



HINDU CONNECTIONS

September, 2006

AHA Deepavali Celebration



October 22, 2006 from
4:00pm to 8:00pm.
Eagle Heights
Community Center,
611 Eagle Heights,
Madison, WI 53705

Free Program:

Former Priest (Raghu Chandra Bhatt) of Hindu Temple of Pewaukee will conduct Puja. Celebration of Deepavali will begin with puja, archana and sankalpa. Puja has been scheduled as follows: Laxmi-Ganesh Puja, Saraswati Puja, Navgrah Puja, Katha & Arati.

Puja : 4:00 PM – 5:30 PM

Archana - \$5 - Fruit, flowers and other items needed for archana will be provided.

Sankalpa - \$11: Includes archana and personal family puja-sankalpa. Please provide your family name, and gotra for sankalpa.

Potluck Dinner : 5:30 PM – 6:30 PM - (Bring your own choice of vegetarian food to share with others)

Entertainment: 6:30 PM – 8:00 PM - Open dances (Garaba, Dandia, Bhangra, Folk & much more!!!) Please invite your friends and families in celebration of Deepavali.

Mela (Fundraising) Event - Treasurer's Report:

Gross Income	\$1,078.00
Expenses	\$ 499.00
Net Income	\$ 578.00

Income will be distributed among four organizations – AHA, Ekal Vidyalaya Foundation, St Vincent's Food Pantry and Second Harvest Food Bank.

"It is imperative that we pray and offer solace and help to each other. But if you and I are having a single thought of violence or hatred against anyone in the world at this moment, we are contributing to the wounding of the world."

Deepak Chopra

KRISHNA JANMASTAMI ~ August 19, 2006 :

AHA Reporter - Dennis Murray



On August 19, 2006, the American Hindu Association (AHA) organized a large and joyous Krishna Janmashtami festival on behalf of the Madison area Hindu community. Siddeshvari Deviji's talk reflected all that is new in modern India's revival and preservation of this great tradition. She emphasized the power of the feminine and the path of bakti (faith) in this generation where there is not enough time for long term study meditation. For the first time in quite a while new temples are being built in India itself, showing that Hinduism is regaining its former self-confidence, and is putting forth one of the most responsible and now living traditions today. What impressed me most was when she asked what is the purpose of human life?

Answer: to seek God/ Goddess. This simple and fundamental point is all too often lost in religious arguments. Yes, God is the All, the source and sole purpose of all that is, was, and will ever be.

What does Namaskar mean?

www.americanhindu.net/Hindu.doc

Namaskar is the most popular form of greeting in India. It is a general salutation and is used as a welcome and also a farewell. Namaskar also means 'I BOW TO THEE'. The palms are placed together and raised to touch the forehead, the position of the Third Eye. Together, the hands symbolize the One Mind; or the Self, meeting the Self; the right hand representing the holy, or higher nature, and the left, the worldly, or lower nature. Another term used for this greeting is namaste. Namaste may have originated in the ancient times as a showing of hands to prove that no arms were being carried.

"His Duty is to CHERISH me; mine is only to surrender to SERVE."

Vaageesar

Colors in Hinduism

www.americanhindu.net/Hindu.doc

For the Hindu, colors play a very important role in the religion and culture and have a very deep significance, transcending purely decorative values. Hindu artistes use color on the deities and their dresses signifying their qualities. Proper use of colors creates an environment, which should keep a person cheerful. Some of the main colors used in religious ceremonies are red, yellow (turmeric), green from leaves, white from wheat flour etc.

Red - In Hindu religion red is of utmost significance and the color most frequently used for auspicious occasions like marriages, birth of a child, festivals etc. A red mark is put on the forehead during ceremonies and important occasions. As a sign of marriage, women put red powder on the hair parting. They also wear a red sari during marriage. Red powder is usually thrown on statues of deities and phallic symbols during prayers. It is also the color of Shakti (prowess). A red colored dress is put on deities who are charitable, brave, protective and who have the capacity to destroy evil. On the death of a woman, her body is wrapped in a red cloth for the cremation.

Saffron - It represents fire and as impurities are burnt by fire, this color symbolizes purity. It also represents religious abstinence. It is the color of holy men and ascetics who have renounced the world. Wearing the color symbolizes the quest for light. It is the battle color of the Rajputs, the warrior caste.

Green - Symbolizing peace and happiness, it stabilizes the mind. The color is cool to the eyes and represents nature.

Yellow - This is the color of knowledge and learning. It symbolizes happiness, peace, meditation, competence and mental development. It is the color of spring and activates the mind. Lord Vishnu's dress is yellow symbolizing his representation of knowledge. Lord Krishna and Ganesha also wear yellow dresses.

White - It is a mixture of seven different colors hence it symbolizes a little bit of the quality of each. It represents purity, cleanliness, peace and knowledge. The goddess of knowledge, Saraswati is always shown as wearing a white dress, sitting on a white lotus. The other prominent deities would also have a touch of white on their dress. A Hindu widow would wear a white dress in mourning.

Blue - The Creator has given the maximum of blue to nature (i.e.) the sky, the oceans, the rivers and the lakes. The deity who has the qualities of bravery, manliness, determination, the ability to deal with difficult situations, of stable mind and depth of character is represented as blue colored. Lord Rama and Krishna spent their life protecting humanity and destroying evil, hence they are colored blue.

The Puranas (lesson 14): by Shree S. K. Das

The word Purana means the old or the ancient. The other different meanings are *Puranavam* : something which took place in the past. *Puranavam* also means that although it is flowing since past but is still new. It also means something which explains the old. Therefore we can conclude that Purana means something which although old is still breathing anew.

One of the *puranas* Vayu Purana states that

yasmatpura hynatidam puranam tena hi smrtam

niruktamasya yo veda sarvapapaih pramuchyate (1.203)

"Since it is alive from the ancient times it is called Purana. One who knows this overcomes all sins."

Puranas are the *Smritis* - that which comes by remembrance. Vedas are *Srutis* - that which is learnt by hearing.

As in the case of Vedas it was Lord Brahma who first remembered the Puranas. This was before he got the message of Vedas in his heart.

Let us try to understand the difference and similarities in both. Let us try to understand the relationship between the two.

It may look contradictory when we realise that although the Puranas are older Vedas have no beginning and not man-made. Puranas are both *Paurusheya* and *Apaurusheya* - created by man and not created by man. The first Purana is called Brahma Purana which comes out as Brahma's breath. It had 1 billion slokas and in heavenly planets that is still being referred. Vysadeva divided this into 18 Puranas and the slokas were limited to 400,000 and thus they are the man-made engineered part of the *apaurusheya*.

The Vedas were received by Rishis and the puranas were perceived by the Munis. The rishis are seers and munis are the spokesmen. We generally get confused and think that Rishis and Munis are same. It is interesting to note that they are different. The word Rishi has four meanings - Speed, Shruti (that which is heard), Truth and Austerity. Lord Brahma says that one who has these four qualities may be called Rishi. In *Taittiriya Aranyaka* (Remember it?) it is explained that in the beginning there was only austerity - *Tapas*. Lord Brahma imparted the Vedas and Shrutis to these Rishis who were undergoing great austerities. These rishis then propagated the mantras or the hymns to their disciples and thus the chain was formed.

The Muni is one who is also undergoing austerities. He lives like a mendicant and nomad and spends his night wherever he finds some shelter at night. Bhagavad Gita also states that one who is not affected by miseries, not bothered about material comforts and free from anger and fear is called muni. This certifies that Puranas are not ordinary or written by some persons with ulterior motives. They are transcendental.

Puranas are not mythology but historical facts. The difference between history and puranas is that history is written in chronological order and it is not so in puranas.

Whatever is written in concise form in Vedas is explained in details in Puranas. The Puranas are supplementary commentary on Vedas and help us understand it better with practical examples and anecdotes.

The Symptoms of Puranas: Shree S. K. Das

From the time immemorial it is said that Puranas had five symptoms called "Pancha Lakshana". They are Sarga, Pratisarga, Vamsha, Manavantara and Vamshanubarit.

I will try to explain each one of them:

1. *Sarga*: The complete process of creation of the manifest material world with its varieties of entities is called Sarga. Sarga describes the beginning of the creation. It describes how the earth was created and how the five material elements like fire, water, air, earth and ether (akasha) came into being. Its all described very scientifically in Puranas.

2. *Pratisarga*: It is the opposite of Sarga. It describes the end of creation. It describes how there will be pralaya (annihilation) at the end of Brahma's one day and how there will be maha-pralaya (complete dissolution) at the end of Brahma's lifespan. Different Puranas describe it in different ways.

3. *Vamsha*: This describes a lineage of each dynasty each gotra which started from one of the rishis. Here one can see a clear connection between Vedas and Puranas. For example these parampara (succession) can be seen in Yajurveda and Samveda.

4. *Manavantara*: This tells about time factor (kala). Four yugas (Satya, Treta, Dwapar and Kali) make one mahayuga and in 1000 mahayugas there are 14 manvantaras. Each manavantara is presided by a person called Manu and each Manu has five associates. Right now we are in Kaliyuga of Vaivasvat manavantara presided by Vaivasvat Manu. This is used in each and every ritual when do sankalpa etc.

5. *Vamshanubarit*: This describes the character and other traits of all the great personalities like kings, rishis etc.

As the time passed these *Panchalakshana* (5 symptoms) expanded to ten.

They are 1. Sarga 2. Visarga 3. Vritti 4. Raksha
5. Antarani 6. Vamsha 7. Vamshanubarit 8. Sankhya
9. Hetu 10. Apashraya

You have already read about 5 of them. I will try to explain the remaining five.

1. *Visarga*: Each living entity gets is born in a particular specie according to karma and desires. This is called Visarga. We can say that all the dead material is Sarga and all the living entities are Visarga.

2. *Vritti*: The materials used by the living entities for its sustenance is called Vritti. So for a human being to eat wheat and rice and fruits is natural but to eat another living entities is manipulation.

3. *Raksha*: The Puranas describe the different incarnations of the Supreme. Whenever irreligiosity increases the Lord either comes Himself or sends His representatives (avatars) to annihilate the demons and to save the saints and devotees. This saving of the devotees is what Raksha is.

4. *Hetu*: Hetu means cause or means. The subject matter of hetu is included to know the cause of Sarga and Pratisarga. It is to know why the creation takes place and why it is annihilated.

5. *Apashraya*: The Puranas discuss three aspects of jivas - the live stage, the dreaming stage and the deep sleep stage. This is the subject matter of Apashraya.

At least now we know that Puranas are not some stories to entertain but have deep meanings and significance.

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**Congratulations to Srinivasan & Vaishnavi
Vembakkam family on the birth of their son Sisttakrit.**
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