



PLEASE NOTE THE SCHEDULES

Monday Through Thursday: 9 am to 12 noon
and 6 pm to 8 pm
Friday, Weekends & Holidays: 9 am to 8 pm

PASCHIMAVANI

DIRECTIONS

From Freeway 580 in Livermore:
Exit North Vasco Road, left on Scenic Ave,
Left on Arrowhead Avenue

NEWS FROM THE HINDU COMMUNITY AND CULTURAL CENTER, LIVERMORE
VISIT OUR WEB SITE AT <http://www.livermoretemple.org>

SHIVA-VISHNU TEMPLE

OM NAMAH SHIVAYA

TELEPHONE (925) 449-6255 FAX (925) 455-0404

OM NAMO NARAYANAYA

ANOTHER SUCCESSFUL YOUTH & EDUCATION PROGRAM



Annual Children day was held on Nov 19th, 2005 from 9:30 am to 5 pm. About 200 kids enthusiastically participated in the program. If chacha Nehru (Pdt. Jawaharlal Nehru) was to see the program he would have been proud. Morning session started by invocation prayer by Pandit Nageshwara Sastri, followed by Vishnu Saharanam chanting by Youth. Many other slokas were recited by youth. Youth Forum presentation included Temples of India - Kasi, Badrinath, Chidambaram, etc, by Youth had visited

these threeertha sthalas. There were artifacts and activity center representing North, South, East and West regions of India. Children then danced to classical and folk dances from different states of India.



Children and parents were extremely happy. Program was a great success due to the enthusiasm of Y&E chair and support of innumerable volunteers, stated Dr. Kamala Shankar, she had 40 Helping hands - members of

BOD also came to the Dias and addressed the audience.

Upcoming Programs for January – June 2006

Bala Jyothi	1:30 – 2:20 on II & IV Saturdays
Bhakthi Jyothi	2:30 – 3:30 on II Saturdays
Sanskrit Class	1 – 2 pm on I & III Sundays
Bhagwat Geeta Class	2:30 – 3:30 pm on IV Saturdays

Please contact Temple Librarian Sunita Krishnakumar at sunubabu@yahoo.com for further details and to register.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Dear Devotees:

In response to my appeal in the last issue of Paschma Vani, 37 devotees have expressed interest to receive PV by mail to their homes. I thank them all and promise that HCCC will honor their wishes. Other devotees can pick up their copies from the Temple or read from the Temple website (a link will be included in every mass email). Printing each copy of PV costs 50 cents to HCCC now. If any of you would like to receive by mail, please fill up a card with the Temple Manager. Because of this, every three months, HCCC will be saving at least \$3700 of your donation money.

Also, mails to the following Steering Committee members of HCCC are returning back to us and we are unable to contact them for a while. If any of you happened to know the current whereabouts (mailing address, phone and email) of any of these people, please send an email to

HCCC Executive Administrator Dharwar2000@Yahoo.com

Ganesh Basavapatna, Lal Bhatia, Shivani Bhatia, Iswar Bhavnani, Y.S. Chabra, Suresh Challa, Narayan Jagannathan, Surya P Jonnavithula, Satish Kumar Mallavolu, Dwarak Narayan, Chuk Patel Sr., Anjali Pathak, Kalpana Prabhakara, T. Rajagopalan, Manickam Sai, S. Subramanian, R. Talisetty, Arul Tandavan, Gowri Tandavan, Gita Vaidyanathan, Vishwanath, Mohan Vishwanath, Mala Viswanath, Premnath Viswanath, Ramani Aiyer, Kumar S. Sripadam, Mrs. Kumar Sripadam, Neeraja Nimmagadda, Jaganathan Narayan, Srinivas Lingutla, Ranga Rao Chaudhary, Manohar Mahavadi, Sharada Yeluri, M. S. Rajagopalan, Gowri Tandavan.

Thanks for your continued support to HCCC.

Best Regards, Sridar K. Pootheri, Publicity Chairman



PLANNED SPECIAL EVENTS

DATE/DAY	EVENTS	TIME	ACTIVITIES
Jan 1st Sun	New Year' s Day		Temple Opens from 7 am
Jan 2nd Mon	Sravana	6:30 pm	Balaji Sahasranama Archana
Jan 4th Wed	Sashti	6:30 pm	Kartikeya Sahasranama Archana
Jan 7th Sat	1st Saturday of the Month	11:00 am	Swarna Alamkaram for Shiva
Jan 8th Sun	2nd Sunday of the Month	3:30 pm	Shiva-Parvati Kalyanam
Jan 9th Mon	Vaikunta Ekadasi		Detailed Program on Page 3
	Krittika	6:30 pm	Kartikeya Abhishekam and Archana
Jan 10th Tue	Rohini	6:30 pm	Sri Krishna Puja
Jan 11th Wed	Pradosham	6:30 pm	Shiva Abhishekam
Jan 12th Thur	Arudra Darshanam	9:30 am	Shiva Abhishekam
Jan 13th Fri	Punarvasu	6:30 pm	Sri Rama Abhishekam
	Poornima	6:30 pm	Lalitha Sahasranama Parayanam
Jan 14th Sat	2nd Saturday of the Month	10:00 am	Balaji Sahasra kalasha Abhishekam
		11:00 am	Muttangi Alamkaram for Shiva
	Andal Kalyanam	3:30 pm	Andal Kalyana Utsavam
	Makara Sankranthi	6:00 pm	Ayyappa Makara Deepa Puja & Bhajans
Jan 15th Sun	3rd Sunday of the Month	11:00 am	Bilwa Dala Archana for Shiva
Jan 16th Mon	Martin Luther King Day	Temple Open from 9 am to 8 pm (Weekend Timings)	
Jan 17th Tue	Sankatahara Chaturthi	6:30 pm	Ganesha Abhishekam
Jan 21st Sat	3rd Saturday of the Month	11:00 am	Rajatha Alamkaram for Shiva
		11:00 am	Tiruppavada Seva for Balaji
Jan 22nd Sun	Swati	6:30 pm	Narasimha Swamy Abhishekam
Jan 25th Wed	Ekadasi	6:30 pm	Balaji Bhoga Murthy Abhishekam
Jan 26th Thur	Pradosham	6:30 pm	Shiva Abhishekam
Jan 27th Fri	Masa Shivaratri	6:30 pm	108 Kalasha Abhishekam for Shiva
Jan 28th Sat	4th Saturday of the Month	12 Noon	Pushpa Seva for Balaji
Jan 29th Sun	Last Sunday of the Month	4:30 pm	Kala Bhairava Abhishekam
	Sravana	6:30 pm	Balaji Sahasranama Archana
Feb 2nd Thur	Vasanta Panchami	6:30 pm	Lalita Sahasranama Archana for Parvati
	Saraswati Puja in A. Hall		Detailed Program on Page 3
Feb 3rd Fri	Sashti	6:30 pm	Kartikeya Sahasranama Archana
Feb 4th Sat	1st Saturday of the Month	11:00 am	Swarna Alamkaram for Shiva
		12 Noon	Balaji Vastra Samarpana
	Ratha Saptami	10:30 am	Surya Namskaram with Aruna
			Prasna Parayanam
Feb 6th Mon	Krittika	6:30 pm	Kartikeya Abhishekam and Archana
Feb 7th Tue	Rohini	6:30 pm	Sri Krishna Puja
Feb 8th Wed	Ekadasi	6:30 pm	Balaji Bhoga Murthy Abhishekam
Feb 9th Thur	Pradosham	6:30 pm	Shiva Abhishekam
Feb 11th Sat	2nd Saturday of the Month	10:00 am	Balaji Sahasra kalasha Abhishekam
		11:00 am	Muttangi Alamkaram for Shiva
	Punarvasu	6:30 pm	Sri Rama Abhishekam
	Thai Poosam	6:30 pm	Kartikeya Abhishekam, Archana and Thiru Veedhi Utsavam
Feb 12th Sun	2nd Sunday of the Month	3:30 pm	Murugan Kalyana Utsavam
	Poornima	6:30 pm	Lalita Sahasranama Parayanam
Feb 16th Thur	Sankatahara Chaturthi	6:30 pm	Ganesha Abhishekam
Feb 17th Fri	Shiva Brahmotsavam Starts		Detailed Program on Page 3
Feb 18th Sat	3rd Saturday of the Month	11:00 am	Rajatha Alamkaram for Shiva
		11:00 am	Tiruppavada Seva for Balaji
Feb 19th Sun	3rd Sunday of the Month	11:00 am	Bilwa Dala Archana for Shiva
	Swati	6:30 pm	Narasimha Swamy Abhishekam
Feb 20th Mon	President's Day	Temple Open from 9 am to 8 pm (Weekend Timings)	
Feb 24th Fri	Ekadasi	6:30 pm	Balaji Bhoga Murthy Abhishekam
Feb 25th Sat	MAHA SHIVARATRI		Detailed Program on Page 3
	4th Saturday of the Month	12 Noon	Pushpa Seva for Balaji
	Sravana	6:30 pm	Balaji Sahasranama Archana
Feb 26th Sun	Last Sunday of the Month	4:30 pm	Kala Bhairava Abhishekam
Mar 4th Sat	1st Saturday of the Month	11:00 am	Swarna Alamkaram for Shiva
		12 Noon	Balaji Vastra Samarpana

AN INTRODUCTION TO BHAGAWAD GEETA

-- Smt. Prabha Duneja

Wrapped in the middle of the great epic Mahabharata is the holy dialog between Arjuna and Lord Krishna.

Geeta the Song Celestial is like a dehidIpakAnyAya-a lamp placed on the threshold which connects many rooms. The light of the holy Sermon radiates from the middle towards the first six chapters of the great epic and definitely through the other twelve chapters towards the peace at last. Geeta presents the journey of the individual-Soul from a confused and depressed state of mind into the realization of the Self through total Surrender to God. The dialogue opens with "Vishada Yoga" and is concluded in "Prasada Yoga" wherein the depressed mind wakeup to the essential nature of the Indwelling-Self and resumes its true identity. It is indeed a fact that when the individual mind becomes aligned to the source of life, the depressed and dejected mind glides into the grace of the Supreme-Self; the Vishada (pain) is transformed into Prasada (peace and happiness) and the life becomes a blessing. The embodied self that has descended earlier into the limitations of mind and body now wakes up to the majesty of its own infinitude. The person who was enshrouded earlier in depression and loneliness-he is awakened into the blessed state of perceiving inner peace, integrity and happiness. The life that seemed like a useless burden now feels like a great blessing to be used in the service of mankind.

The individual's love and respect of life blossoms and he realizes his meaningful purposes for his being in the world. He becomes self-confident, optimistic, courageous, enthusiastic and moves forward quite intuitively, spontaneously and harmoniously. Such an awakened individual becomes an embodiment of bliss and carries that bliss wherever he goes.

This is the experience of Atmabodha- the knowledge of the Self. It is being awakened to one's own completeness. It is a very personal experience of the indwelling Lord at the exalted level of inner awakening. It is the communication of the "nara" with his eternal companion Narayana.

The message of the holy dialog is indeed phenomenal. It presents a profound insight into the workings of human nature and also provides guidance which is needed in every field of life. It is a systematic guide which and help the individual to enhance his creativity, productivity, inner-peace and contentment. A simple and straightforward approach towards the understanding of the Self at the various levels of human consciousness makes the dialogue uniquely valuable.

sri krishna arpanam astu | yata krishnastato dharmo | yato dharmastato jaya ||

Meaning: Where there is Sri Krishna, Dharma or righteousness is there; and where there is righteousness victory is assured.

Geeta Jayanthi was celebrated with usual pomp and joy on Sunday, Dec 11th.

PLANNED SPECIAL EVENTS

DATE/DAY	EVENTS	TIME	ACTIVITIES
Mar 5th Sun	Sashti	6:30 pm	Kartikeya Sahasranama Archana
Mar 6th Mon	Krittika	6:30 pm	Kartikeya Abhishekam and Archana
Mar 6th Mon	Rohini	6:30 pm	Sri Krishna Puja
Mar 9th Thur	Ekadasi	6:30 pm	Balaji Bhoga Murthy Abhishekam
Mar 9th Thur	Punarvasu	6:30 pm	Sri Rama Abhishekam
Mar 11th Sat	2nd Saturday of the Month	10:00 am	Balaji Sahasra kalasha Abhishekam
Mar 11th Sat		11:00 am	Muttangi Alamkaram for Shiva
Mar 11th Sat	Pradosham	6:30 pm	Shiva Abhishekam
Mar 12th Sun	2nd Sunday of the Month	3:30 pm	Shiva-Parvati Kalyanam
Mar 13th Mon	Poornima	6:30 pm	Lalita Sahasranama Parayanam
Mar 14th Tue	Karadaiyan Nombu	6:30 pm	Mahalakshmi Puja and Tying Sacred Thread
Mar 14th Tue	Lunar Eclipse		Not Visible here
Mar 18th Sat	3rd Saturday of the Month	11:00 am	Rajatha Alamkaram for Shiva
Mar 18th Sat		11:00 am	Tiruppavada Seva for Balaji
Mar 18th Sat	Swati	6:30 pm	Narasimha Swamy Abhishekam
Mar 19th Sun	Sankatahara Chathurthi	6:30 pm	Ganesha Abhishekam
Mar 19th Sun	3rd Sunday of the Month	11:00 am	Bilwa Dala Archana for Shiva
Mar 25th Sat	4th Saturday of the Month	12 Noon	Pushpa Seva for Balaji
Mar 25th Sat	Ekadasi	6:30 pm	Balaji Bhoga Murthy Abhishekam
Mar 25th Sat	Sravana	6:30 pm	Balaji Sahasranama Archana
Mar 26th Sun	Last Sunday of the Month	4:30 pm	Kala Bhairava Abhishekam
Mar 26th Sun	Pradosham	6:30 pm	Shiva Abhishekam
Mar 27th Mon	Masa Shivaratri	6:30 pm	108 Kalasha Abhishekam for Shiva
Mar 28th Tue	Solar Eclipse		Not visible here
Mar 29th Wed	Ugadi, Asthanam	6:30 pm	Panchanga Sravanam in Telugu, Kannada and English
	Vasanta Navaratra Starts		
	Mar 29 Wed - April 6 Thu -9 Days		Valmiki Ramayana Parayanam
April 6 Thu			Sri Rama Navami - Sita Rama Kalyanam
April 9 Sun			Sri Rama Navami (Weekend function)

SHIVA BRAHMOTSAVAM

DATE/DAY	TIME	EVENTS
Feb 17th Friday	7:00 PM	Anujna, Ganapati Puja, Punyahavachanam Deeksha Kankana Dharanam, Panchagavya Shuddi, Amkurarpanam, Dhwaja Pataka Puja, Nandi Abhishekam, Vastu Homa Dhwaja Arohana, Bali, Arathi, Mantra Pushpam
Feb 18th Saturday	7:00 AM	Suprabatham
Feb 18th Saturday	8:00 AM	Agni Pratishta, Nitya Homa and Bali
Feb 18th Saturday	9:30 AM	Shiva Abhishekam
Feb 18th Saturday	11:30 AM	Nava Kumbha Sthapana
Feb 18th Saturday	12:30 PM	Arathi
Feb 18th Saturday	5:00 PM	Rudra Homa, Sadyojatadi Homa, Parivara Devata Homa Laghu Poornahuti and Arathi
Feb 18th Saturday	7:30 PM	Nitya Puja, Aradhana, Bali, Arathi and Mantra Pushpam
Feb 19th Sunday	8:00 AM	Suprabatham
Feb 19th Sunday	9:00 AM	Shiva Abhishekam
Feb 19th Sunday	9:00 AM	Ganesha Abhishekam
Feb 19th Sunday	9:00 AM	Murugan Abhishekam
Feb 19th Sunday	10:30 AM	Nitya Homa, Bali
Feb 19th Sunday	11:30 AM	Parvati and Parameshwara Utsava Moorthy Abhishekam
Feb 19th Sunday	1:00 PM	Avabruda Snanam, Maha Poornahuti and Arathi
Feb 19th Sunday	3:30 PM	Shiva Kalyanam
Feb 19th Sunday	5:00 PM	Nandi Vahana Seva for Lord Shiva & Parvati Dhwaja Avarohanam, Deeksha Visarjanam, Asheervada and Prasada Distribution.

JAN 9TH VAIKUNTA EKADASI

9:00 am	Suprabatham
10:00 am	Balaji Bhoga Murthy Abhishekam
1:00 pm	Sri Vishnu Sahasranama parayanam
4:00 pm	Pancha Sukta Venkateshwara Sahasranama Homa
7:00 pm	Balaji Moola Murthy Abhishekam
9:30 pm	Archana and Sathumurai
10:00 pm	Vaikunta Dwara Puja
11:00 pm	Balaji Ekanta Seva and Asheervadam

THU FEB 2ND VASANTA PANCHAMI

9:30 am	Puja and Pushpanjali in Dasa Bhuja Durga Shrine
10:30 am	Saraswati Puja in Assembly Hall
12 Noon	Pushpanjali
12:30 pm	Aksharabhayasa for Children (Hate Kari)
1:00 pm	Bhog Prasadam
6:30 pm	Pushpanjali in Dasabhuj Durga Shrine
7:00 pm	Arati, Prasada Viniyogam and Visarjana in A.Hall

SAT FEB 25TH MAHA SHIVARATRI

6:00 AM	Shiva Suprabatham
6:30 AM	1st Yaama - Shiva Abhishekam
10:00 AM	2nd yaama - Shiva Abhishekam
1:00 PM	3rd Yaama - Shiva Abhishekam
3:30 PM	4th Yaama - Shiva Abhishekam
6:00 PM	5th Yaama - Mahanyasa Parayanam, Rudra Abhishekam and Ashtavada Seva
12:00 AM	6th Yaama - Shiva Abhishekam
3:30 AM	7th Yaama - Shiva Abhishekam
5:30 AM	8th Yaama - Shiva Abhishekam



Dear Devotees:

The term for the 2005 HCCC board of directors comes to an end in early March 2006. By that time the annual elections for the Board of Directors (BoD) and Executive Committee (EC) office bearers will be over and a new panel of BoD and EC committee members will be selected. I requested that my colleagues on the 2005 HCCC board to join me in writing this final Chairman's column for the year 2005.

Since the previous column, written three months back, a number of notable events have happened at our temple. We would like to highlight those here.

The Shiva Keshava Yagnam at the end of October went well. Our temple priests along with the invited priests made the 5 days yagnam a notable event. Especially noteworthy were the Sammohika Yagam and the Sammoohika Satynnarayana Vratams, both of which registered a large participation by the devotees with great enthusiasm.

Soon after the Yagnam our chief priest Sri. Rompicherla Srinivasacharlu garu has informed the BoD his desire to retire at the end of March 2006, so that he can enjoy more time with his family and also to pursue his literary ambitions. With a heavy heart the Board of Directors have agreed to honor his request for retirement. Before we go into what our plans are for the future, we would first like to highlight here this remarkable gentleman's contributions to this organization.

Sri. Acharlu had his religious training under the tutelage of his father from childhood. He has a doctoral degree in Telugu and Sanskrit literature. He came to our temple at the time of Maha Kumbhabhishekam in 1985 as an invited priest from India. He was recommended very highly by the Tirupati Devasthanam in India as Vaikhanasa agama scholar for our Kumbhabhishekam. The HCCC offered him a priest's position in 1986, and since then he has served the temple and the devotee community in an exemplary manner. His wife Lakshmi garu has also rendered services to the temple in an unselfish way and we are thankful to her.

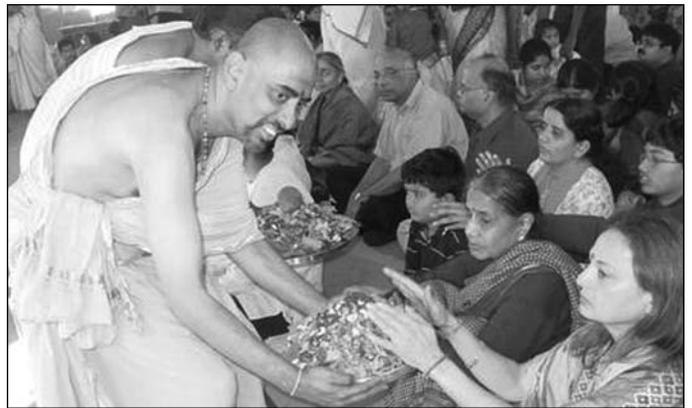
Our temple is the first one to offer in the US many yearly (special) functions that are generally performed in Tirumala. The credit goes to Sri. Acharlu for conducting the functions at our temple in the best Vaikhanasa sampradaya.

In the beginning there were hardly 250 odd families that used to support the temple, and in comparison to the families that come to our temple today, that number is miniscule. Even

though there are several other temples in the Bay Area, this phenomenal growth at our temple is a clear reflection of the devotee's satisfaction with the services provided by our priests and also is a testimonial to the dedication, devotion and detailthe three key ingredients . . . shown by our priests while performing different major and even minor functions.



Devotees taking Samkalpam for a Puja



Devotees acknowledging Homa Offerings



Priests finishing a Homa

EDITOR'S COLUMN

Sri. Acharlu as the senior most priest deserves our praise for being the driving force behind this success, and also for being a mentor and motivator for all the younger priests, who look up to him.

When there is something “ good “ that is going on, giving it up is always hard. This is certainly very true in the case of the HCCC



Devotees Performing Puja



Priests Performing Homa



Priests getting ready for a Homa

relationship with Sri Acharlu. However, as responsible officials running this organization, we feel that it is our duty to respect the wishes of our beloved chief priest to retire at the end of March 2006. Currently efforts are underway to find an equally qualified



Devotees Performing Homa

senior priest to assume his responsibilities.

To mark and celebrate the special occasion of Sri Acharlu's retirement, we formed a special committee to help us organize a grand retirement party for him. In the next month or so we will provide you with more details about the retirement function. We request all devotees to participate in this event, so that together we can show our gratitude and respect for this remarkable man, who has provided invaluable services to this temple and to the Hindu community of the Bay Area.

Our Master Planning Committee (MPC) has interviewed a few prospective architects as a prelude to undertaking construction projects in the future. A master plan will be developed, and from that projects that are a priority will be undertaken first. Two other Strategic Standing Committees (SSCs) - the Long Range Plan Committee (LRPC) and Policies and Procedures committee (PPC) - are also functional. Recently we constituted an Advisory Committee, which will resolve any future issues of contention within the framework of the HCCC bylaws.

In conclusion we would like to thank all of you the devotees, for your participation and request you to continue your generous contributions to the HCCC. We also thank our priests and the administrative staff for their dedication in making HCCC/Shiva Vishnu Temple a great place of worship in the Bay Area.

We wish all of you

“ A HAPPY AND PROSPEROUS NEW YEAR.”

OM Namah Shivaya ... OM Namoh Venkatesaya.

The Board of Directors.

TEN COMMANDMENTS FOR PEACE OF MIND

(By Gyan Rajhans, P.Eng., Bhajanawali Radio Program)

On several occasions in various temples, I have been asked to speak on the ways and means to attain peace of mind, the most sought after objective/commodity of the human race since time immemorial. In the modern age, it would appear that most of us are in a state of perpetual restlessness despite enjoying good health and basic economic security. Analyzing the causes of this restlessness has led me to identify ten possible solutions to attain peace of mind. I have called them "Ten Commandments", because they need to be followed religiously if we are sincere to achieve perfect peace of mind. Here they are with brief explanations:

1. Do not interfere in others' business unless asked. Most of us create our own problems by interfering too often in others' affairs. We do so because somehow we have convinced ourselves that our way is the best way, our logic is the perfect logic and those who do not conform to our thinking must be criticized and steered to the right direction, our direction. This thinking denies the existence of individuality and consequently the existence of God. God has created each one of us in a unique way. No two human beings can think or act in exactly the same way. All men or women act the way they do because God within them prompts them that way. There is God to look after everything. Why are you bothered? Mind your own business and you will keep your peace.

2. Forgive and forget. This is the most powerful aid to peace of mind. We often develop ill feelings inside our heart for the person who insults us or harms us. We nurture grievances. This in turn results in loss of sleep, development of stomach ulcers, and high blood pressure. This insult or injury was done once, but nourishing of grievance goes on forever by constantly remembering it. Get over this bad habit. Believe in the Justice of God and the Doctrine of Karma. Let Him judge the act of the one who insulted you. Life is too short to waste in such trifles. Forgive, Forget, and march on. Love flourishes in giving and forgiving.

3. Do not crave for recognition. This world is full of selfish people. They seldom praise anybody without selfish motives. They may praise you today because you are in power, but no sooner than you are powerless, they will forget your achievement and will start finding faults in you. Why do you wish to kill yourself in striving for their recognition? Their recognition is not worth the aggravation. Do your duties ethically, sincerely and leave the rest to God.

4. Do not be jealous. We all have experienced how jealousy can disturb our peace of mind. You know that you work harder than your colleagues in the office, but sometimes they get promotions; you do not. You started a business several years ago, but you are not as successful as your neighbor whose business is only one year old. There are several examples like these in everyday life. Should you be jealous? No. Remember everybody's life is shaped by his or her previous Karma, which has now become his Destiny. If you are destined to be rich, nothing in the world can stop you. If you are not so destined, no one can help you either. Nothing will be gained by blaming others for your misfortune. Jealousy will not get you anywhere; it will only take away your peace of mind.

5. Change yourself according to the environment. If you try to change the environment single-handedly, the chances are you will fail. Instead, change yourself to suit your environment. As you do this, even the environment, which has been unfriendly to you, will mysteriously change and seem congenial and harmonious.

6. Endure what cannot be cured. This is the best way to turn a disadvantage into an advantage. Every day we face numerous inconveniences, ailments, irritations, and accidents that are beyond our control. If we cannot control them or change them, we must learn to put up with these things. We must learn to endure them cheerfully thinking, "God Wills it so, so be it." God's plan is beyond our comprehension. Believe in it and you will gain in terms of patience, inner strength, and will power.

7. Do not bite off more than you can chew. This maxim needs to be remembered constantly. We often tend to take more responsibilities than we are capable of carrying out. This is done to satisfy our ego. Know your limitations. Why take on additional loads that may create more worries? You cannot gain peace of mind by expanding your external activities. Reduce your material engagements and spend time in prayer, introspection and meditation. This will reduce those thoughts in your mind that make you restless. Uncluttered mind will produce greater peace of mind.

8. Meditate regularly. Meditation calms the mind and gets rid of disturbing thoughts. This is the highest state of peace of mind. Try and experience it yourself. If you meditate earnestly for half an hour everyday, your mind will tend to become peaceful during the remaining twenty-three and a half-hours. Your mind will not be easily disturbed as it was before. You would benefit by gradually increasing the period of daily meditation. You may think that this will interfere with your daily work. On the contrary, this will increase your efficiency and you will be able to produce better results in less time.

9. Never leave the mind vacant. An empty mind is the devil's workshop. All evil actions start in the vacant mind. Keep your mind occupied in something positive, something worthwhile. Actively follow a hobby. Do something that holds your interest. You must decide what you value more: money or peace of mind. Your hobby, like social work or temple work, may not always earn you more money, but you will have a sense of fulfillment and achievement. Even when you are resting physically, occupy yourself in healthy reading or mental chanting of God's name (Japa) like "Om Nama: Shivaya or Om Namo Narayanaya".

10. Do not procrastinate and never regret. Do not waste time in protracted wondering "Should I or shouldn't I?" Days, weeks, months, and years may be wasted in that futile mental debating. You can never plan enough because you can never anticipate all future happenings. Always remember, God has His own plan, too for you. Value your time and do the things that need to be done. It does not matter if you fail the first time. You can learn from your mistakes and succeed the next time. Sitting back and worrying will lead to nothing. Learn from your mistakes, but do not brood over the past. DO NOT REGRET. Whatever happened was destined to happen only that way. Take it as the Will of God. You do not have the power to alter the course of God's Will. Why cry over spilt milk?

May God help you remain at peace with yourself and the world around you.

Om Shanti Shanti Shanti



HINDUISM FOR THE NEXT GENERATION

ESSENTIALS OF BHAKTI: AN ADVANCED LESSON FOR THE FAITHFUL

Bhakti means intense devotion. The concept of devotion is more or less the same in all religions. But in Hinduism there are certain extra subtleties which make the concept comparatively more complicated. These are four in number: viz., 1. the One Reality versus many 'Gods' of worship; 2. deity worship through 'idols'; 3. the freedom to choose one's own 'favorite deity', at the same time not being exclusive; and 4. the interactive ramifications of God's grace, fate and free will. An integrated but brief presentation of all these will be attempted here in the context of Bhakti.

The concept of God in Hinduism is more complex than the naive conception of a Supreme Cosmic Power. The Upanishads take pains to explain how every physical expression amenable to sense perception is nothing but an expression of the divine. In fact, anything that has name and form is a creation of the human mind. So we have to transcend the concept of name and form to get to the true nature of God. The Upanishads declare that there is a substratum of existence behind all the manifest presentations to the mind. This is just like gold being the substratum of existence in all gold ornaments, plastic being the substratum of existence in all articles of plastic. This substratum – named brahman, by the Upanishads – perme-

Continued on page 8..

HEALTH FAIR - 2005



Each year, in early December, a major annual event takes place in our temple that re-enforces our commitment to Serve God by Serving Humanity – the event is our annual Health Fair. The Health Fair is made possible by a team of dedicated and selfless medical professionals ranging from surgeons and registered nurses to LVNs and Stanford Medical students, who volunteer their time for a full day health open-house that includes free routine medical check-ups,

blood and bone density tests, and advice on a variety of health matters from general medicine to osteoporosis, nutrition & diet, dental hygiene, cardiology, urology, back problems, physical therapy, gastroenterology & liver, pulmonology, yoga and meditation.

This year more than 250 people in the bay area showed up at the Fair in our temple to avail this free service - most of them elders and visitors to the US without any or adequate medical insurance. To help us keep costs under control, local businesses offered discounts, free services and supplies - not the least of these were Contra Central Medical, Polymer Technology Systems, Avantis, Longs Drugs, Safeway of Livermore, New Taste of India Restaurant in Fremont and Kaiser Permanente.

The purpose of the Health Fair is two-fold: our community is very family oriented and while relatives of expatriates, most of them seniors, can barely afford to make it over to spend time with their children and grand-children, health care costs here are so high, they tend to neglect even basics for fear of incurring high hospital bills. By putting together this event, we try to help the needy in no small way. The second and even more important aspect of our Health Fair is the emphasis on preventive health care – a stitch in time saves nine is very relevant when it come to medical health. Even those with enough insurance and access to regular hospital care make it a point to come and be educated at our Health Fair. We gain enormous satisfaction in giving back to our community – our neighborhood that means so much to each of us.

The credit for the immense success of this year's Health Fair goes to all the HCCC volunteers and the 33 medical professionals who gave their very best effort for a whole day. With its several Human Services events, HCCC reaches out into its community – very few organizations that stem from religious roots can boast of such diverse philanthropy!

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ates everything in the world. It is the common content of all that has a name and/or form. For that very reason, it has no name or form for itself. It is spoken of as 'THAT' in the neuter gender by the Upanishads. This is the unique Godhead of Hinduism. There is no other. There is no second. It is the source of all energy, of all power, either in nature or in living beings. But the difficulty with this concept is this: there is no subject-object relationship in this context, brahman cannot be the object of cognition, since brahman has no second. In fact nothing can be predicated about brahman without delimiting the infiniteness of brahman.

So Hindu Vedanta, with a mathematical precision, has postulated that the moment one wants to think of brahman as an object of thought, one has already delimited brahman and is only thinking of Iswara, otherwise called saguna Brahman - brahman with attributes. Iswara is the all-powerful Almighty which is the subject of all religions. It has all the supreme qualities of brahman - if brahman could be said to have qualities or attributes - and, in addition, it could be the object of our thought process. By its very nature all names and forms suit it. The Vedic logic here is really very subtle, interesting and should be enjoyed as such. It has no name or form and therefore it could be called by any name and could be given any form. The concept of idol worship is the practical implementation of this unique logic of Hinduism. Hinduism has the daring to carry the rationale of this to its logical conclusion and hence it is we find a plethora of 'gods' and 'goddesses' in the Hindu framework.

Since no single name or form of God can fully describe the infinite grandeur that is God, since each name or form is only a symbol that points to something that is beyond this visual representation and since each is only a representation of some aspect or manifestation of the supreme Divinity, it is the entire array of all names and forms of God that will approximate to the fullness that is God.

In spite of all this, knowing the weakness of Man, Hinduism recommends that each person may choose his deity of worship. This is called the principle of ishTa-devatA, which is another distinguishing feature of Hinduism. If the grossest manifestation is the only thing that suits your taste, or mood, or psychological make-up or intellect, you are free to worship God in that form. Even the same person may worship an idol at one time and at another time may meditate and attempt to merge in the transcendental para brahman which is the basic divine chip that we are all made of, if we care to look within ourselves.

It is this train of thought in the Hindu mind which lives with different purANas extolling different deities. The Shiva Purana may say that Shiva is the greatest God, every other God is subordinate to it and the Vishnu purANA may say the same thing of Vishnu. There is no contradiction meant, implied or slurred over. This is the remarkable beauty of Hinduism. When they say that all Gods are nothing but names and forms of the same Ultimate para brahman, they mean it. If we understand it the wrong way, we are the ones to blame, not Hinduism. This is why when we explain Hinduism to a novice or to a non-Hindu we have to start from the philosophical end.

- V. Krishnamurthi



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