

धर्मसन्देश Dharma Sandesh

a quarterly newsletter of Bharatiya Mandir, Middletown, NY

आ नो भद्राः क्रतवो यन्तु विश्वतः। Let noble thoughts come to us from everywhere. RigVeda 1.89.1

नमस्ते Namaste

ॐ – OM. We are excited to bring you a quarterly newsletter from Bharatiya Mandir in Fair Oaks / Middletown, NY. With summer here, we are ready for a fresh beginning with this quarter's newsletter (June-August 2009).



You will notice that our newsletter is called "**Dharma Sandesh**" (धर्मसन्देश). "Dharma", in simple terms, refers to righteousness, conduct, a sense of duty, virtue, and the ultimate truth. "Sandesh" means a message or news. So, Dharma Sandesh refers to a message of Dharma.

Hinduism is traditionally known as Sanathana Dharma (सनातन धर्म - eternal or everlasting sense of right and duty). Our duty as Hindus includes understanding the different aspects of our Sanathana Dharma in terms of our Gods and Goddesses, our rituals, the Vedas, Puranas, Upanishads and philosophy, and upholding the values of Sanathana Dharma in these modern times.

Our primary objective in this newsletter is to bring forth facets of our Sanathana Dharma in a simplistic manner so that we can all attempt to understand and appreciate our Dharma. We hope that you will welcome our efforts in this direction and help and inspire us to successfully march forward in preserving and upholding our Sanathana Dharma.

You will notice several interesting sections in the newsletter, including Subhaashitaa, Baba's Teachings, GnanaVihara, Sunhere Bol (Children's Corner), Temple Events, Ask a Question, and so on.

Devotees are encouraged to contribute to the different sections of the newsletter. If you have an interesting article on Hinduism, Vedas, Puranas or related philosophy, please send it to the Editorial Board. Please make sure that you always give due credit to the source. Guidelines for article submission are given at the end of this newsletter.

We hope that you will find this newsletter interesting and easy to read. We look forward for your feedback so that we can bring to you information that is useful for you in your spiritual journey and quest for Dharma.

Sincerely,

Your Editorial Board

सुभाषिता Subhaashitaa

In this section, we present a Sanskrit quotation and its interpretation/meaning.

न चोरहार्यं न च राजहार्यं न च भातृभाज्यं न च भारकारी ।
व्यये कृते वर्धते एव नित्यं विद्याधनं सर्वधनप्रधानम् ॥
na-chora-haaryam-na-ca-raajahaaryam-na-
bhraatrubhaajyam-na-ca-bhaarakaari |
vyaye-krute-vardhata-eva-nityam-vidyaa-dhanam-sarva-
dhana-pradhaanam ||

Education is the greatest asset (wealth) among all types of wealth. It cannot be stolen by thieves. It cannot be taken away by the king (or government) in terms of taxes. It cannot be divided or split among brothers like other property. Unlike other wealth or property, it is never a burden. It also has this unusual characteristic that the more you spend it everyday, the more it grows everyday. We should strive to get more and more of this wealth called education.

Contributed by Dr. Narasimhaswamy Banavara

साई प्रेरणा Baba's Teachings

In this section, we present a teaching of Sri Sai Baba.

"Life is a Game, Play it" SAI INSPIRES, May 7, 2009

What is the relationship between the game of CRICKET and DHARMA? How will it help in our spiritual journey? Swami gives us one step at a time.

The game of life is worth playing and becomes interesting only when there are boundaries for the field and rules and restrictions for the players.

Imagine a game of basketball / football / cricket where there are no rules or boundaries or umpires. The game will be chaotic, and it soon will degenerate into a riot, a free fight. DHARMA (right conduct) is what makes the game of life interesting, decent and desirable.

Contributed by Dr. Vijaya Dasari

ज्ञानविहार GnanaVihara

In this section, we present articles on Hinduism, Vedas, Puranas, Upanishads, and related philosophy. This issue's article talks about the greatness of the Guru.

The Guru

गुरुब्रह्म गुरुर्विष्णुः गुरुर्देवो महेश्वरः ।
गुरुः साक्षात् परब्रह्म तस्मै श्री गुरवे नमः ॥
gurur-brahma-gurur-vishnuh-gurur-devo-maheshwarah |
guruh-saakshaat-parabrahma-tasmai-sri-gurave-namah ||

The Guru is himself Lord Brahma, the creator of the Universe. The Guru is himself Lord Vishnu, the protector of the Universe. The Guru is himself Lord Maheshwara (Shiva), the annihilator of the universe and who assimilates the entire universe unto Himself at the end of the creation cycle. The Guru is verily the Supreme Spirit, the Ultimate, and the Absolute Brahman!! Salutations to that Guru!!

Most of us are familiar with this shloka. And many of us are generally familiar with its broader meaning. But do we know what it really means?

At a party once, one well-educated and well-to-do person was making fun of her kindergarten and elementary school teachers. "After all, they teach A, B, C and 1, 2, 3. What is the big deal? What else can they really teach?" "No wonder they get paid so less." "Guess they could not get a better job. That's why they became teachers," and so on.

If those underpaid, overworked kindergarten and elementary school teachers had not taught that lady those ABCs or 123s at that time, then she would not be standing there with her education and money. They taught her, they inspired her to achieve great things in life, and they helped her in more ways than one to be the person she is today. Those attributes and experiences are extremely valuable to us as growing, impressionable children and they mould our lives permanently.

We should always consider our teachers as our Guru. In fact, it is said in the scriptures that anyone in your life who teaches you is your Guru. Our parents are our first Guru, especially the mother who devotes her life to raising her child and guiding the child in the path of righteousness. The father then initiates the child into education and inspires the child to become a well-informed and responsible citizen. Along the way, every teacher guides the child and moulds the child in the path of life, education and career. Every one of these persons is the child's Guru.

The scriptures state that the Guru is the ultimate spiritual preceptor who imparts divine knowledge to his disciple. The all-compassionate Guru is no ordinary human being, and must never be considered as one. The Guru is always equated with the Trinity Brahma-Vishnu-Shiva, and he embodies all the three entities in knowledge, power and benevolence.

गकारः सिद्धिदः प्रोक्तो रेफः पापस्य दाहकः ।
उकारो विष्णुरव्यक्तस्थितायात्म गुरुः परः ॥
gakaarah-siddhidah-prokto-rephah-paapasya-daahakah |
ukaaro-vishnuravyakta-sthitaayaatma-guruh-parah ||

The letter 'G' symbolises the grantor of all success. The letter 'R' symbolises the vanquisher of all evil. The letter 'U' symbolises the imperceptible Lord Vishnu. That means that the great Guru is the grantor of all successes, the vanquisher of all evil, and the omnipresent Lord Vishnu.

गणेशोवाग्निनायुक्तो विष्णुना च समन्वितः ।
वर्णद्वयात्मको मन्त्रशतुर्वर्गं फलप्रदः ॥
ganesha-vaagninaa-yukto-vishnuna-ca-samanvitah |
varna-dvayaatmako-mantrasha-turvarga-phalapradah ||

The letter ‘G’ is also symbolic of Lord Ganapati, who is the remover of all obstacles. The letter ‘R’ is also symbolic of Lord Agni (Fire), who is the vanquisher of all evil. The letter ‘U’ is symbolic of Lord Vishnu, the all-pervading protector of the worlds. Therefore this two-syllable mantra called ‘Guru’ is the remover of all obstacles in his disciple’s life, is the vanquisher of all evil, and is the protector of his disciple. In essence, the Guru is the divine grantor of all the four Purushaarthas (pursuits of human life) – Dharma (righteousness and discharge of duty), Artha (acquirement of wealth), Kama (gratification of desire) and Moksha (eternal liberation or salvation).

The Guru is the ultimate source of all knowledge. All knowledge stems from him and is assimilated into him. The Guru is given the ultimate, supreme, and exalted status of the Paramaatma (परमात्मा), the Supreme Spirit.

In fact, the Supreme Spirit Himself sought a Guru when He incarnated on earth. Though He was the source and the ocean of all knowledge, Sri Rama sat at the feet of His Guru Vasishtha who initiated Him into education and taught Him. Similarly, the Supreme Lord Krishna sat at the feet of His Guru Sandeepani and received instruction from him. Verily all great men have taken refuge at the feet of their Guru and have received instruction and knowledge from that Guru. For example, Svetaketu learnt the nature of Truth from Uddalaka, Maitreyi from Yajnavalkya, Bhrigu from Varuna, Narada from Sanatkumara, Nachiketas from Yama, and Indra from Prajapati. All the Gods have Guru Brihaspati as their preceptor. The greatest and the most divine souls sat at the feet of Guru Dakshinamurti, a form of Lord Shiva, to receive divine instruction from Him.

The scriptures indicate that every spiritual aspirant and every student needs a Guru to show him the path of true knowledge and help him in his quest for the Ultimate Truth or Brahma-Jnana. The Guru imparts education to the disciple, imparts knowledge of the sacred scriptures, clarifies any doubts and ambiguities arising in the disciple’s mind, and shows to the

disciple the essence of all the teachings and the scriptures. While doing so, the Guru also deftly removes any defects, such as ego and ignorance, in his disciple that cause impediments in his quest for the Ultimate Truth.

Let us bow down to the Guru, respect every person who has taught us something valuable and important in life, and attempt to shed the arrogance and disdain that we might have for other people, big or small in life. Who knows who our next teacher might be!!
Contributed by Dr. Narasimhaswamy Banavara

पूछिए Ask a Question

In this section, readers are invited to ask questions pertaining to Hinduism, our Gods and Goddesses, Puranas, and any such topics. Guidelines for submission are given at the end of the newsletter.

Question: How many brothers did Lord Rama have?

Answer: Lord Rama had three brothers, Lakshmana, Bharata and Shatrughna. Lord Vishnu, the protector of the Universe, incarnated as Lord Rama in order to vanquish the Rakshasas Ravana and Kumbhakarna and to establish Dharma on earth. AdiSesha, the great serpent who forms the seat and canopy for Lord Vishnu, incarnated as Lakshmana and served Lord Rama throughout His Avatar. Lord Vishnu’s conch or Shankha, named Panchajanya, incarnated as Bharata. Lord Vishnu’s discus or Chakra, named Sudarshana, incarnated as Shatrughna.

सुनहरे बोल Children's Corner

In this section, we present an article written by a youth. Our youth are encouraged to submit articles related to the temple and Hinduism and/or their experiences with the temple and Hinduism.

Since this is the first issue of the newsletter, we do not present any article. Instead, we present an open question to all children.

The question is “What do I like about my Bharatiya Mandir? And why?”

Please write your thoughts on this question. Have a parent or guardian submit your article along with the following information: your full name, age, the name of school, and your grade. Guidelines for submission are given at the end of the newsletter.

Your articles will be published in the next issue of Dharma Sandesh.

समाचार Temple Events

In this section, news on recent and future major temple and community events are reported.

May 2, 2009 – Mata ki Chowki



It seems like yesterday when we had our first gathering at the Mandir, but in reality it was 10 years ago on May 2, 1999. As part of the Mandir's tenth anniversary celebrations, Mata ki Chowki was arranged on Saturday, May 2, 2009. Dr. Anil Dua, with his group of talented devotees, sang Mata ke Bhajan without a break for more than three hours, with more than 150 devotees in attendance.

This celebration was sponsored by Vijay and Pooja Sood who were also celebrating their 25th wedding anniversary. The devotees congratulated the couple and extended them their best wishes.

Contributed by Mrs. Raj Arora



May 3, 2009 – Tenth Anniversary Celebrations for Bharatiya Mandir

Bharatiya Mandir celebrated its tenth anniversary on May 3, 2009 with a host of activities, most of which centered on our children. Kiran Kothari and Pragnaben Prohit joined our celebrations for the fifth year in a row, and started off the auspicious day with melodic Bhajan. The activities ranged from a lovely short skit on Lord Krishna, to an impressive recitation of the Hanuman Chalisa, and an inspirational classical Kathak dance performance.

For the second year in a row we also had an outdoor 'Mela.' Different food stalls were set up from chat to cotton candy, ice cream sundaes and other delicacies. There was music, mehandi, and a lot of ongoing fun. The children ran all of the stalls, and all of the items were graciously donated by local businesses.



The turnout and support exceeded our expectations. We were able to raise \$1,001 towards ongoing children's programs at the Temple. More importantly, this event exemplified the spirit and strength of our community. It was heartwarming to see the enthusiasm of all of the volunteers, and the sincerity with which everyone took their responsibilities. Thanks go out to everyone who stepped forward and said yes without even having to be asked. The teen volunteers were AMAZING, and it was especially reassuring to see their commitment. You could see the joy in their eyes and the fun time they were having. One teen described this as being the most fun they have had at the Temple since summer camp!



Our local businesses also came through in a big way. Whomever we approached, we received more than we asked for. Their unhesitant generosity is very much appreciated. Our sincere thanks go out to Taste of India, Cumberland Farms, Budget Beverage, Fill and Fly Citgo, Fair Oaks Subway, Stewart's of Goshen, Ms. Manju Kashyap and Boy Scouts Troop 65. The Board would like to extend an extra special thanks to Charanjit ("CJ") Singh from Aaojee. He not only donated all of the snacks (hundreds of plates of aloo tikki and samosa chat, plus idli sambar), but also gave us a full day of his time. CJ's booth raised well over half of the contributions received.

Thanks to the community for coming out and proving that fun and fundraising can go together. We would like to personally thank Mrs. Chhaya Baxi, Dr. Vijaya Dasari and Mrs. Urvashi Gupta, whose tireless efforts were behind the success of this event. It was their optimism and encouragement that kept the project moving despite setbacks (most notably the forecast for

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rain!) along the way.



Whoever attended the celebration and witnessed the overwhelming support from the community and the enthusiasm of the children was convinced and left with a great sense of satisfaction that we were moving in the right direction, instilling good values and passing along our traditions and our culture to capable, eager hands. Be sure to visit the Temple's website to view a complete set of pictures from that day.

Contributed by Mrs. Poonam Kumar

July 5, 2009 – Special Pooja

A special Pooja for the 2009 graduates of our community will be held on Sunday, July 5, 2009 at 11:00 a.m. at the Mandir. All graduates (high school and college) are invited to join and participate. Please call PunditJi at 361-3055 if you plan to participate. A Pooja Thali will be reserved for you.

लिखिए Write to Us

We invite your comments, questions and other feedback. We will attempt to publish as many letters as possible in every issue of the newsletter. Guidelines for submission are given at the end of the newsletter.

मन्दिर विषय Temple Information

Temple Address: Bharatiya Mandir
347 Bloomingburg Road, Middletown, NY 10940

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Temple Hours:

Mon, Tue, Wed, Fri – 10:00 am -11:00 am and 5:00 pm - 8:00 pm

Thu – 5:00 pm - 7:00 pm

Sat, Sun & Holidays – 10:00 am - 1:00 pm and 2:00 pm - 8:00 pm

Aarati (daily) – 7:00 pm

Aarati (weekends) – 12:00 noon and 7:00 pm

WEEKLY POOJA SCHEDULE

MONDAY	SRI RUDRAASHTAKAM, SRI LINGAASHTKAM, SHIV CHALEESA	6:30 P.M.
TUESDAY	SUNDAR KANDAA	5:00 P.M.
TUESDAY	SRI RAM STUTI,HANUMAN CHALEESA, SANKAT MOCHAN,HANUMAN ASHTAK	6:30 P.M.
WEDNESDAY	SRI VISHNU SAHASRANAMA, SRI ASHTA LAKSHMI STOTRAM	6:30 P.M.
THURSDAY	SAI BHAJAN	6:30 P.M.
FRIDAY	SRI DURGA SAPTASHATI STOTRAM SRI LAKSHMI SAHASRANAMA	6:30 P.M.

Saturday & Sunday Weekend Special Programs

SATURDAY	VENKATESHWARA SUPRABHATAM	10:30 A.M.
SATURDAY	AARATI	12:00 & 7:00 P.M
SUNDAY	SRI GANAPATHI ABHISHEKA & PUJA (ON EVERY SUNDAY)	10:30 A.M.
SUNDAY	AARATI	12:00 & 7:00 P.M
1 ST SUNDAY OF MONTH	VEDIC HOMA & BHajan	11:00 A.M
2 ND SUNDAY OF MONTH	SRI RAMA ABHISHEKA & PUJA	11:00 A.M
3 RD SUNDAY OF MONTH	SRI KRISHNA ABHISHEKA & PUJA	11:00 A.M
4 TH SUNDAY OF MONTH	NAVAGRAHA HOMA	11:00 A.M

MONTHLY POOJA

PURNIMA: EVERY FULL MOON DAY - SATYA NARAYANA POOJA AND KATHA

SHIVRATREE (MONTHLY):SHIV ABHISHEK 6 P.M.

COMMUNITY MEMBERS CAN REACH PUNDITJI BY CALLING THE FOLLOWING PHONE # 733-8170 (R) or 591-4510 (Cell) or 361-3055 (Mandir) FOR SPECIAL POOJA.

Children's classes at the temple – Registration is now open for the Children's Cultural, and Religious Classes. Classes are held at the temple every Sunday from 4:00 until 5:30 pm. We welcome all new children, and if you are interested in volunteering, please contact us at bmandir@citilink.net.

सूचना Guidelines for Article Submissions

Please follow the guidelines given below when submitting any article, question, comment or other feedback.

1. Use MS Word to type your article if you are using the computer. If you write the article by hand, please ensure that it is legible.
2. Email your submission (article, question, etc.) to bharatiya_mandir@yahoo.com or mail it to "Attn: Dharma Sandesh Newsletter", Bharatiya Mandir, 347 Bloomingburg Road, Middletown, NY 10940.
3. Include your full name (and email address) with your submission.
4. You could also submit a photo of yourself.
5. Please note that the editors reserve the right to edit your article in consultation with you.
6. Recommended Length for Submissions:
 - a. GnanaVihara Article – less than 1000 words.
 - b. Sunhere Bol (Children's Corner) Article – less than 100 words.
 - c. Comments, Questions / Other Feedback – less than 50 words.
7. Deadline for all submissions: July 20, 2009.

Dharma Sandesh Newsletter Editorial Board:

Mr. Om Arora

Dr. Narasimhaswamy Banavara

Ms. Tina Sodha