



HINDU CONNECTIONS

August, 2009

Vinyaka Puja & Havan (Homam) Ceremonies at AHA Temple grounds on Aug 29, 2009

A special Vinyaka Puja and Havan (Homam) ceremony was organized on the temple grounds on Saturday, August 29th afternoon. The canopy in the backyard of



the temple was decorated as a pandal sanctum sanctorum and Lord Ganesha's idol was set up on an altar within. A Havan-Kund was set up at the foot of the canopy and a huge tent set up right after to accommodate attending devotees. The decorations and set up reminded one of the way Vinayaka Chaturthi festival is celebrated back in India. It was truly a heartwarming and nostalgic sight. The ceremonies of the afternoon started with Pandit Raghuchandra Bhatt-ji performing the Ganapati Avahan, Archana, and Puja in accordance with ritual appropriate to the occasion. This was followed by Havan (Homam) in which all devotees who had sponsored the event got the opportunity to do Havan offerings personally. The ceremonies concluded with Aarti, darshan of the deity, blessings and Prasad distribution by Pandit-ji. All sponsoring devotees also received a Tulsi (holy basil) plant as a token of appreciation. In spite of the inclement weather there was a good 100+ crowd in attendance for the occasion. The evening concluded with a sumptuous dinner graciously sponsored by MVS Corporation.

Krishna Janamashtami Celebrations - Aug 14, 2009

Sri Krishna Janamashtami was celebrated at the AHA temple on Friday, August 07, 2007. Volunteer devotees had lovingly setup and decorated a 'jhoola' (cradle swing) for the Lord. It being a Friday the celebrations were scheduled for the evening hours. The temple was jam packed with devotees. The 200 plus crowd was



spilling outside. The puja ceremonies were conducted with complete devotion by priest Sri Raghuchandra Bhatt-ji in accordance with the ritual appropriate to the occasion. After the puja rituals, all present sang the Aarti in praise of the Creator of the universe who had graced mankind by taking birth as a baby to liberate mother earth of the reigning evil at the time. The Lord who gave the gift of Sri Bhagvad Geeta (The Divine Song) whose concepts and teachings are as relevant today as they were when it was first recited by Sri Krishna to Arjuna the great warrior thousands of years ago on the battlefield of Kurukshetra. After the Aarti all devotees got blessings and Prasad from the priest and a blessed opportunity to sway and rock the cradle of the baby Lord Sri Krishna. The evening concluded with a sumptuous dinner graciously sponsored by Taj India Restaurant, complete with special food for those observing a fast. All devotees left satisfied with fulfilling spiritual experience.

Vinyaka Chaturthi Celebrations at AHA Temple, on Aug 23, 2009 ~ AHA Reporter ~ Dr. Jagan Iyengar

Vinyaka Chaturthi was celebrated at a grand scale in the Mandir (Temple) of AHA Madison, at 2138 S Fish Hatchery Rd Fitchburg, WI. The presiding person Mr Amit Mangar, officiated the proceedings in an excellent manner. He was very methodical, and cogent, and illustrated the meanings of the "sanskrit" shlokas well to the audience. Mr Amit Mangar gave the meanings of various stages of Gnaesha Chturthi Celebrations in 5 stages. Each stage followed the previous stage in a seamless fashion. It was a joy to watch these proceedings. Mr Amit had the detailed knowledge and has the passion to carry out the Pujas (Prayers). His young and energetic presence inspired

the audience in attendance, as was observed by everyone during Ganesha Gayathri Mantra chanting for 108 times. It was done with fervor and energy and Bhakthi. Om was chanted 3 times beautifully by Amit



and then the Gayathri. He added the extra dimension and gave meaning to "Gayathri" as I would have visualized as Sanskrit scholar back home in India-- "Gayantham Triumvathe Ithi Gayathri" (Sanskrit).

The story of Vinayaka was narrated nicely by Amit. AHA volunteers made available copies of the shlokas (prayers) and Vinayaka story for the audience. The Arati for Ganesha was sung with devotion by Amit and everyone in attendance. Then The "Managala Arti" with Jaya Jagdishvara here... was beautifully rendered by every one. Then the blessings of God Ganesha was observed. Bhajans (songs) were sung by some members and chanted by the audience.

The program concluded with a meal prepared by everyone and given with great hospitality by AHA Volunteers. The audience had opportunity to socialize and talk with one another after the function concluded. The program lasted for about 4 hours. We wish AHA many more programs and functions and we wish them great success and sustained audience and worship for many years.

Many Thanks for the opportunity to write about the program on August 23, 2009.

GEMS FROM THE BHAGVAD GEETA

This is a series of extracts from the Sri Bhagavada Geeta (The Divine Song). The Bhagavada Geeta is said to be the essence of all the Vedas and Upanishads. It's teachings are as relevant today as they were when the Lord, Sri Krishna, expounded to prince Arjuna on the sacred battle field of Kurukshetra thousands of years ago. While it is impossible to do justice to a profound work such as this in a newsletter, in each edition we present a few randomly chosen set of couplets and their brief meaning. We hope it enriches your life and helps you find a balance between your material and spiritual journey.

Ch6: Couplet # 41

*prapya punya-kritam lokan usitva sasvatih samah
sucinam srimatam gehe yoga-bhrasto 'bhijayate*
The unsuccessful Yogi, after attained the world of sacred persons and having stayed there for countless years, he is reborn in the family of pious and wealthy people.

Ch6: Couplet # 42

*atha va yoginam eva kule bhavati dhimatam
etad dhi durlabhataram loke janma yad idrsam*
Or (if he has acquired objectivity and detachment) he is born in a family of enlightened Yogis. This type of birth, certainly, is very rare in this world.

Ch6: Couplet # 43

*tatra tam buddhi-samyogam labhate paurva-dehikam
yatate ca tato bhuyah samsiddhau kuru-nandana*
There, he attains connection to the knowledge of his religious performances of the previous births O Son of Kuru! He than strives harder for his liberation.

Ch6: Couplet # 44

*purvabhyasena tenaiva hriyate hy avaso 'pi sah
jijnasur api yogasya shabda-brahmativartate*
By virtue of the spiritual and sacred propensity of his previous life, he is automatically drawn towards God and then that inquisitive with the help of Yoga, surpasses the Holy Writ (scriptures and Vedas) and principles of Vedic rituals.

Ch6: Couplet # 45

*prayatnad yatamanas tu yogi samshuddha-kilbisah
aneka-janma-samsiddhas tato yati param gamit*
A Yogi, practicing diligently and achieving perfection after many births and being eternally pure and washed of all sins, attains the Supreme state.

Ch6: Couplet # 46

*tapasvibhyo 'dhiko yogi jnanibhyo 'pi mato 'dhikah
karmibhyas cadhiko yogi tasmad yogi bhavarjuna*
A Yogi is superior to the ascetics, greater than the scholars and also superior to the ritualistic. Therefore, O Arjuna! You become a Yogi.

Ch6: Couplet # 47

*yoginam api sarvesammad-gatenantar-atmana
shraddhavan bhajate yo mam sa me yuktatamo matah*
And of all Yogis one who is immersed in me and worships Me with devotion, he is considered to be in communion with Me.

Amit Mangar ~ Editor American Hindu Association

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