

American Hindu Association

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HINDU CONNECTIONS

June, 2008

AHA Bala Gokulam in Madison



and exciting crafts including making glittery Heli and Father's Day cards, and making their own Shiva lingam's to add to mandars at home. Several children have also decided to compete in Balagokulam's Kaun Banega Ramayana Expert competition. Children of different age groups complete quizzes about the Ramayan and compete to see who is the Ramayana Expert of their age group! The children are very excited and we are happy to have such a great opportunity to get them excited about learning the Ramayan. We would like to encourage all children and parents to join the Balagokulam classes. It's never too late! The children are having a wonderful time learning about Hinduism. We meet every Saturday at 2pm at James Madison Memorial High school on Grammon Rd.

Mother's Day Thoughts from Trinidad

<http://www.hinduismtoday.com/tpi/2008/5/10ff2.shtml>

TRINIDAD, TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO, May 11, 2008: (From Paras Ramnatar, HPI Correspondent) On Sunday May 11, 2008, Hindus will join the world in the observance of Mother's Day. But in the Hindu mind, Mother's Day began with the creation of the universe. Motherhood as an art is almost forgotten now. Children must always respect their mothers. But mothers must also respect and live a life that befits motherhood. They must dedicate themselves fully to this most noble task. Hindus have always worshipped the Creator both as Mother and as Father. And so Hindus join with the rest of the world in celebrating Mother's Day. Hindu Scriptures state unequivocally: "I declare that my parents are my heaven, my dharma and my karma. All manifestations of God seek with favor those who love and respect their parents."

USC Appoints Hindu Dean of Religious Life

source: www.mercurynews.com/breakingnews/ci_9259408

LOS ANGELES The University of Southern California says a Hindu religious scholar has been named dean of religious life. USC said Wednesday that the appointment of Varun Seni marks the first time a Hindu has been named the chief spiritual leader of an American university. Seni takes the position on July 1. His job will include working with 70 student religious groups and 25 religious directors on campus. USC says Seni will provide moral and ethical leadership. Seni was born in India and raised in Southern California. He will take over the position currently held by Rabbi Susan Laemle.

Words of Wisdom: Control Your Tongue.

The pen is mightier than the sword, but even mightier than the pen is the tongue. The tongue has no bones but has the power to crush many. Words are extremely powerful and can do much damage. God has given us two ears and one mouth; His way of saying that we should listen twice as much as we should speak. Think before opening your mouth. "Am I going to say something useful, or should I just be quiet?" Speak only when it is essential to do so. Even then choose your words very carefully. You will be thankful you did.

There are times when you feel that you just cannot control your tongue, and at that point you know you are going to regret your words later. Remember at that crucial



We are happy to report that Balagokulam classes have been a success! For the last three months 10-40 children have gathered each Saturday to learn Shlokas, hear stories of our Gods, do yoga, crafts, play games and just generally have a fantastic time! The children have already learned several shlokas including: Guru Brahma, Shri Rama Rama, and Ramaskandam Hanumantum. The children have also done some special

moment that a hundred regrets and a thousand apologies cannot mend the damage caused by one thoughtless or malicious word. You may be very kind and helpful, but if you speak angrily to someone, he will forget all the good you have done and remember only the words of anger that escaped from your mouth.

Wise ones speak to communicate some great thought, whereas the fool speaks for the sake of saying something. We have been gifted with the power of speech. It becomes our responsibility to make sure that we speak sparingly. And when we do speak, we must make sure that our words are kind and benevolent, giving happiness to all who hear them.

And finally, "It is better to keep quiet and have the world think you a fool than to open your mouth and remove all doubt."

From: Didi Ji of Radha Madhava Society.

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. Its 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.

Ch4: Couplet # 23

**gata-sangasya muktasya jnanavasthita-cetasah
yajnayacaratah karma samagram praviliyate**

Actions of a man, who is free from attachments of fruits of actions, free from malice, stable in knowledge of the self, who works for the sake of sacrifice, are totally destroyed.

Ch4: Couplet # 24

**brahmarpanam brahma havir brahmagnau brahmana hutam
brahmaiva tena gantavyam brahma-karma-samadhinā**

The ladle with which an oblation is poured, the fire into which oblation is poured and the act of offering oblation is God. Oblation poured into fire of God, by God, is regarded as sacrifice. One who performs such sacrifice are merged in Him and attains Him.

Ch4: Couplet # 25

**daivam evapare yajnam yoginah paryupasate
brahmagnav apare yajnam yajnaivopajuhvati**

Other yogis worship the demigods only. Some offer self as sacrifice by sacrifice of ones conduct and behavior in the fire of the Supreme.

Ch4: Couplet # 26

**srotradinindriyany anye samyamagnisu juhvati
shabdadin visayan anya indriyagnisu juhvati**

Some ascetics offer sacrifice of hearing and other senses in the fire of restraint, other type of sacrificing priests sacrifice offer sound and other objects of the senses in the fire of the senses.

Ch4: Couplet # 27

**sarvanindriya-karmani prana-karmani capare
atma-samyama-yogagnau juhvati jnana-dipite**

Other ascetics who blaze with true knowledge, sacrifice all functions of the senses and those of the breath, by knowledge, as oblations into the fire of restraint.

Ch4: Couplet # 28

**dravya-yajnas tapo-yajna yoga-yajnas tathapare
svadhyaya-jnana-yajnas ca yatayah samsita-vratāh**

Some offer as sacrifice their possessions and others by performing asceticism through devotion or religious performance (Yoga) while others offer sacrifice with self restraint, by continuous and regular study of the Vedas and some as devoted in sacrifice of knowledge.

Ch4: Couplet # 29

**apane juhvati pranam prane 'panam tathapare
pranapana-gati ruddhva pranayama-parayanah**

Other ascetics offer sacrifice, the outgoing breath into the incoming and incoming breath into the outgoing encumbering the flow of incoming and outgoing breath and remain in cataleptic state, stopping all their breathing.

Ch4: Couplet # 30

**apare niyataharah pranam pranesu juhvati
sarve 'py ete yajna-vido yajna-ksapita-kalmasah**

Others, limiting their eating process, offer the act of suspending their inhalation and exhalation as sacrifice. They live a healthy life full of virtuous conduct and full of morality. All their sins are destroyed.

Ch4: Couplet # 31

**yajna-sistamrita-bhujo yanti brahma sanatanam
nayam loko 'sty ayajnasya kuto 'nyah kuru-sattama**

Those who eat take the remnants after a sacrifice attain the eternal Absolute. O Best of the Kuru dynasty! Even in this world he cannot be happy who performs no sacrifice, how can he be happy in the other world?

Ch4: Couplet # 32

**evam bahu-vidha yajna vitata brahmano mukhe
karma-jan viddhi tan sarvam evam jnatva vimoksyase**

Many forms of sacrifice, I narrated above, are described in details in the Vedas. Understand these all sacrifices to be born of action. After knowing them, you will become emancipated.

Ch4: Couplet # 33

**sreyan dravya-mayad yajnaj jnana-yajnah parantapa
sarvam karmakhilam partha jnane parisamapyate**

O Arjuna! Offering sacrifice in knowledge is superior than the sacrifice of material possessions. O Subduer of Enemy! Entirely all actions and objects end in knowledge.

Ch4: Couplet # 34

**tad viddhi pranipatena pariprasnena sevaya
upadeksyanti te jnanam jnaninas tattva-darshinah**

Learn this truth by approaching spiritual philosophers, by inquiring from him with your respectful behavior, with humble requests and providing service unto him. Then these wise philosophers will instruct you in that knowledge.

Ch4: Couplet # 35

**yaj jnatva na punar moham evam yasyasi pandava
yena bhutany asesani drakasyasy atmany atho mayi**

Having obtained real knowledge from these spiritual philosophers, you will never fall again into such illusion like this. By that knowledge you will see that all beings in the soul and then in Me.

Ch4: Couplet # 36

**api ced asi papebhyah sarvebhyah papa-krt-tamah
sarvam jnana-plavenaiva vrinam santarisyasi**

Even if you are the sinful of all sinners, yet you shall cross this ocean of sins easily with this boat of transcendental knowledge.

Ch4: Couplet # 37

yathaidhamsi samiddho 'gnir bhasma-sat kurute 'rjuna
jnanagnih sarva-karmani bhasma-sat kurute tatha
*As a blazing fire turns firewood to ashes, O Arjuna, so does the fire of knowledge
burn all actions to ashes.*

Ch4: Couplet # 37

na hi jnanena sadrsam pavitram iha vidyate
tat svayam yoga-samsiddhah kalenatmani vindati
*Definitely, in this world, nothing is more pure as knowledge. One who has attained
perfection in devotional services (Yoga), he automatically attains this knowledge in
his self in due course of time.*

Editorial Board ~ American Hindu Association

I adopted the theory of reincarnation when I was 26.
Religion offered nothing to the point. When I
discovered reincarnation ... time was no longer
limited. I was no longer a slave to the hands of the
clock.

American Auto Industrialist ~ Henry Ford

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