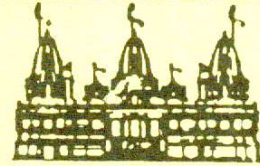


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HINDU TEMPLE SOCIETY, INC.

P.O. BOX 4264  
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(404) 860-3864



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Vikram Year 2044

Newsletter

Vol. 44-4

February, 1988

COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSONS

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Sheila Kamath

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## MONTHLY PUJA

**February 21, Sunday, 10:00 A.M.**

Our regular monthly Puja will be conducted on February 21, Sunday at 10:00 A.M. The Sri Rajarajeswari Peetham Group from Pennsylvania will perform the Puja. Two additional programs are also scheduled for that weekend. A get together of children of all ages with the Peetham Group on Saturday 9:00 A.M. - Noon; and a get together with adults on Sunday 7:00 P.M. to 9:00 P.M. Everyone is encouraged to participate in the above events.

Please contact Dinesh Jasani (803) 648-0583, if you would like to meet with Peetham Group or arrange for a meal during their visit.

Mr. Thakur Aildasani and family will host the monthly Puja.

### Maha Shivaratri Celebration

**February 20, Saturday, 8:00 P.M. to Midnight**

Maha Shivaratri will be celebrated on Saturday night (the night before our monthly Puja) starting at 8:00 P.M. The Sri Rajarajeswari Peetham Group will perform the Shivaratri Puja from 8:00 P.M. to 11:00 P.M. followed by one hour of Bhajans. Please attend and participate in this great religious festival.

### Holi Celebration:

**March 5, Saturday, 10:00 A.M. - Noon**

Holi is on March 3. We will celebrate the festival of colors "Holi" on March 5, 1988 starting at 10:00 A.M. Bring your entire family for this funfilled and joyous event.

**Prasad For Monthly Puja:** Mr. and Mrs. Thakur Aildasani and family.

**Cleaning Responsibility:** Kailash Sharma and all attending families.

### **TEMPLE OPENING SCHEDULE (7:00 - 8:00 P.M.)**

February 12, 13, 14	Rita Jerath 738-8511
February 19, 20, 21	Maha Shivaratri Celebrations
February 26, 27, 28	Sheila Kamath 733-8996
March 4, 5, 6	Shyamala Swamy 737-8484
March 11, 12, 13	Giridar Sharma 868-7099
March 18, 19, 20	Adarsh K. Gulati 733-5190

### **BALSHALA ACTIVITIES**

Hindu Temple Balshala started another session on January 10, 1988. Please contact Sheila Kamath (733-8996) for this and future sessions.

### **GEETA STUDY**

**Saturdays, 6:30 — 8:30 P.M.**

- Everyone is invited to participate in the stimulating Geeta discussions on "Gyana Yoga" every Saturday evening. Please note the change of the day to Saturday from Sunday.
- The Hindu Temple Society expresses its profound appreciation to Mr. Vijay Aranke for his leading role in Geeta discussions. Mr. Aranke is leaving the Augusta area and we wish him great success in the future.

### **YOGA CLASSES**

The Yoga classes are held every Tuesday 7:15 P.M. to 8:15 P.M. at the Hindu Temple. Interested individuals are invited to take advantage of these classes.

### **Our Previous Events**

#### **Republic Day Celebration:**

The Republic Day of India was celebrated at the Hindu Temple on January 24, 1988 with great enthusiasm. Hoisting of Indian flag, singing of national anthem, speeches by adults and children of Augusta related to the Republic Day and its significance, singing of patriotic songs were some of the highlights of this historic celebration. The executive committee thanks everyone's participation in making this a successful event.

### **Our Upcoming Programs:**

#### **Concert by "Ustad Hamid Hossain":**

Ustad Hamid Hossain, a well known sitarist and vocalist (Classical Raga, Gazal, Thumri, Bhajan and Shabad), will perform a special concert on March 26, 1988 at the Hindu Temple starting at 8:00 P.M. Please mark your calendar for this performance. Tickets will be available from members of Executive Committee or from Taj Mahal Gifts and Spices. A donation of \$20.00 per family or \$10.00 per person will be charged for tickets. More details about this concert in next newsletter.

### **FIFTH ANNUAL "POWERLINE" ESSAY COMPETITION RESULTS**

- There were six essays submitted on "Festivals of India" for this competition. The essay by Mr. Mayank Patel on the "Festival of Navaratri" was judged as the best essay. Congratulations to Mayank for an excellent essay which will be published in the newsletter in the near future. Mayank was given the first cash prize of \$40.00 for his effort. The second best essay was by Mr. Nupur Aggarwal on the "Festival of Holi". Congratulations to Nupur for his effort. A second prize of \$20.00 was awarded to Nupur. The essays by other contestants were also well written and awarded honorable mention prizes (\$10.00 each).
- The Executive Committee greatly appreciates the effort of Dr. Virandra B. Mahesh for being the official judge for the essay competition.
- A final note of thanks to "Powerline" for sponsoring this essay competition. We look forward to many future competitions and participation by our youth.

### **"YOUTH CORNER"**

#### **Maha Shivaratri: A Great Festival**

Mahashivaratri is one of the great festivals of India. This festival though celebrated as a nation-wide holiday is not an occasion for popular rejoicing in the sense in which Dassera or Diwali or Durga Puja in Bengal are. Still for hundreds of millions of followers of Lord Shiva specially and for every Hindu generally, this is the night connected with the Great God and hence festive and a messenger of joy. Blessed be the night that brings to us a reminder of the Great God. The night of the fourteenth day of the dark half of every lunar month of the Hindu calendar is a Shivaratri and auspicious for the worship of Shiva. But the most auspicious of them all is Mahashivaratri; the Shivaratri of the Hindu month of Magha. This occurs generally in the month of February in European calendar. Mahashivaratri festival though of special spiritual significance for Shaivites, followers of Lord Shiva, is also celebrated by Hindus generally all over the world. On this day, all Hindus disregard their

tiny superficial differences in belief and practice and emphasize the common core of their spiritual beliefs viz the one and the only Ultimate Truth and offer their worship to Him in His aspect as Great God Shiva.

There are several stories in the Puranas that relate to Jyotirlingas, Mahashivaratri and the supremacy of Lord Shiva over the two other Gods of Hindu Trinity viz Brahma and Vishnu. Jyotirlingas (literally Lingas of light) are Lingas that under the orders of Lord Shiva came naturally out of the 'bowels of the earth' and were not erected by human hands. The Puranic story goes like this. Shiva in order to prove his superiority over Brahma and Vishnu assumed the form of a Linga of fire and challenged Brahma and Vishnu to find out the lower and upper ends of this Linga. The Linga which was created by the Great God himself was co-existent with the Universe and extended over all the three worlds; - the swarga loka (the worlds of heaven), the prithvi loka (this earth) and the patals loka (the nether world). Brahma and Vishnu, so goes the story, could not fathom the limits of the Linga; they accepted defeat and acknowledged Shiva as their superior.

To commemorate the above victory, the Great God created out of the 'bowels of the earth' Jyotirlingas at twelve places all over India. There is a beautiful Sanskrit verse on the location of the twelve Jyotirlingas which is recited and meditated upon by devout Shaivites. The twelve places and the associated Shiva temples 'housing' these Jyotirlingas are as follows: (1) Somnath (Saurashtra), (2) Mallikarjuna (Andhra Pradesh), (3) Mahakaleswara (Ujjain, Madhya Pradesh), (4) Omkareswara (on river Narmada), (5) Vajjanath (Parli), (6) Bhimashankar (Dakini forest), (7) Rameshwaram (Tamil Nadu), (8) Nagnath (Daruka forest), (9) Vishwanath (Varansi), (10) Tryambakeshwar (Nasik), (11) Kedarnath (Himalayas, Uttar Pradesh) and (12) Ghusruneswar (Verul).

These twelve places are called Shivapuris, the places where the Great God resides. Varanasi in Uttar Pradesh (often called Benaras) is the eternal city of the Hindus where Lord Shiva resides. When Lord Shiva created the twelve Jyotirlingas, 'earth and water from every land' were brought to each of the twelve spots to make each Jyotirlinga a symbol and a representative of the universal spirit. The great Indian Poet Kalidas, the composer of the world renowned poems of Shakuntala and Meghdoot, has sung of the greatness of the Greatness God Shiva in his Kumarasambhavam referring to His metaphysical significance where 'contraries merge' and 'exclusion does not exclude but includes'. Kalidasa captures the universal conception of Shiva as 'He who has nothing (akinchana) and yet is the source of everything' (prabhavah sa sampadam). Shiva is called Bholanath, the God of simple and the humble folks. Shiva is the Great Renouncer, the Personification of the ultimate in renunciation, the Great Yogi. Our humble salutations to the

Great God Shiva on this, His most auspicious day, the Mahashivaratri.

## "RELIGIOUS - PHILOSOPHICAL CORNER"

### The Stages of Yoga

The word Yoga is derived from Sanskrit "yui" meaning to bind, join, attach, to direct and concentrate one's attention on, to use and apply. It also means union or communion. It is the true union of our will to the will of GOD. Yoga is also referred to, in Karmayoga of Srimad Bhagavad Gita, as the skill in work (perfection). Kathopanishad describes Yoga as "when the senses are stilled, when the mind is at rest, when the intellect wavers not — then the wise is reached the highest stage". This steady control of senses and mind has been defined as Yoga. Everything is permeated by the Supreme Universal Spirit, Paramatma or God, of which the individual human spirit Jivatma is a part. The system of Yoga gives a means by which the Jivatma can be united to Paramatma, known as Moksha. Patanjali (200 B.C.) in the first classic treatise, The Yoga Sutras, enumerated eight stages of Yoga. They are:

1. Yama - Universal moral commandments.
2. Niyama - Self purification by discipline.
3. Aasana - Posture
4. Pranayama - Rhythmic control of breath.
5. Pratyahara - Withdrawal and emancipation of the mind from the domination of the senses.
6. Dharana - Concentration
7. Dhyana - Meditation
8. Samadhi - A state of superconsciousness brought about by profound meditation in which the Sankhya (aspirant) becomes one with Paramatma.

Yama and Niyama control Yogi's passions and emotions and keep him in harmony with his fellow men. Aasanas keep the body healthy and strong and in perfect harmony with nature. Pranayama and Pratyahara teach the aspirant to regulate the breathing and thereby control the mind. Dharana, Dhyana and Samadhi take the Yogi into the innermost recesses of his soul. The Yogi doesn't look heavenward to find God. He knows that HE is within. Thus "the ladle is Brahman, the oblation is Brahman, it is offered by Brahman in the fire which is Brahman, Brahman alone he attains who sees Brahman in action."

(Source: Srimad Bhavad Gita; Light of Yoga by BKS Iyengar)

— M.S. Swamy

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