival/Celebration
8-Nov-2015	Sunday	Dhanteras Pradosham
10-Nov-2015	Tuesday	Narak Chaturdashi Diwali
12-Nov-2015	Thursday	Gujrati New Year
14-Nov-2015	Saturday	Temple Diwali Celebrations
22-Nov-2015	Sunday	Tulasi Kalyanam
25-Nov-2015	Wednesday	Kartikai Deepam Sarvalaya Deepam Satyanarayana Vratam
28-Nov-2015	Saturday	Sankatahara Chaturthi Prasanna Ganapathi Abhishekam
5-Dec-2015	Saturday	Mandala Kala Abhishekam
16-Dec-2015	Wednesday	Dhanus Sankramana
19-Dec-2015	Saturday	Mandala Kala Abhishekam
21-Dec-2015	Monday	Vaikuntha Ekadashi Uttarayana Shishir Rutu
25-Dec-2015	Saturday	Mandala Kala Abhishekam
27-Dec-2015	Sunday	Mandala Sampathi
28-Dec-2015	Monday	Sankatahara Chaturthi Prasanna Ganapathi Abhishekam
31-Dec-2015	Friday	New Year Puja
22-Nov-2015	Sunday (Morning)	Skanda Shasti/Soorasamharam Special Puja (This Puja will be per- formed for the first time and will be headed by Guest Priest Vedamurthy Yagneswara Dhikshitji)



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hindu temple
Omaha, Nebraska

MandalaKaala Arambha Puja 2015

Guest Priest: Sri Yagneswara Dhikshitar

Priests: Pandit Vidya Shankar Ji and Pandit Damodhar Bhattar Ji

Saturday November 21st Morning, 2015



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

Program

08:30 AM - 09:00 AM	Ganapathi Homam
09:00 AM - 10:00 AM	Sankalpa, Kalasha puja, abhishekam
10:00 AM - 10:45 AM	Alankaram, Bhajans, Ratha yatra with talappoli
10:45 AM - 11:15 AM	Ayyappa Ashtothara Namavali and Sharana ghosham
11:15 AM - 12:00 PM	Padi puja, Ayyappa Namaskaram, Deepa Aradhana
12:00 PM - 01:00 PM	Prasadam

Devotees are encouraged to sponsor kalasha puja for \$101. Signup sheets will be posted at the Temple or contact Ratheesh Nair at 402-403-3422

The ratha yatra (also known as sreebhuthabali) is accompanied by thalappoli. Children and Ladies are invited to participate in the thalappoli. 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.**

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT

Web: www.htom.org

Email: Htom.puja@gmail.com

Call: 402 697 8546



Diwali Wishes



Happy Diwali and Prosperous New Year

From:

Dharmistaben and Hemant Desai

Kajal and Akah



**HAPPY DIWALI AND
NEW YEAR**



FROM:

Bharati and Ashok Patel

Deep, Neel & Jay



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From:



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May this festival of lights be a festival of joy for you
Happy Deepawali

&

Happy New Year

From:

**PURNIMA AND BABU GUDA
RAHUL AND REEMA**

Diwali Poem

The lights are shining
the sweets are attracting
it's to celebrate Diwali in a way that is exciting.
We clean the house for goddess Lukshmi to come,
my mom buys fresh fruits like apples, bananas and sweet plumbs.
It's finally time to celebrate a holiday from where we come from.
We light the diyas and the candles.
The joy is so amusing like a ride on a camel.
My mom helps me light them because it is something I can not handle.
We dress in nice clothes
as the whole house glows.
We as a family are so eager to puga.
I play the drums as father sings songs
my whole family sings along.
At the end we take a moment to pray to god.
I pray for my family and ask god to help me with all my jobs.
Then we give prasad to all the people we know.
They say thank-you and give me fruits and a rose.
At the end we party and play cards
Its always a pleasure to throw your hands up and have some fun.
I will always remember how much joy I have in this festival.
The lighthearted glee is always so unforgettable.
Happy Diwali to all families,
may your wishes come to reality.



Saanvi Mehrotra
(Youth Group)

HAPPY DEEPAVALI WISHES FROM THE RAMAKRISHNAN FAMILY



From:

Usha and VT Ramakrishnan

Praveen Ramakrishnan

Madan and Lauryl Ramakrishnan



Drawing from Balvihar Kids



THE NIGHT OF LIGHTS

The second I step foot inside our Hindu Temple, the booming joyous laughter rings in my eardrums. My lips very slowly start to morph into a smile. My pace quickens waiting to see all the programs that are being performed. The melodious tunes, the chanting and the performances correspond in perfect harmony to give the devotees a wonderful experience at this terrific temple.

I practically taste the aroma of the delicious food creeping up my nose. My stomach is grumbling waiting for food. The colorful vibrant dresses flow like an ocean. The piercing yet hilarious whistles place a smile on everybody's faces and it rings through the pitch black space around me illuminated by diyas/lights.

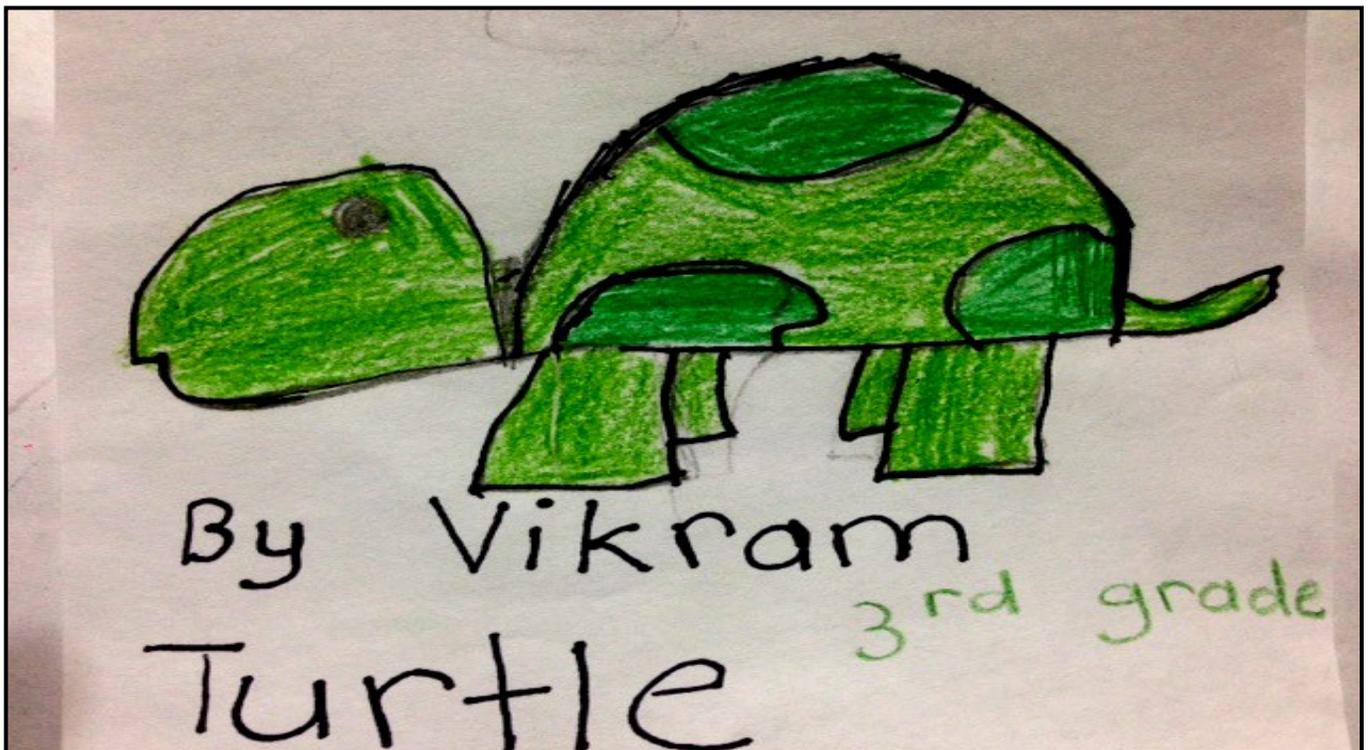
The celebratory time of good over evil is cherished by millions of people. Though we may be halfway across the world from our country, this perfect temple brings that environment just miles from our homes. The beautiful decorations strung across the stage with the lamp signify that Diwali is not only here in this temple, but also in our hearts. The faithful devotees show their love and kindness in this veneration where we forget our differences and unite as one as we wonder through the night.

BY: ANUSHA DESHPANDE
(7TH GRADE)



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Drawing from Balvihar Kids





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BalVihar–Kids Write-ups and Activity

Thoughts of kids on BalVihar:

Tanishqa Patil, Grade 2- I like BalVihar because we listen to stories, learn Hindi, learn about India, do yoga, and it is fun.

Rahul Mohan, Grade 2- I like BalVihar because I learn Hindi (alphabets, fruits, vegetables, body parts), about Gods, read books, and funday.

Arunem Bhowmick, Grade 2- I like BalVihar because I learn a lot of Hindi, do fun activities, teachers give candy, and BalVihar is awesome.

Vikram Nagaraj, Grade 2- I like BalVihar because I learn and feel great about India, read awesome stories on India, feel really good about learning Hindu Gods, learn about morals, and share ideas & experiences in class.

Sririam Srinivas, Grade 2- I like BalVihar because it is fun, reading stories about India & mythology, and Hindu Gods & festivals.

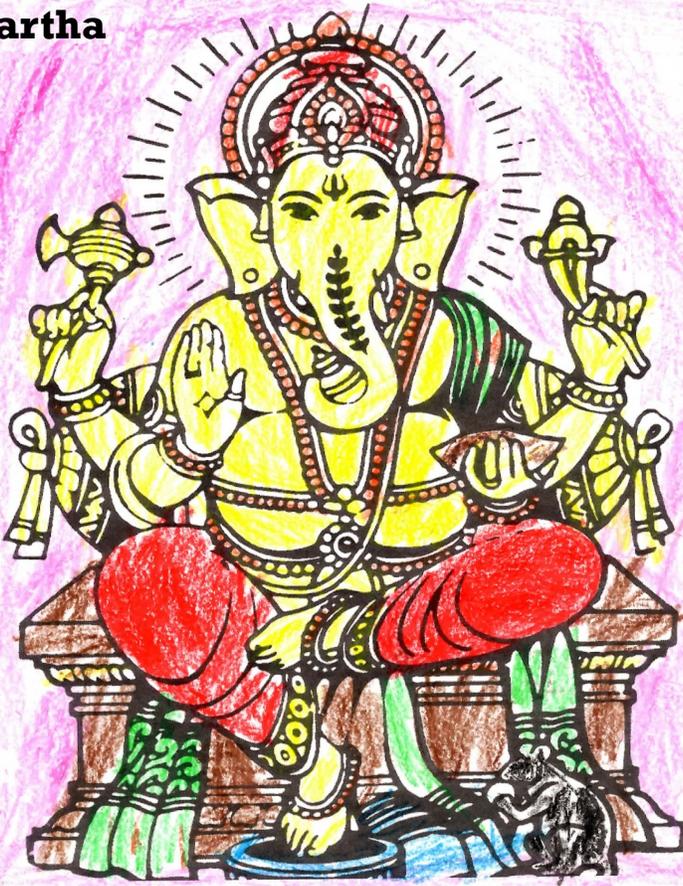
Ninad Rao, Grade 2- I like BalVihar because is fun, no homework most of the time, and tell stories

Poem on Deepavali by Shravan:

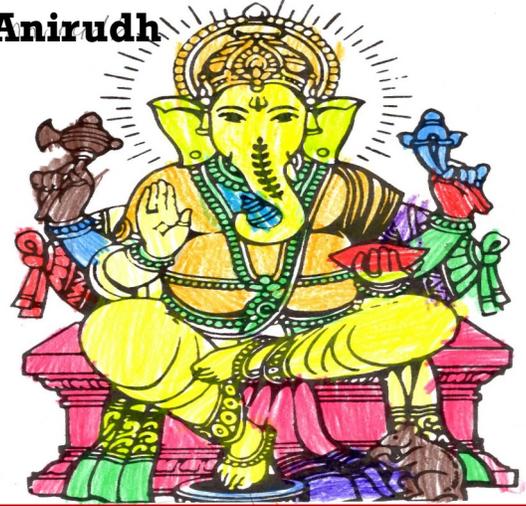
Deepawali, Deepawali,
It came so fast.
Deepawali, Deepawali,
Now is not the time to sit and Bast.
Deepawali, Deepawali,
Let's have some fun fast.
Deepawali, Deepawali,
I watch the fireworks you can't be last.
Deepawali, Deepawali,
Let's eat some sweets and friends here we meet.

Ganesh-Ji Drawings from BalVihar Kids

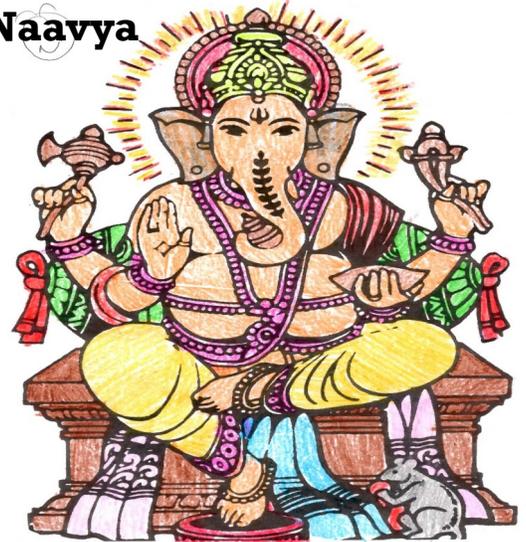
Partha



Anirudh

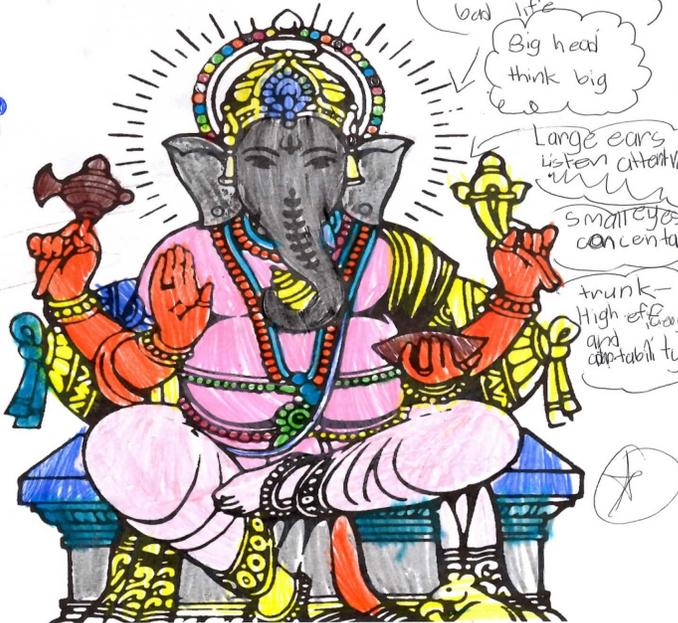


Naavya

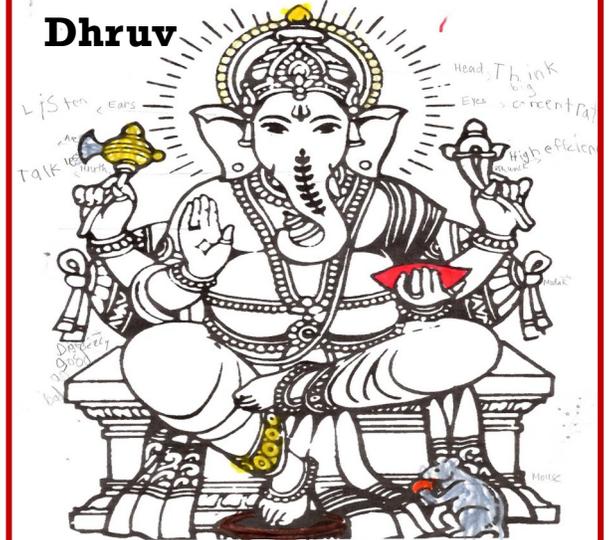


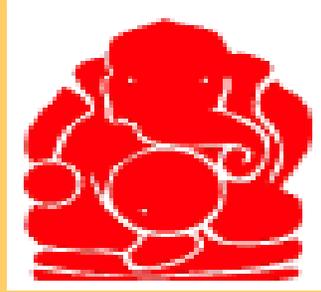
Jiya

From: Priyanka pva65910@gmail.com
 To: Ganesh Ji
 Date: October 18, 2015 at 8:59 AM
 To: pva65910@gmail.com



Dhruv





Happy Deepavali Wishes

From:

SARASWATHI AND GAJANAN JOSHI

Sumangala and Shantaram Joshi

Yashaswini and Krishnamurthi Joshi

And Deepa Joshi



Editor's Corner

It is indeed a pleasure to bring this special Deepavali issue of Deepam. As usual we have attempted to include useful information and Diwali wishes of our community members. I thank them for their continued support of the Deepam. In this special issue, we have included several articles related to religious, spiritual and social issues for our community. The contents in each one of the articles are the views of the authors and as an editorial policy we have not altered the content except for minor editing. We want to sincerely thank all the well-wishers and the contributors for this publication. We invite you all to consider contributing articles for publication in Deepam. Articles from young adults are also welcome and I request the parents to encourage their children to contribute their articles. As always constructive comments and suggestions from the readers are most welcome.

I also take this opportunity to thank the members of Publication Advisory Committee Babu Guda, Shantaram Joshi and Manju Mehta for their help in bringing this issue. We also want to thank Mr. Shane Harris from the Creighton University Printing Facility for going out of their way in helping us in printing this publication. A major way of improving the quality of Deepam is to get a constructive feedback from its readers. I look forward to your suggestions to improve the Deepam.

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

I look forward to hearing from you all

Namaskar!

Nagendra Chaturvedi
Editor



From:
Archana & Nagendra Chaturvedi
Partha & Prahaan





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Durga : Meaning & Symbolism

The word "Durga" in Sanskrit means a fort, or a place which is difficult to overrun. Another meaning of "Durga" is "Durgatinashini" which literally translates into "the one who eliminates sufferings. Thus, Hindus believe that goddess Durga protects her devotees from the evils of the world and at the same time removes their miseries. Goddess Durga is depicted as having eight or ten hands. This is as per the impression of the artist or sculptor. Mostly she has only eight hands. These represent eight quadrants or ten directions in Hinduism. This suggests that she protects the devotees from all directions.

Durga's Weapons:

In one hand (right top) she does not hold anything and it is the Blessing hand (Abhaya Hastham) and the remaining 7 hands hold:

The conch shell in Durga's hand symbolizes the 'Pranava' or the mystic word 'Om', which indicates her holding on to God in the form of sound.

The bow and arrows represent energy. By holding both the bow and arrows in one hand "Mother Durga" is indicating her control over both aspects of energy - potential and kinetic.

The thunderbolt signifies firmness. The devotee of Durga must be firm like thunderbolt in one's convictions.

The lotus in Durga's hand is not in fully bloomed, it symbolizing certainty of success but not finality.

The "Sudarshan-Chakra", which spins around the index finger of the Goddess, while not touching it, signifies that the entire world is subservient to the will of Durga and is at her command.

The sword that Durga holds in one of her hands symbolizes knowledge, which has the sharpness of a sword.

Durga's trident or "trishul" is a symbol of three qualities - Satwa (inactivity), Rajas (activity) and Tamas (non-activity).

One may also see the symbolism as:

- Chakra in her 1st upper right hand symbolizes dharma (duty/righteousness). We must perform our duty/responsibilities in life.
- Conch in her first upper left hand symbolizes happiness. We must perform our duty happily and cheerfully and not with resentment.
- Sword in her second right lower hand symbolizes eradication of vices. We must learn to discriminate and eradicate our evil qualities.
- Bow and arrow in her second left lower hand symbolizes character like Lord Rama. When we face difficulties in our life we should not lose our character (values).
- Lotus Flower in her third lower left hand symbolizes detachment. We must live in the world without attachment to the external world. Just like the lotus flower stays in dirty water yet smiles and gives its beauty to others. This is the only way to receive her blessings.
- Club in her third right lower hand is the symbol of Hanuman and symbolizes devotion and surrender. Whatever we do in our life we do with love and devotion and accept the outcome as the Almighty's will.
- Trident/Trishul in her fourth left lower hand symbolizes courage. We must have courage to eliminate our evil qualities and face the challenges in our life.
- Fourth Lower Right Hand symbolizes forgiveness and her blessings. We must forgive ourselves and others for mistakes and/or any hurt we may have caused.

Durga Maa is depicted as riding on a lion or a tiger. A tiger symbolizes unlimited power. Durga riding a tiger indicates that she possesses unlimited power and uses it to protect virtue and destroy evil. The lion is a symbol of uncontrolled animalistic tendencies (such as anger, arrogance, selfishness, greed, jealousy, desire to harm others etc.) and her sitting on it reminds us to control these qualities, so that we are not controlled by them.

She is usually shown wearing a red sari. The color red symbolizes action and the red clothes signify that she is destroying evil and protecting mankind from pain and suffering.

**By:
Sadhvi**

Hindu Temple VISION 2022

Long-range planning committee is working on Hindu Vision 2022 developed during Dr. Sanjay Singh's stewardship and presented and approved in Jan. 2014. It was a year-long (2013-14) exercise and included input from community and leaders.

Vision 2022 includes four tasks (see below) and we will attempt to address those tasks with your help and support. In all these areas, SPACE and MONEY are major issues that must be addressed and that will be major focus for 2015-16. We need more space for most of the proposed tasks and we have started the process to accomplish it.

1. EDUCATION

GOALS:

- Balvihar – Teacher training, Online education, Space, Curriculum
- Youth Group – Increase numbers & interest, Online Education, curriculum, able to educate peers about their faith with confidence. Sense of service
- Adult Education – Basic Hindu Concepts
- Center of Learning – Training Pandits & also Acharyas
- Dharma Deepam publication –twice a year

Requirements:

- A plan for implementation
- Detailed information about resources needed:
 - Money
 - Space
 - Personnel

2. Vedantic & Spiritual

GOALS:

- Vedantic Center of Hindu Temple –
 - Regular scheduled activities – ie. once a month
 - Special events,
 - Designated Budget.
- Involve the YOUTH
- Provide Avenues for Spiritual Advancement of our devotees
- YOGA – Collaborate and provide opportunities

Requirements:

- A plan for implementation
- Detailed information about resources needed:
 - Money
 - Space
 - Personnel

3. Religious Services

GOALS:

- Increase participation of youth & women.
- Dedicated space or building for Gurus
- Increasing the number of priests to 3 or 4
- National Conference on Hinduism-Sanatan Dharma
- Dharma Deepam publication –twice a year
- Make religious rituals understandable to all

Requirements:

- A plan for implementation
- Detailed information about resources needed:
 - Money
 - Space
 - Personnel

4. Community Service

GOALS:

- Opportunities for regular Service by Hindu Temple
- Need regular service activities for our children & youth
- Opportunities for service and assistance in India
- Inculcate a sense of service – ‘Seva Bhav’
- How to coordinate with the IAN

Requirements:

- A plan for implementation
- Detailed information about resources needed:
 - Money
 - Space
 - Personnel

Hindu temple management is considering purchase of Northside property (see details below) which can fulfill our current space requirement and future growth. Long range planning committee and fund raising committee have developed plans and will be presenting it to the community.

Northside Property



- 17,500 Sq ft finished space
- 2.2 Acre land
- Estimated cost for purchase and development: \$1.25 million

With Prasanna Ganapati's grace, and your generous support, we will be able to accomplish these goals.

By: Dr. Rakesh Singh
(Chair Long Range Planning Committee)

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Dr. Shailendra Saxena, M.D., Ph.D.
A Staunch Supporter, leader, donor
and Past Chair of the Board of
Trustees of our Temple



**Shri Suresh Seshadri, a longtime
volunteer, Served as Puja
Committee Chair, Vice President
and President of the EC of our
Temple**



**Shrimati Vandana Singh, 2015
Outstanding Volunteer of the Year**



**Shri Venkatesh Bettadapura, 2015
Outstanding Volunteer of the Year**



**Shri Vijay Anand Kannan, 2015
Outstanding Volunteer of the Year**





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Happy Deepavali to You All
From Hindu Temple, Omaha NE