



Hindu Darshan

A Publication of Hindu Society of Manitoba 2023



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EDITORIAL



वसुधैव कुटुम्बकम्:

Sanatan Dharma's Sacred Wholistic View of the World

Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam - "The World Is One Family", is a Sanskrit phrase that spells most significant and primary moral value of believers and followers of Sanatan Dharma. The phrase emphasizes on a universal perspective of all earthly affairs, prioritizing the collective well-being of all creatures alike, over individual or family welfare. It urges the reader to ensure welfare of all-beings, foster global solidarity, duty and responsibility, and humanitarian and compassionate conduct, especially in addressing crucial subjects like sustainable progress and development; health, peace, and happiness for all-beings; and climate health including Air, Water, Forest, Sky and Planetary health.

The phrase is taken from the Maha Upanishad Verse:

अयं निजः परो वेति गणना लघुचेतसाम्।

उदारचरितानां तु वसुधैव कुटुम्बकम्॥

महा उपनिषद् ६ .७

Ayam Nijah Paro Veti Ganana Laghucetasam
Udaracaritanam Tu Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam

The verse ascribes quality of an individual (Sanatani) who has attained the highest level of spiritual progress, and one who can perform his worldly duties without attachment to material possessions.

This edition of the Hindu Darshan celebrates the concept of the Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam and its significance in our world today. We have included literary works of our talented community members that cover the religious, cultural, and social aspects of *Sanatana Dharma* befitting to the concept of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam.

The Hindu Society of Manitoba has been actively engaged in cultivating and enhancing awareness of the true teachings, practices, and values of *Sanatana Dharma* to all. Let us continue to spread awareness and serve humanity by preserving overall well-being of our planet earth and all of its habitants.

To conclude, I express a very happy and prosperous New Year to all and my sincere gratitude to our readers for encouraging us, the Board of Directors of The Hindu Society of Manitoba for giving us the opportunity and believing in us. Additionally, a warm thank you to the members of the Editorial Board for their valuable time and efforts, the authors for their literary contributions, and the advertisers, sponsors and well-wishers for their financial support.

Thank you,

Sanjay Moudgil

On behalf of the Editorial Board

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* Opinions expressed in this magazine are not necessarily those of the Editorial Board.

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Davinder Gandhi



**A JOINT MESSAGE FROM
THE PRESIDENT AND THE CHAIRPERSON OF BOARD OF TRUSTEES
OF THE HINDU SOCIETY OF MANITOBA**



On behalf of the Board of Governors, both the Management Committees and the Board of Trustees of the Hindu Society of Manitoba, we would like to wish all our members a very Happy Diwali and a Prosperous New Year. As we celebrate Diwali, the festival of lights, let us embrace the spirit of unity and togetherness that this auspicious festival symbolizes. May the radiant glow of the diya's illuminate our paths and bring prosperity to all.

As we embark on the journey into 2024, I extend my heartfelt gratitude to each one of you for your unwavering support and dedication to our community. Your commitment to our shared goals has been instrumental in shaping the success of Hindu Society of Manitoba.

I would also like to take this opportunity to express our sincerest appreciation to the management committee of both the temples for their tireless effort in organizing various events and providing a nurturing environment for our community to thrive.

Together, we have achieved remarkable milestones, and I am confident that in the year ahead, we will continue to build upon our successes and overcome any challenges that may come our way. Let us remain united in our vision and work together to create a brighter future for the Hindu Society of Manitoba.

I am thrilled to share the wonderful news that the renovation project at the temple is progressing smoothly, thanks to the collaborative efforts of our community. Furthermore, I am delighted to announce that we have secured funding from Federal Government, Provincial Government and Winnipeg Foundation to support this endeavor. I would like to extend a special thank you to the late Mr. Hasmukhbhai Pandya, Rao Atmuri, and Shameel Thakrar for their invaluable assistance in navigating the grant application process. Their dedication and expertise have played a crucial role in securing these funds, which will greatly contribute to the enhancement of our temple facilities. As our community continues to grow, it has become increasingly evident that our facilities need to evolve to meet the changing needs of our society. With this renovation project, we aim to create a more inclusive and accessible space that caters to the diverse needs of our members.

I am truly grateful for the support and dedication of every one of you. Together, we are making significant strides towards ensuring that our temple and cultural centre remains a cornerstone of our community for generations to come. We were honoured to host His Excellency, Sanjay Kumar Verma, the esteemed High Commissioner of India and his esteemed wife, Mrs. Gunjan Verma to our temple and cultural center for the very first time. Their Excellencies graced us with their presence and brought heartfelt greetings on behalf of the Government of India.

As we look to the upcoming year, it promises to be busy with many initiatives and projects. We continue to look for volunteers and member participation in our activities. Please reach out to any member of the Management Committees if you are interested in getting involved.

Thank you for your continued trust and collaboration. Here's to a prosperous and fulfilling 2024 for us all!

Happy Diwali and Happy New Year.

Kirit Thakrar
President

Ganpat Lodha
Chairperson, Board of Trustees



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Message from the Prime Minister of Canada

I am pleased to welcome everyone to the Hindu Society of Manitoba's 2023 Diwali Celebration.

Canada's diversity has always been one of our nation's strengths, and today's celebration is a reminder of this unique characteristic. I believe Diwali encompasses the spirit of those who have fought to make our country more inclusive for all Canadians, as the holiday symbolizes the victory of light over darkness.

Today's event is not only an opportunity to celebrate Diwali, but also a platform to showcase Indian traditions that you hold dear, such as music, dance, and delicious and authentic cuisine. I wish you a joyous day as you come together to celebrate Diwali and your heritage.



I would also like to thank everyone at the Hindu Society of Manitoba for organizing this Diwali Celebration. Your hard work and dedication have led to this immensely successful event and have allowed Manitobans to celebrate their rich culture.

Happy Diwali!

Please accept my very best wishes.

Ottawa
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A Message from the Lieutenant Governor of Manitoba

“How far that little candle throws his beams! So shines a good deed in a weary world,” wrote William Shakespeare.

As the King’s representative in our province, I am pleased to extend vice-regal greetings to the members and friends of the Hindu Society of Manitoba as you observe Diwali 2023. This joyful festival inspires your members to come together, strengthening generational and community bonds in celebration of goodness and enlightenment.

For more than 50 years, the Hindu Society of Manitoba has done excellent work in promoting and preserving Hindu history, religion and customs in our province. By sharing your unique culture with your fellow citizens, you encourage mutual understanding and inter-cultural harmony that enhance our entire provincial community, today, tomorrow and for years to come.

I commend the board of directors, staff and volunteers for your efforts to encourage Hindu culture, support newcomers and build community, as well as your ongoing contributions to the vibrant cultural mosaic that is valued by all Manitobans. I wish you a safe, happy celebration and continued success.

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read "Anita R. Neville".

**The Honourable Anita R. Neville, P.C., O.M.
Lieutenant Governor of Manitoba**

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CANADA

A MESSAGE FROM THE PREMIER

I am pleased to extend greetings to those celebrating Diwali throughout our province.

The Diwali Mela is an opportunity for people to come together and celebrate a new sense of optimism. The Hindu Society of Manitoba has worked hard to plan an evening of performances, activities, and food to show the beauty of Diwali and remind us that faith and goodness endure to triumph over darkness.

The Hindu Society of Manitoba is an essential part of our province. Their work as an organization is vital in both preserving, as well as promoting, Hindu culture. They play an important role in helping newcomers feel more at home as well as creating a culturally rich Manitoba for us all.

Thank you for the important work you do. Enjoy the festivities!



**The Honourable Wab Kinew
Premier of Manitoba**



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Mayor's Message

On behalf of the City of Winnipeg, I would like to extend my best wishes to everyone celebrating Diwali.

Diwali is one of the most welcome fall celebrations representing the victory of good over evil, knowledge over ignorance, and hope over despair. It is a time to gather with friends and family, to count blessings, and to prepare for a year ahead filled with health and happiness.

Thank you to the Hindu Society of Manitoba for organizing this year's celebration and your ongoing efforts towards celebrating the many contributions of the Indian community to our city. One of Winnipeg's greatest strengths is our diversity. By maintaining and celebrating the Indian community's culture and social traditions you are helping to strengthen our community.

My best wishes to all attendees for a most joyful Diwali.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "S. Gillingham". The signature is fluid and cursive, written over a light grey rectangular background.

Scott Gillingham
Mayor
City of Winnipeg

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Shubh Diwali!

As the radiant festival of Diwali approaches, our hearts are aglow with warmth and joy, much like the beautiful lamps that illuminate this auspicious occasion. Diwali, the Festival of Lights, signifies the triumph of light over darkness, good over evil, and hope over despair. It is a time for unity, celebration, and reflection.

As Manitobans, we come together as one community, embracing the diversity that enriches our lives. This Diwali, may the light of knowledge guide us towards understanding, tolerance, and compassion for one another.

As we light our diyas, may they symbolize the illumination of our hearts with love and kindness. Let us share the bounties of this festive season with those in need, extending a hand of support and empathy to make our community stronger.

To the Hindu Society of Manitoba, your commitment to preserving and promoting this rich cultural heritage is truly inspiring. Together, we can continue to build bridges of understanding and respect among all communities.

Thank you for generously welcoming us to this event year after year. It continues to be our privilege and pleasure for all of us at RBC to serve you and support this community throughout the year.

Wishing you a Diwali filled with boundless joy, prosperity, and peace. May the light of Diwali shine brightly in your lives, illuminating the path to a brighter, harmonious future.

From our RBC family to yours, thank you for your shining spirit.



Kim Ulmer
RBC Regional President

Happy Diwali



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Sunday	Morning Bhajans: 10.00 - 12.00 pm Aarti: 12.00 pm Preeti Bhoj: 12.15 pm	Evening Closed	Sunday	9.00 am - 7.00 pm Morning Bhajans: 10.00 am - 12.00 pm Aarti: 12.00 pm Preeti Bhoj: 12.15 pm	
	Monday to Friday 9.00 am - 12.00 pm	Monday to Friday 5.30 - 8.30 pm		Monday to Friday 9.00 am - 12.00 pm	Monday to Friday 5.30 - 8.00 pm
	Saturday 9.00 am - 7.00 pm			Saturday 9.00 am - 7.00 pm	
Monday	Shiva Puja	Shiva Abhishek	Monday	Shiva Puja	Rudrabhishekam, Rudri Chanting, Purusha Sooktam, Durga, Sri & Medha Sooktams
Tuesday	Hanuman & Durga Puja	Sunder Kaand, Hanuman Chalisa, Sankat Mochan, Bajrang Baan	Tuesday	Hanuman & Durga Puja	Sunder Kaand, Hanuman Chalisa, Sankat Mochan, Bajrang Baan
Wednesday	Ganesh Puja	Ganesh Puja	Wednesday	Closed	Closed
Thursday	Guru & Vishnu Puja	Guru & Vishnu Puja	Thursday	Guru, Vishnu, Krishna & Ram Puja	Guru, Vishnu, Krishna & Ram Puja
Friday	Lakshmi & Durga Puja	Lakshmi & Durga Puja	Friday	Lakshmi, Karthikeya & Lalitha Sahasranmam Puja	Lakshmi, Karthikeya, Lalitha Sahasranmam Puja
Saturday	Vishnu & Hanuman Puja	Hanuman Chalisa	Saturday	Vishnu, Hanuman & Vishnu Saharanamam Puja	Sunder Kaand, Hanuman Chalisa, Sankat Mochan, Bajrang Baan
1st Sunday	Havan		1st Sunday	Ramayan	
2nd Sunday	Amritvani		2nd Sunday	Shiv Shakti Path	
3rd Sunday	Ramayan		3rd Sunday	Bhagwat Geeta	
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5th Sunday	Satyanarayan Katha		5th Sunday	Satyanarayan Katha	
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GANPATI BAPPA AAA GAYE HAI

Adisha Gupta

Every year after summers, I am very excited to welcome Ganesh Ji at our Massi's house to celebrate Ganesh Chaturthi because it is Ganesha's birthday. It's a very special time of the year. The day before Ganesha's birthday we decorated the house with colorful hangings, diyas and flowers. I made a lot of drawings and waited for Ganesha's arrival. In the evening after school, we welcomed Ganesh Ji. The Bappa was all covered. I had so many feelings at the same time. These are some of them- Happy, Excited, Proud, felt like dancing and wow.

First Day of Bappa in our house

Next day, in the morning we opened Bappa's face after Pooja and Aarti. Bappa looked so beautiful. I couldn't stop looking at Ganpati Bappa. In the evening, we dressed up. Papa was wearing a Kurta; Mumma was wearing a Saree; I was wearing a red salwar suit, and my sisters were wearing a lehenga. We had a kirtan with friends and family. I sang bhajans- *Ek do teen Chaar Ganpati Ki Jai Jai Kar* and *Ganpati Bappa Aa Gaye hai*. I especially learned Ganesh Ji aarti on harmonium for his birthday. I and my sisters danced to songs Shankar Ji Ka Damru Baaje. Then, we offered prasad and laddoo which is Ganesh Ji's favorite sweet.

Last Day of Bappa at our house

On the Second day, my mumma told us the story why is Ganesh Chaturthi celebrated and explained the meaning of *Dukhharta Sukharta Varta Vighnachi*. We had a kirtan and after aarti it was the time to say bye to Bappa. We dipped Bappa in water. I was sad but at the same time I wanted Ganpati Bappa to go home to see his parents. I miss him. I am waiting to see him next year. I love you, Ganesh Ji.





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VASUDHAIV KUTUMBAKAM- SURPRISING PARALLELS BETWEEN INDIC AND INDIGENOUS TRIBES OF SOUTH AMERICA

Arindom Sinha

The world is a diverse and culturally rich place, filled with an array of belief systems and spiritual teachings that have shaped the course of human history. Among the many ancient civilizations that existed on opposite sides of the globe, the Hindu gods and the deities of various Indigenous South American civilizations share some striking similarities. These resemblances suggest the possibility of cross-cultural interactions or the parallel development of human spirituality.

I. Divine Triads and Cosmic Balance

One of the most intriguing parallels between Hindu gods and South American civilizations can be found in the concept of divine triads and the importance of cosmic balance. In Hinduism, the holy Trinity consists of Brahma (the creator), Vishnu (the preserver), and Shiva (the destroyer/regenerator). These deities represent the cyclical nature of creation, preservation, and regeneration through destruction in the universe.

In South American civilizations like the Aztecs, there is a similar triadic structure. The primary gods in the Aztec pantheon were Huitzilopochtli (the god of war), Tlaloc (the god of rain and fertility), and Quetzalcoatl (the feathered serpent god associated with creation and wind). These deities played essential roles in maintaining cosmic balance by governing various aspects of life, echoing the Hindu concept of the Trimurti.

II. Serpent Symbolism

Serpent symbolism is another intriguing parallel between Hindu gods and South American civilizations. In Hinduism, Lord Vishnu is often depicted reclining on the cosmic serpent known as Shesha or Ananta. The serpent represents the infinite and the universe's unending cycle.

Similarly, in Mesoamerican civilizations including the Maya, the feathered serpent god, Kukulcan (or Quetzalcoatl among the Aztecs), played a significant role. Kukulcan was associated with creation, wind, and agriculture, just like Lord Vishnu's role as the preserver and nurturer. The feathered serpent symbolizes the dual nature of existence, just as the cosmic serpent does in Hindu mythology.

III. Rituals and Offerings

Rituals and offerings to the gods are common practices in both Hinduism and South American civilizations. In Hinduism, devotees make offerings of food, flowers, and incense to seek the blessings of their deities. Similarly, South American civilizations had elaborate rituals and sacrifices to appease their gods.

The Mayans, for instance, conducted complex ceremonies, including sacrifices, to honour their deities and maintain the cosmic order. While the specifics of these rituals differed, the underlying belief in the need to make offerings to the gods for their favour and protection is a common thread.

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IV. Reincarnation and the Afterlife

Both Hinduism and South American civilizations held beliefs about reincarnation and the afterlife. In Hinduism, the cycle of samsara involves the continuous cycle of birth, death, and rebirth until one achieves liberation (moksha) from this cycle. Similarly, in South American civilizations like the Aztecs, the concept of life after death was prominent, with a belief in an afterlife that depended on one's actions in this world.

Conclusion

The parallels between Hindu gods and South American civilizations are fascinating and raise questions about potential connections or independent developments in human spirituality. While it is unclear if there was direct contact between these two distant cultures, the common themes of divine triads, serpent symbolism, rituals, and beliefs about the afterlife demonstrate the universality of certain spiritual concepts.

Even as general observation we see worldwide some common recurring traditions amongst Indigenous communities.

- Sacred Rivers and Water Worship
- Nature Worship
- Medicinal Plants and Herbal Remedies
- Animism and Ancestral Spirits
- Oral Traditions and Storytelling
- Ceremonial Practices
- Respect for Elders and Ancestral Wisdom
- Sustainable Living
- Circular Concepts of Time

These parallels remind us of the rich tapestry of human beliefs and the capacity of different cultures to arrive at similar ideas about the nature of the divine and the cosmos. Whether through contact or independent evolution, these similarities offer a profound insight into the shared human experience of understanding the universe as one and treats all beings as relatives with mutually symbiotic relationships. I hope more research gets carried out as world population was much smaller back then although it was very sparse at that time but far closer in familial roots, “Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam” - (वसुधैव कुटुम्बकम्) all beings on earth are family.

An interesting piece of trivia: anyone who has visited the sacred Bannock point petroforms in Manitoba's Whiteshell park belonging to Anishinaabe (Ojibwe) tribe, and many creation stories from Turtle Island that can attest to Hindu ritualistic vibes in that area as well.





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CELEBRATING CHATHURDASA LOKAS-REVERENCE TO 14 WORLDS OF SANATANA DHARMA

Pt. Venkat Machiraju

Sanatan Dharma-the oldest living religion of this world, even goes beyond earth (Vasundhara) and acknowledges and respects the lives in 14 worlds. The 14 worlds are described in many puranas in Sanatan Dharma. In these 14 worlds there are 7 upper worlds and 7 lower worlds. The upper worlds are called as “*URDHVALOKAS*”, and the lower worlds are called as PATALAS.

The Urdvaokas: The ascending spiritual order of liberation

The urdvalokas or upper worlds viz.,

1 BHULOKA	3 SUVARLOKA	5 JANALOKA	7 SATYALOKA
2 BHUVARLOKA	4 MAHARLOKA	6 TAPOLOKA &	

These seven Urdhva lokas we recite when we ever we chant the Gyatri Mantra. We all know the Gyatri Mantra, the Gyatri Mantra starts with “*Tat savitur vareniyam bhargo devasya dheemahi dheeyo yonah prochodayat*” the first line of the Gayatri Mantra is the praise or prayer of God and his multi-dimensional existence. While using the shorter Gayatri Mantra we only recite ***Om Bhur bhuv suvah tat savitur vareniyam...*** The first line refers or praises god in three-dimension ***Om Bhur bhuv suvaha***. These are the three dimensions of God. But there is also longer Gayatri Mantra where God is praised how he manifested himself into seven dimensions or seven urdhvalokas. The longer Gyatri Mantra is recited in this way: ***Om Bhuhu Om Bhuvaha Om Suvaha Om Mahaha Om Janaha Om Tapaha Ogam Satyam Tat Sa Vitur Vareniyam...*** so, these seven lokas represents the ascension of the human soul into higher and higher worlds. The bhuloka is the material dimension with which we are all familiar and of which we are a part. Here we have infinite galaxies and infinite stars are all part of it. Our solar system and Earth is also part of it - where we all live. In this material dimension everything is made of solid matter such as our human bodies, animal bodies and plants. Above the material dimension there is the bhuvanloka which is much bigger than the material dimension. In this dimension everything is made of vibrational fields of waves. A person in Bhuvan Loka will be made of out a vibrational wave field. People will have 10 times longer (500 – thousand yrs) life spans than the material dimension. People who come here are with average good karmas after death This Dimension of Bhuvan loka is also called as Pitru loka. A month will be a day in this dimension. Above this bhuvanloka (or vibrational dimension) there is suvarloka or swargaloka which we commonly refer as the heavens or swargaloka. In this dimension everything is made of

light: people, houses, everything. Here people have the power to manifest things with their thought. People are much happier here. One year of our earth life will be one day in this dimension. Here, people live for thousands of years. People with very good karmas will come to this dimension after their death. This dimension is much bigger than the bhuloka and bhuhvarloka. Beyond this dimension there is Maharloka. This dimension is made of pure thought it is beyond our imagination. People come here after great punya, and they live here for thousands and thousands of years. There is lot more happiness here. This is also called Dasama dwara the 10th door. There is absolutely no matter. Everything here is made with pure thought only pure thought. Beyond this dimension there is much bigger dimension called Jan? loka. Great yogis and saints ascend to this dimension. When they come here there is no rebirth for them. They live here for millions of years here. They occasionally come down or descend as avatars like Rama, Krishna, Bhuddha etc., as avataras. Beyond this dimension there is the Tapo Loka. Here, no souls can come here and stay here. Only God created divine souls who administrate or run the world will exist in this dimension. Some of them are named like **SANAKA, SANANDANA, SANATANA, SANATKUMARA**. Beyond this dimension there is an infinite number of dimensions full of light and bliss called as Satyaloka. People who attain moksha will come here eternally. The same satyaloka is referred in the Puuranas as **Vaikunta, Kailasa, Brahma loka, Goloka** and so on. It is a goal of every living soul to reach satyaloka and attain moksha.

The seven lower Lokas: the descending order of sensual indulgence

The 7 lower worlds are called the patalas. They are known as follows:

1 ATALA	3 SUTALA	5 MAHATALA	7 PATALA
2 VITALA	4 TALATALA	6 RASATALA	

These patalas are not hell or narakas as misunderstood by some, they are dimensions of extreme sensual pleasures. For example, someone is addicted to extreme pleasure of eating or sense of taste they are born in theses patalas only for eating, they will lose other senses and will be thrown in to one of the patalas where they can enjoy the sense of taste for long long time and once, they overcome their desire they will be ascended to the higher dimensions. In ancient times, the other places like North America other continents where people are extremely materialistic are referred as patalas also. We should understand all these dimensions can be existing in the same place or space. All these different dimensions are like concentric spheres. The bigger spheres are the higher dimensions or urdhva lokas the smaller dimensions are the patalas. Our physical world consisting of our earth is the 7th smaller concentric sphere. If you live on earth, we also exist in other lokas also as earth is a part of all the bigger spheres. But we don't feel them, and we are only aware of our earth

dimension. Let us take an example in bhagavata purana - **Hiranyaksha** a demon king drowns earth in huge ocean of rasatala. Rasatala is one of the patalas/lower worlds. Rasa means juice or enjoyment, tala means place, dimension, or world. Hiranyaksha means one who is constantly looking for gold with his eyes. He is an extremely materialistic greedy king with no spirituality. He made all his people very materialistic with sensual pleasures. The whole earth became a place of extreme materialistic pleasures with no spirituality. This is what the purana means the earth is submerged in the ocean of rasatala. To save this earth varaha is born from the nose of brahma in the form of small fly. Soon he become huge Pig or Varaha. Nose symbolizes smell or earth & materialistic pleasures. Varaha the pig incarnation of Vishnu is also called as Yagna Varaha. The nature of the pig is to enjoy in muddy marshy places. Therefore, the pig symbolizes extreme sensual pleasures. Yagna Varaha means sacrificing and detached while enjoying everything. Yagna Varaha taught the extreme materialistic people in the Hiranyaksha kingdom how to enjoy material things with the sense of sacrifice and surrender to God. All pleasures are gift of God hence sacred showing the divine love for us. This is how he uplifted the people from materialism to spiritualism thus, automatically lifting the earth from ocean of rasatala.

Concluding remarks: How to go there!

These dimensions are not only places of existence but at the same time they are mental states and spiritual states all existing in the same place and same time. For example: anyone who is extremely materialistic and sensual is living on the earth and at the same time existing in the patalas. Another person who is extremely saintly and still on earth is living in the tapoloka or maharloka. If our Karmik (actions, words, thought and speech) perspectives and resulting behavior treats all living being on this Vasundhara (earth) as family members in a respectful and nurturing ways, then one can attain the highest spiritual order of – Satya Loka irrespective of where they live. This is the real meaning and accomplishment of ‘Vasudhaiva Kutumbkam’. Shall we begin our life Journey on a path to ‘Vasudhaiva Kutumbkam’?





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दिवाली अंधकार पर प्रकाश और बुराई पर अच्छाई की विजय एवं प्रभुता का उत्सव है। ऐसा माना जाता है कि इस दिन भगवान राम, माता सीता और उनके भाई लक्ष्मण अपने चौदह वर्ष के वनवास (निर्वासन) और लंका के राजा रावण पर विजय के उपरान्त अयोध्या लौटे थे। इस त्योहार के आने के कई दिन पहले से ही घरों की लिपाई पुताई सजावट प्रारंभ हो जाती है। इस दिन पहनने के लिए नए कपड़े बनवाए जाते हैं। इस दिन देवी लक्ष्मी की पूजा और उनके आगमन एवं स्वागत के लिए घरों को सजाया जाता है।

दीपावली का त्योहार पांच दिनों तक चलने वाला सनातन धर्म का सबसे बड़ा एवं महत्वपूर्ण पर्व है। यह पांच दिवसीय त्योहार भारत में प्रकाश, समृद्धि और सांस्कृतिक महत्व का उत्सव है। इस पांच दिवसीय त्योहार में धनतेरस, नरक चतुर्दशी, दिवाली, गोवर्धन पूजा और भाई दूज सम्मिलित हैं। प्रत्येक दिन के अपने अनुष्ठान और परंपराएं होती हैं, जो मानवता को एकता, प्रेम और अंधकार पर प्रकाश की विजय का संदेश देती हैं। यह समय विशेषकर परिवारों के एक साथ आने, उपहारों का आदान-प्रदान करने, दीपक जलाने और परस्पर संबंधों को सुदृढ़ करने का समय है।

प्रथम दिवस: धनतेरस या धन त्रयोदशी - यह दिवाली उत्सव के प्रारम्भ का प्रतीक है। इस दिन, लोग देवी लक्ष्मी और भगवान कुबेर की पूजा करते हैं और अपने जीवन में धन और समृद्धि लाने के लिए नई वस्तुएं खरीदते हैं। धनतेरस के दिन व्यापारी अपने नए बही खाते बनाते हैं।

द्वितीय दिवस: नरक चतुर्दशी या छोटी दिवाली - दूसरे दिन छोटी दिवाली या नरक चतुर्दशी मनाई जाती है। यह राक्षस नरकासुर के विरुद्ध भगवान कृष्ण की विजय का सम्मान करता है। नरक चौदस के दिन सूर्योदय के पूर्व स्नान करना अच्छा माना जाता है।

तृतीय दिवस: दिवाली एवं दीपावली - कार्तिक अमावस्या यानि के दीपावली का मुख्य दिन जिसे बड़े उत्साह के साथ मनाया जाता है। इस दिन लक्ष्मी की पूजा की जाती है तथा खील एवं बताशे का प्रसाद चढ़ाया जाता है। इस दिन, लोग अपने घरों को मिट्टी के दीपकों के प्रकाश, रंग-बिरंगी रंगोली और अन्य साज सज्जाओं से सुसज्जित करते हैं। लक्ष्मी पूजा शुभ आयोजन पारंपरिक रूप से संध्या के समय शुभ प्रदोष-काल में किया जाता है।



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चतुर्थ दिवस: गोवर्धन पूजा - दिवाली के एक दिन बाद, भारतीय गोवर्धन पूजा मनाते हैं, जो भगवान कृष्ण की पूजा के लिए समर्पित दिन है। ऐसा कहा जाता है कि भगवान कृष्ण ने "गोवर्धन" नामक पर्वत को उठाकर मथुरा के लोगों को भगवान इंद्र से बचाया था।

पञ्चम दिवस: भाई दूज - अन्तिम दिवस को भाई दूज, भाऊ बीज, या भैया दूज के नाम से जाना जाता है और यह भाइयों और बहनों के बीच अनोखे रिश्ते का सम्मान करता है।

दिवाली की प्रतीक्षा सभी बच्चों और बड़ों को पूरे वर्ष रहती है। कई दिनों पहले से ही इस उत्सव को मनाने की तैयारियां शुरू हो जाती हैं। भगवान श्री राम, माता सीता, और भ्राता लक्ष्मण चौदह वर्ष का वनवास पूरा करके अपने घर अयोध्या लौटने की खुशी में सभी अयोध्यावासियों ने दीप जलाकर उनका स्वागत किया था। तभी से दीपो का यह त्यौहार दीपावली के नाम से प्रचलित है। कार्तिक मास की अमावस्या की अंधेरी रात असंख्य जगमगाते दीपो के साथ जगमगाने लगती है।

भारत के लगभग सभी धर्मों के लोग दिवाली का त्योहार मनाते हैं। भारत जैसे बहुसांस्कृतिक और विविधतापूर्ण देश में इस त्योहार को मनाने का हर धर्म शैली एवं आस्था भले ही प्रथक हो, परन्तु दिवाली की महत्ता सनातन, जैन, सिख एवं बौद्ध धर्म में एक समान है। यह त्योहार लोगों के जीवन में जो उत्साह, जीवन्तता और खुशी लाता है, वह सभी धर्मों के लोगों को एक साथ बांधता है।

जैन धर्म की मान्यता है कि दिवाली के दिन जैन तीर्थकरों में से अंतिम, भगवान महावीर ने निर्वाण प्राप्त किया था, जिसे पूर्ण ज्ञान और आत्मज्ञान भी कहा जाता है। भगवान महावीर ने दुनिया भर में जैनियों द्वारा अपनाए जाने वाले धर्म की स्थापना की थी।

सिखों के लिए दिवाली आज़ादी के संघर्ष की कहानी है। सिख दिवाली का दिन मुगल जेल से गुरु हरगोबिंद की रिहाई के उपलक्ष्य में बंदी छोड़ दिवस रूप में मनाते हैं। इस दिन जहांगीर की साजिशों से छठे गुरु, गुरु हरगोबिंद ने जीत प्राप्त करी थी। जहांगीर ने वर्ष 1619 में गुरु हरगोबिंद और उनके साथ 52 अन्य राजकुमारों को कैद कर लिया था। गुरु हरगोबिंद ने जेल से आजादी के लिए तब तक इन्कार करते रहे जब तक कि वह सभी को वापस लाने में सक्षम नहीं हो गए।

बौद्ध समुदाय की मान्यता है कि दिवाली के दिन सम्राट अशोक ने बौद्ध धर्म अपनाया था। इसलिए वे दिवाली को अशोक विजयादशमी के रूप में मनाते हैं। वे इस दिन मंत्रोच्चार के साथ-साथ सम्राट अशोक को तथा उनकी उपलब्धियों को याद करते हैं। नेवार बौद्ध समुदाय के लोग दिवाली के दिन लक्ष्मी की पूजा भी करते हैं।

अपितु दिवाली की कहानी अलग-अलग धर्मों में अलग-अलग है, किन्तु इसका सार एक ही है। दिवाली भारत के समृद्ध एवं गौरवशाली अतीत को प्रदर्शित करती है, अपने पर्यवेक्षकों को जीवन के सच्चे मूल्यों को बनाए रखने का संदेश देती है तथा लोगों को आंतरिक प्रकाश और संसार की अंतर्निहित वास्तविकता में आनंद लेना सिखाती है।



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THE UNIVERSE OF GODS, RELIGION AND SOCIETY

Dr. Dan A. Chekki

God, religion, and society are intricately intertwined, and this symbiotic relationship is inseparable. Faith in God and religious beliefs have a tremendous impact on society. Our attitudes, behaviour and personality, values, ethics and morals, art and architecture, music and dance, philosophy, and politics, and so forth are influenced by religious values. We address our individual and collective prayers to a God or Gods. The faithful think God creates this universe and that nothing can happen without God's will.

Religion provides people with a sense of community, identity, and unity, and social support networks and mutual help in normal and difficult times. Millions of devotees believe that worship of God and offering of prayers to God will bring blessings, comfort, and peace of mind, especially in times of misfortune, suffering and pain.

Today despite increasing materialism and secularism, belief in a god or gods has not diminished. In fact, devotees donate to build temples and go on pilgrimage to holy places. Millions plunge in sacred rivers to wash off their sins. Everyday tens of thousands of people offer prayers to God for good jobs, family life, health, happiness, and prosperity. People who value faith assert religion and spirituality can elevate the quality of life for many individuals, families, and communities. They believe that God is Almighty, all powerful, immortal, self-illuminating, the Supreme Light, loving, kind, compassionate and so on.

Many thousands of years ago, when human beings wandered and lived in caves amid forests, hills and dales, rivers, and lakes; gathered fruits and berries and hunted for survival, the notion of God was associated with nature and natural phenomena. The earliest humans on this planet, when they saw sunrise and sunset, wildfires, thunder, lightning, and rain, flowing rivers, earthquakes, storms, and floods, changing seasons, births, and deaths, they were struck with wonder, fear, and reverence. All these natural phenomena seemed mysterious. They thought there was a superhuman supreme power behind all these natural events. They began worshipping the Sun and Fire for light and warmth, rivers for life-sustaining water, and trees for fruits and berries. When disasters such as drought, wildfire, earthquakes, floods and the like happened, they thought gods were angry and furious. They believed those Gods could be pleased with sacrifices and sacrificed goats, sheep, and other animals, and prayed to have success in hunting and to have more cows, children, long life and so on.

The teachings of Vasudhaiv Kutimbkam:

The Rigveda, the oldest scripture (1500-900 B.C.) provides evidence of the fact that people recognized nature and natural phenomena as Gods and goddesses. This sacred book refers to the Sun (Surya), Dawn (Usha), Fire (Agni), Storm (Maruts), Rain God (Indra), the Mother Goddess (Aditi), the Lord of Life and Death (Varuna) as supernatural supreme forces. During the Vedic period people distinguished between Gods and human beings

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because they believed God was the source of all energy and all-powerful.

The Upanishads (900-500 B.C.) describe god Brahman (not to be confused with Brahmin or god Brahma), as the Supreme Reality, in a myriad of ways. Brahman is infinite in form, both visible and invisible, all-powerful, all-pervading, the supreme bliss, creator, the Supreme soul of the universe, incomprehensible, imperishable, gender neutral, fills the whole universe and dwells in the core of the human heart, beyond description, 'not this, not this (neti, neti).

Brahman is knowledge, wisdom, action, goodness and truth, and is smaller than the smallest, greater than the greatest, the source of all life, the one Supreme Light that gives light to all. Whatever exists in this universe--humans, animals, birds, plants, stars, galaxies and so on-- are all dependent on the primal energy of Brahman. Food, life-breath (prana), sound, the syllable OM, and the cosmic process are all Brahman. In other words, the god Brahman manifests in many different forms. Saint Basava, 12th century philosopher-poet, said 'God is One, names are many'.

The world originates from Brahman and returns to Brahman.

The Upanishads present a spiritual view and emphasize the importance of ethical life and the practice of moral virtues for God-realization and experiencing the ecstasy of divine union. The individual soul (Atman) , the Supreme Soul (Brahman) and their synthesis are the essence of the Upanishads. This world is intimately connected with God. The devotees recite the Upanishad prayer: ' Lead us from the unreal to the real, lead us from darkness to light, lead us from death to immortality.'

At a later stage, the concept of incarnations of God (Avataras) emerged. God Vishnu took the human form appearing as Lord Ramachandra. Krishna is another important of the incarnations of God Vishnu. The Song of God, the Bhagavad Gita, depicts Lord Krishna, echoing similar thoughts about God as presented in the Upanishads: God is knowledge, wisdom, life-breath, the Supreme Light and so on. Lord Krishna says: ' Whenever righteousness declines, God appears in every age on earth, to destroy evil, and to re-establish righteousness (dharma). The Gita teaches us to follow the good and simple life composed of both the spiritual-contemplative and the active work and service-oriented life, doing good to others, treating others as oneself.

Many sacred scriptures, including myths and legends (Puranas) tell us about the Great God Shiva (Mahadeva), Parvati in different forms as the Great Goddess (Mahadevi) or Devi, Durga, Kali and so on; Ganesh, Kartikeya; Brahma, Laxmi, Saraswati and so forth; and narrate stories about hundreds of other gods. Today, a few of these major gods and goddesses exert an enormous influence on millions and millions of people's religious and social life.



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6 STEPS TO IMPROVE MENTAL WELLNESS

Bhavana Garg, Rhea Gupta, Sharad Srivastava, Surekha Joshi, Natalie Mota,
Shay-Lee Bolton, Jitender Sareen, and the CBTm Team

We recommend 6 steps for improving mental wellness, whether you are feeling well or if you are distressed. We call them “Skills for Life” because practicing these skills can help you feel better and prevent mental health problems. Below are some key skills that have been taken from our Cognitive Behaviour Therapy with mindfulness program that is FREELY available for all Manitobans (<https://cbtm.ca>).

1. Mindfulness

Mindfulness is the act of staying in the present. You can practice this throughout your day and when doing yoga or meditation. Focus on your breathing - feel the air move in and out of your lungs and observe yourself without judgment. Do not worry about the past or future. This will help you calm and focus your mind, something that is especially important as we are distracted by social media. Just like exercising your muscles, you can build your attentional skills and concentration if you practice mindfulness. You can try practicing by downloading an app such as “Mindshift” or “Mindfulness Coach” or by joining the Wellness Group at the mandir.

2. Movement

Find time to be active every day! Choose an activity that you enjoy, such as walking, biking, dancing, playing cricket, or weights. You can also get a membership to use the gym space at the mandir by obtaining a form at the mandir’s front desk. Do not wait until you are feeling happy or motivated to start the activity. Start it today when you have time. Remember Nike’s motto – ‘Just do it!’. Physical activity keeps our brain healthy, improves sleep, and is the fastest way to improve mood. It is hard not to smile when you are dancing. Dance and music are an important part of our culture. Put on your favourite song and dance!

3. Nutrition

Healthy eating is an important part of mental wellness. Our bodies are a temple, and we need to provide them with the proper nutrients. Look at the food you eat daily and ask yourself a few questions. Do I eat enough fruits and vegetables? Do I get enough protein, like beans, lentils, nuts, and seeds? Am I drinking enough water? Nutrition fuels our system by giving us the energy to engage in activities that enhance our mood. Every person has different needs, so be a scientist and observe your body and mind after eating certain types of food. Try to make changes based on your observations! Alcohol and other substances also negatively affect our mood, thoughts, and behaviours, and reducing consumption can have meaningful impacts on mental health.

4. Social Support

When you are dealing with stress, it’s important to reach out to people close to you. Talking to your friends and family may help you feel more supported and can uplift your mood. Have a cup of chai or coffee with a loved one and talk about anything you wish. Social media can be a good way to stay connected when it is used in moderation. But, if social media causes you to feel isolated or have negative emotions, then substitute it for meaningful contact with others. Regardless of your amount



6 STEPS TO IMPROVE MENTAL WELLNESS

We recommend 6 steps for improving mental wellness, whether you are feeling well or if you are distressed. We call them "Skills for Life" because practicing these skills can help you feel better and also prevent mental health problems. Below are some key skills that have been taken from our Cognitive Behaviour Therapy with Mindfulness program that is **FREE**LY available for all Manitobans (www.cbtm.ca).

MINDFULNESS



1

- Mindfulness means staying in the present moment.
- Practice this throughout your day and during yoga or meditation.
- Focus on your breathing - feel the air move in and out of your lungs.
- This will help calm and focus your mind.
- Download an app such as **Mindshift** or **Mindfulness Coach** to practice.

MOVEMENT



2

- Find time to be active every day!
- Choose an activity that you enjoy - walking, dancing, or playing badminton.
- Get a membership to use the gym space at the mandir by filling out a form at the front desk!
- Physical activity keeps our brain healthy, improves sleep, and rapidly uplifts mood.

NUTRITION



3

- Our bodies are a temple. Treat them with care by practicing good nutrition.
- Make sure to eat enough fruits, vegetables, and protein, and drink water.
- Be a scientist - observe your body and mind after eating certain foods, and make healthy changes.
- Reducing alcohol and substance use can improve our wellness too.

SOCIAL SUPPORT



4

- Reach out directly to friends and family when you are stressed.
- This can help you feel more supported and keeps you away from distractions like social media.
- If you are active on social media, make sure you follow accounts that positively impact you, like "@healthycdns" on Instagram.
- Our mandir community is also built of welcoming people, and is a great place to find connection and belonging.

CBTm



5

- CBTm is a program that teaches life skills to improve mental health.
- You can participate on Zoom with a live facilitator, or online at your own pace.
- Topics include mindfulness meditation, sleep, nutrition, and understanding stress.
- Register today at cbtm.ca. Scan the QR code below!



ACCESS TO CARE



6

- As part of your wellness, take 5 minutes to fill out a personal wellness plan and keep it with you (form is attached).
- If you are struggling, there are many places to go including your primary care provider.
- If you need urgent help, contact the Crisis Response Centre at 204-940-1781 or go to 817 Bannatyne Ave.

Written by: Bhavani Garg, Rhea Gupta, Mitali Srivastava, Sushila Jyani, Natalie Anon, Shayla de Bolton, Jitender Sareen, and the CBTm Team

of social media use, be mindful of the pages you are following and make sure that their content positively impacts your mood. Consider following the government account “@healthycdns” on Instagram for tips on healthy living. The mandir is also one place that you can go to find welcoming people and it is a great place to find connection and belonging.

5. CBTm

Consider joining CBTm, an education program designed by our team that is free and teaches skills that can be implemented into your life to improve mental wellbeing. You can complete the course on Zoom with a live facilitator or do the web course online at your own pace and on your own schedule. Topics include mindfulness meditation, sleep and nutrition, creating goals, understanding stress, and building resiliency. CBTm is a prevention and treatment option that has been funded by Manitoba Health, and it can help you strengthen your mental health. Register today at cbtm.ca.

6. Access to Care

As part of your wellness, it is important for you to create a personal wellness plan. We encourage you to take a few minutes to fill out your personal wellness plan and keep it with you to remind you how to recognize and manage stress. It will take 5 minutes to create this plan (attached form). If you want to use a mobile app, the app “Safety Plan” or “CALM” can be used. If you are struggling, there are many places you can go, such as your primary care provider. If you need urgent help, contact the Crisis Response Centre at 204-940-1781 or go to 817 Bannatyne Ave, Winnipeg.

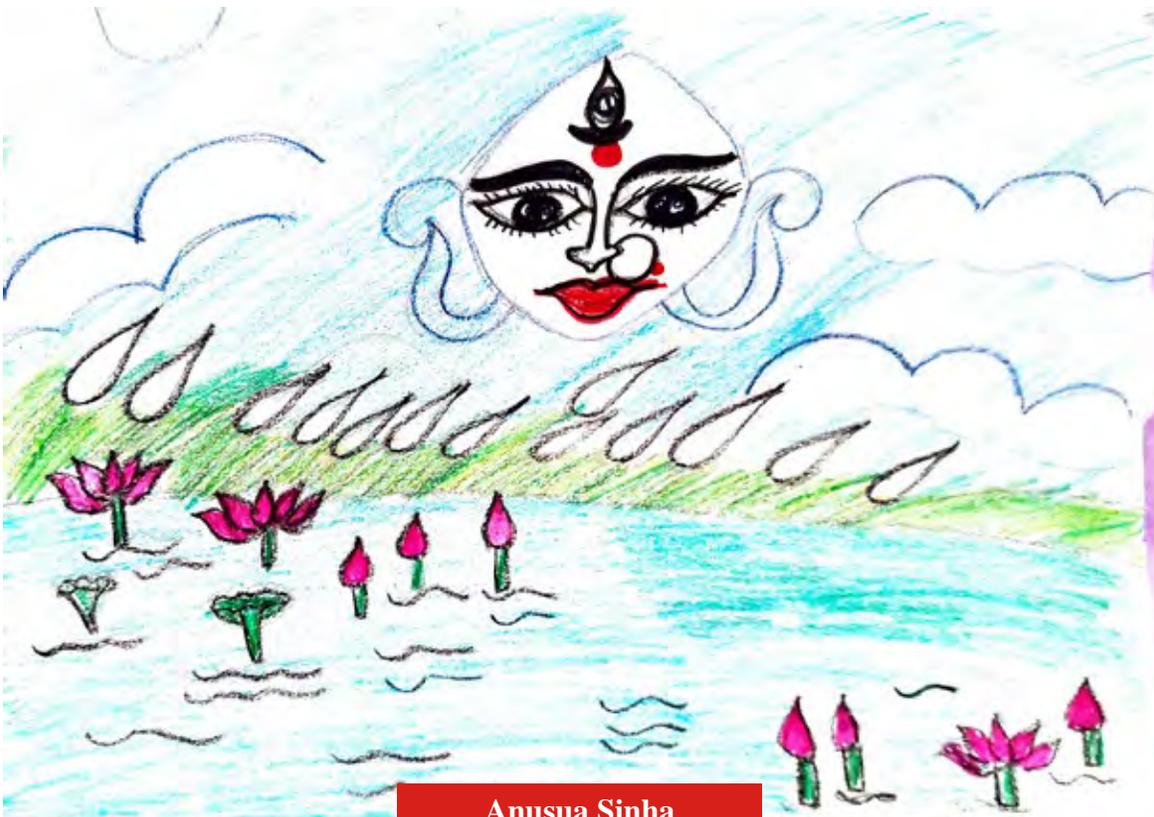


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LORD DATTATREYA- THE 24 GURUS WHO REINFORCE “VASUDHAIV KUTUMBAKAM”

Abhimanyu Gupta

Lord Dattatreya, a revered deity in Hinduism, is a unique and enigmatic figure who embodies the essence of the divine trinity - Brahma, Vishnu, and Shiva. His story and teachings have captivated the hearts and minds of millions of devotees, transcending the boundaries of religion and culture.

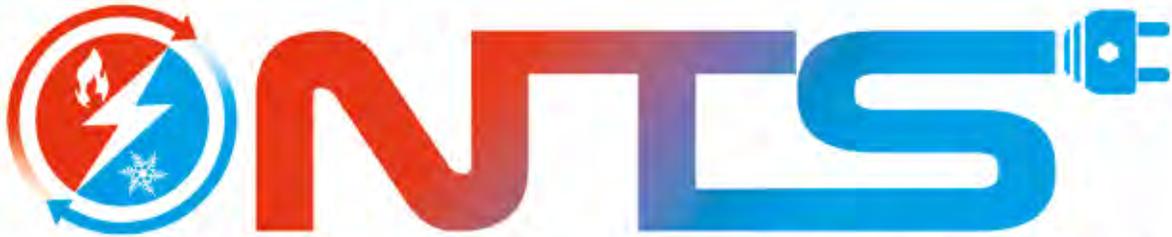
Dattatreya's origin can be traced back to ancient Indian scriptures, primarily the Puranas. He is often depicted as a sage with three heads, symbolizing the three principal deities of Hinduism. Each head signifies a different facet of the divine cosmos. Brahma's head signifies the power of creation, Vishnu's head represents the power of preservation, and Shiva's head represents the power of destruction or transformation.

According to the legends, Dattatreya was born to the sage Atri and his devoted wife Anasuya. His birth is seen as a divine intervention, as a response to the severe penance undertaken by Anasuya. The divine trinity, Brahma, Vishnu, and Shiva were impressed by her devotion and decided to be born as her sons. Thus, Dattatreya came into existence as the culmination of their divine energies. Lord Dattatreya's life is a testament to his wisdom and spiritual prowess. He wandered across the ancient forests of India, often accompanied by a pack of four dogs, symbolizing the four Vedas. His teachings emphasize the unity of all religions and the importance of self-realization. He encouraged people to transcend the boundaries of caste, creed, and religion, emphasizing that all paths lead to the same ultimate truth.

One of the most profound teachings of Lord Dattatreya is the concept of the Guru, or spiritual teacher. He believed that a Guru could be anyone or anything that imparts knowledge and wisdom, not limited to human form. Dattatreya himself considered 24 Gurus from various aspects of life, including earth, water, air, and even a prostitute. He emphasized that one should learn from every experience and every being in this universe.

Dattatreya's teachings also revolve around the importance of detachment from material possessions and the ego. He believed that attachment to worldly possessions and the ego were the root causes of suffering. By renouncing desires and practicing selflessness, one could attain spiritual liberation. Lord Dattatreya's influence extends beyond the boundaries of Hinduism. He is venerated in various other religious traditions, including Jainism and Nathism. His teachings resonate with seekers from all walks of life, transcending religious boundaries.

In art and iconography, Lord Dattatreya is often depicted holding a trident, a begging bowl, and a drum. The trident symbolizes his control over the three Gunas (qualities) - Sattva (goodness), Rajas (passion), and Tamas (ignorance). The begging bowl represents his renunciation of worldly possessions, and the drum symbolizes the eternal cosmic rhythm.



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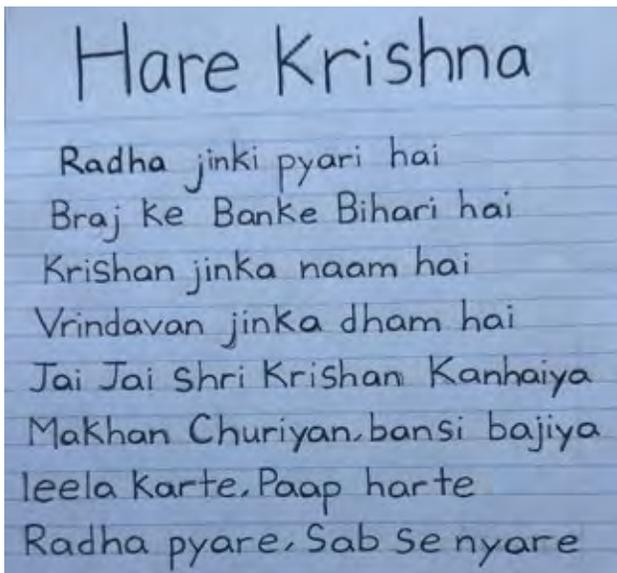
Devotees of Lord Dattatreya celebrate his appearance day, known as Datta Jayanti, with great fervor and devotion. They offer prayers, chant his mantras, and engage in acts of charity and selflessness in honor of his teachings.

Dattatreya's teachings align closely with the philosophy of Advaita Vedanta, emphasizing the ultimate oneness of the individual soul (Atman) with the Supreme Reality (Brahman). He taught that by realizing this oneness, one could transcend the cycle of birth and death (samsara) and attain moksha, liberation from the cycle of reincarnation.

Dattatreya is often regarded as the Adi Yogi, the first yogi. He is associated with the Nath tradition, a lineage of yogis who revere him as their primary Guru. His teachings encompass various aspects of yoga, including meditation, as a way to attain self-realization. Yogic practitioners, even in modern times, find inspiration in his holistic approach to spiritual and physical well-being.

The reverence for nature and animals, as symbolized by Dattatreya's companionship with dogs, resonates strongly with the contemporary ecological movement. His teachings remind us of our interconnectedness with the environment and the importance of living in harmony with nature.

Lord Dattatreya stands as a unique and revered figure in the vast tapestry of Hindu mythology. His embodiment of the divine trinity, coupled with his teachings of unity, detachment, and the importance of a Guru, continue to inspire countless individuals on their spiritual journeys. His message transcends religious boundaries, offering a timeless path to spiritual realization and liberation. Lord Dattatreya's legacy endures, reminding us of the boundless wisdom that lies within the heart of every seeker.



Aarvi Sikri



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MAA-THE CREATOR'S CREATION THAT GIVES BIRTH TO ALL BEING ON VASUDHA

Charulata Gupta

Maa, Baa, Amma, Aai, Mata! No matter how you say Mother, it is the most melodious word in the world. Maa resembles like sweet sound of a *payal* (anklet) coated with *mishri* (rock sugar). It brings sheer comfort and joy, and it is considered as one of the first word that a child will learn to say... Maa. We live in a society of gender ideology and have been brought up with pre-determined ideas about behaviours, norms, and ideals of the different genders. The patriarchy is a prevalent gender ideology as it places men as the rulers of a society. In patriarchal society, men dominate the economic and political spheres of life.

Just as there are two sides to a coin, in a matriarchal community, it is the woman who has significantly more influence, choice and power, thus swapping the role with the man. Even today, there are examples in societies that prove this. In India, the prominent matriarchal societies are the Khasi and the Garo tribes of Meghalaya, the Nair and the Ezhavas tribes of Kerala, and the Bunt and Billava tribes of Karnataka [1]. In a matriarchal society, the children take the name of their mother and households are run by matriarchs, often the oldest woman, the grandmother. The family inheritance goes from a mother to a daughter. They make all major household decisions, including financial ones. The birth of a girl child is celebrated, and women face no social bars.

Not just India, across the world, there are societies that still follow the matriarchal system and they are the Mosuo of China, Bribri of Costa Rica, Umoja of Kenya, Minagkabau of Indonesia, and the Akan of Ghana [2]. Amongst the Canadian Indigenous communities, the matriarch play an important role in the community and is often the final decision-maker in community decisions [4].

In the Hindu religion, the name of a woman always comes first Sita-Ram, Radha-Krishna, Lakshmi-Narayan. During Navratri the nine forms of Durga Maa are worshipped [3]. These forms are Maa Shailputri (daughter of mountain), Maa Brahmacharini (mother of devotion and penance), Maa Chandraghanta (destroyer of demons), Maa Kushmanda (Goddess of the Cosmic Egg), Maa Skandamata (Goddess of motherhood and children), Maa Katyayani (Goddess of Power), Maa Kaalratri (Goddess of Auspiciousness and Courage), Maa Mahagauri (Goddess of Beauty and Women), and Maa Siddhidatri (Goddess of Supernatural Powers or Siddhis) [4].

As unrest is rising in our society, it is facing multiple social problems. From wars to global climate change to global hunger. One solution is empowering women stakeholders by increasing women's representation in leadership, decision-making, providing equal resources to women farmers, funding women's organizations that help the vulnerable are just a few examples. Often in our prayers we say, "*tuhi mata tuhi pita hai*" (you are mother you are father). Let us not forget that there is only one creator in this world. Maa, who gives birth to the next generation. Let us help our one and only world by uplifting our current maa's and our future maa's as well.

1. <https://www.indiatoday.in/education-today/gk-current-affairs/story/living-examples-of-matrilineal-societies-in-india-312344-2016-03-08>
2. <https://www.townandcountrymag.com/society/tradition/g28565280/matriarchal-societies-list/>
3. <https://www.crcna.org/news-and-events/news/indigenous-matriarchs>
4. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Navadurga>

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CONNECTING TO ROOTS FROM A DISTANCE

Mishi Gulati

Finally, I took a moment to write this as I realize staying in a foreign country, miles away from family it's challenging for our kids to keep connected to our roots.

Me as an Indian parent, and I guess all Indian parents likely experience this, want my kids to be raised like I was, with same religious beliefs, traditions, respect for elders, values, festivals and all those little things that are so meaningful in developing one's personality. This could be very difficult as situations are different now. I understand that our kids have to follow the culture they are growing in but we somehow have to imbibe our religious beliefs. We as parents are best resources for teaching our kids who we are in and out and provide beliefs that our ancestors have created.

We can not only just brief them about our traditions but also must get involved as much as possible – it can even be just speaking on our native language. Yes, even if I don't live in India me and both my kids speak in Hindi, in fact I encourage them to talk more often as I don't want our families who is still in India to feel disconnected because of a language barrier.

Every day we as immigrants are surrounded by foreign culture, religious beliefs and festivals, Hollywood movies, English music, prepackaged food etc.. Of course, we can celebrate Christmas, ask for gifts but we must not forget ourselves and also remind our children about Holi, Diwali, Raksha Bandhan, Ganesh Chaturthi, Navratri and all other festivals we enjoyed celebrating as kids. So, this holiday season let's recognize some of our Indian identities and spend some time with kids reminding our origin. It doesn't need to be a big commitment, it could be as simple as watching some Bollywood movies, listening Hindi songs, going to temple, singing bhajans, looking at some old photographs, eating some favorite Indian meals like rajma chawal, choley poori, vada pav, papdi chat etc. and show some places and markets on YouTube where you used to visit as a child and sharing some childhood memories.

Let's encourage small activities that amplify our Indian Culture, connect us back to our origins, the origin that shaped us to what and who we are. Let's connect our kids to their families and cousins in India, share some bonding memories with their grandparents that help us bridge the gap between us and our roots.



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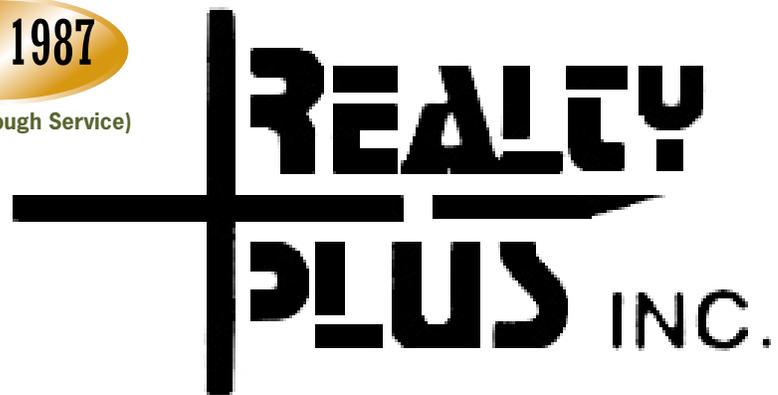
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THE SANATAN (HINDU) FESTIVALS

Rajvi Pandey

There are many colorful aspects of Sanatan (Hindu) dharma that includes many celebrations and festivals. Here I am talking about a few of our sparkling and colorful festivals.

In an array of festivals, **Deepawali** is the biggest festival in our Sanatan culture.

Deepawali: The worship of our Goddess “Laxmi”, the sound of fireworks, the fragrance of flowers, the sound of laughing children, the aroma of home-made sweets. Deepawali is celebrated for the triumph of good over evil when our Lord “Ram” defeated the evil spirits of “Ravan” in his Lanka.

Another colourful festival of the Sanatan dharma is **Holi** (Rangpanchmi).

Holi: When the colours are flying, water guns are spraying everywhere. We celebrate Holi for the triumph of good over evil, when our Lord “Vishnu” kills the evil king “HiranyaKashyap”. Once HiranyaKashyap asked his sister Holika to kill his own son who was also a great Vishnu devotee named “Prahlad” by sitting on a fire. Having a cloak that protected her from fire, Holika agreed. Prahlad starts chanting the name of Lord Vishnu and a miracle happens as Lord Vishnu comes and saves Prahlad from the fire and Holika burns to death.

Another rhythm of the Sanatan religion is Janmashtami.

It is the day of Janmashtami when flutes are played, Dahi-Haandi’s are being broken, and types are dressed up as a little “Krishna,” and we all call them “**Kanha**.”

Janmashtami is celebrated on Krishna’s Avtaran Diwas. To celebrate this, kids and youngsters in societies stand upon each others’ shoulders and break the haandis which is full of dahi (yogurt) or maakhhan (home-made white butter), which also represents one of the famous Lord Krishna’s childhood notorious activities.

When Krishna was a child, he and his friends used to climb on each other’s shoulders to break haandis filled with maakhhan and eat it. That’s why we know him as a Maakhhan Chor.

In other religions and holy books that we read or hear from the scholars of their religion that either their God’s messenger took birth and spreads the message of God on earth and they call themselves as “Son of God” or the “Messenger of God” but, only in our Santan culture we have a holy book called “Bhaghvad Geeta” depicted by our Lord Krishna himself where he mentioned to Arjun in Kurukshetra that “**I am the God, the Supreme himself**”.

There are lots of other festivals in Hindu culture like

Navaratri, 9 days of celebration with dance, music, and devotion for Maa Goddess Durga. 10th day we celebrate Dussehra, which shows the triumph of goodness over evil.

The different colours of our Sanatan dharma that shows Devotion, Kindness, Honesty, and Integrity as part of our culture.

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" वसुधैव कुटुंबकम् "

मनीषा पांडे

भारत की सनातन संस्कृति में 'वसुधैव कुटुंबकम्' एक अद्भुत विचार एवं उन्नत जीवनशैली है, जिसके अंतर्गत सारे संसार में निवासरत प्राणियों को समरसता में बांधे रखने का संदेश निहित है। सकल सृष्टि एक परिवार है और उसमें रहने वाले समस्त प्राणियों के सुख-दुख, कष्ट-पीड़ा हमारे अपने परिवार के ही हैं।

संस्कृत भाषा का यह वाक्यांश- 'वसुधैव कुटुंबकम्' महा उपनिषद् (६ .७१) से लिया गया है, जिसका सीधा अर्थ है: 'समस्त संसार एक परिवार है।' "ये तेरा; ये मेरा", इस प्रकार की धारणा एक संकुचित मनोवृत्ति है, जो मानवता के लिए कल्याणकारी नहीं है।

भूमंडल के किसी भी देश में कभी भी कोई राजनीतिक, सामाजिक, भौगोलिक, शैक्षणिक अथवा आर्थिक संकट या असमानता उभरने पर अन्य समर्थ राष्ट्रों द्वारा उन्हें यथोचित सहयोग देना मानवीय धर्म है।

तुर्की का भूकंप, सुनामी या कुछ वर्ष पहले कोरोना जैसी महामारी के समय सारे संसार की पीड़ा को अपने अंतःस्थल में समेटकर भारत सरकार ने कोरोना वैक्सीन एवं अन्य आवश्यक मेडिकल उपकरण उपलब्ध करवाकर जो अभूतपूर्व कार्य किया, उसकी भूरि-भूरि प्रशंसा सभी देशों के राष्ट्राध्यक्ष अब तक करते रहे हैं और सामाजिक समरसता और सौहार्द का वो संदेश इतिहास के पन्नों में सदा-सदा के लिए रेखांकित हो गया है।

किसी देश में अचानक आई किसी आकस्मिक त्रासदी से निबटने के लिए सक्षम राष्ट्रों द्वारा पीड़ित राष्ट्र के नागरिकों को उचित सहायता उपलब्ध कराकर उनमें प्रेम व भाईचारे के बीज प्रस्फुटित करना 'वसुधैव कुटुंबकम्' का प्रमुख बीज-सूत्र है, जो भारतीय संस्कृति की जड़ों से जुड़ा हुआ है। ऐसे संकट के समय सामाजिक सरोकार की उज्ज्वल भावना को आदर्श-रूप में अंगीकार कर उसका पालन करना ही समस्त मानवता की सबसे बड़ी और पुण्य सेवा है।

वर्तमान भारत सरकार ने 'वसुधैव कुटुंबकम्' के विचार को अपने कृत्यों से प्रमाणित एवं सिद्ध करते हुए भारतीय संस्कृति का एक अनूठा उदाहरण विश्व के सम्मुख प्रस्तुत किया है तथा प्रत्येक भारतीय एवं भारतीय संस्कृति को विश्व के पटल पर गौरवान्वित किया है। आईये हम सब भी आज यह प्रण करें कि हम आजीवन अपने आचारों, विचारों एवं कृत्यों से भारत माता को विश्व के पटल पर गौरवान्वित करेंगे तथा भारत माता के सम्मान को सदैव सर्वोपरि रखेंगे। भारत माता की जय। वन्देमातरम्।



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UNRAVELING THE UNITY AND HARMONY WITH ALL BEINGS

A Review of J. Sai Deepak's "India That is Bharat"

Abhimanyu Gupta

In a world where globalization and modernization often blur the lines of cultural identity, "India That is Bharat" by J. Sai Deepak stands as a refreshing reminder of India's rich cultural heritage and its deep-rooted traditions. Published in 2021, this book offers readers a profound exploration of India's cultural, historical, and philosophical tapestry. In this review, we delve into the essence of J. Sai Deepak's work and how it presents a captivating journey through the heart of India's identity.

J. Sai Deepak, a well-known lawyer, author, and speaker, has been a prominent voice advocating for the preservation of India's cultural and civilizational heritage. He has consistently used his platform to engage with contemporary issues while drawing from the timeless wisdom of Indian scriptures and philosophy. "India That is Bharat" is an extension of his dedication to unraveling the essence of India.

The title of the book itself is a profound statement. "India That is Bharat" alludes to the idea that India is not just a geographical entity but a civilizational narrative, with "Bharat" representing the ancient cultural and philosophical underpinnings of the nation. This title sets the tone for the entire book, where Deepak explores India's diverse and intricate cultural history.

One of the book's key strengths lies in its ability to take readers on a journey through the different facets of Indian culture. Deepak weaves a narrative that embraces India's linguistic diversity, artistic expressions, religious beliefs, and social customs. He demonstrates how these elements have evolved over millennia and have contributed to India's unique identity. Whether it's the rich tradition of classical arts such as music and dance, the religious diversity that coexists harmoniously, or the culinary delights that vary from region to region, Deepak paints a vivid picture of India's cultural mosaic.

The book also provides a historical perspective on India's development. It delves into India's ancient history, its interactions with various civilizations, and the enduring legacy of Indian philosophy. Deepak discusses how India has been shaped by external influences, yet has always retained its distinct identity. He also sheds light on pivotal moments in Indian history, such as the Maurya and Gupta empires, the Mughal era, and the British colonial period, offering a nuanced understanding of India's historical trajectory.

Central to the book is its exploration of Indian philosophy. Deepak delves into the profound concepts of dharma, karma, and moksha, which have played a crucial role in shaping the Indian way of life. He explains how these philosophies have transcended

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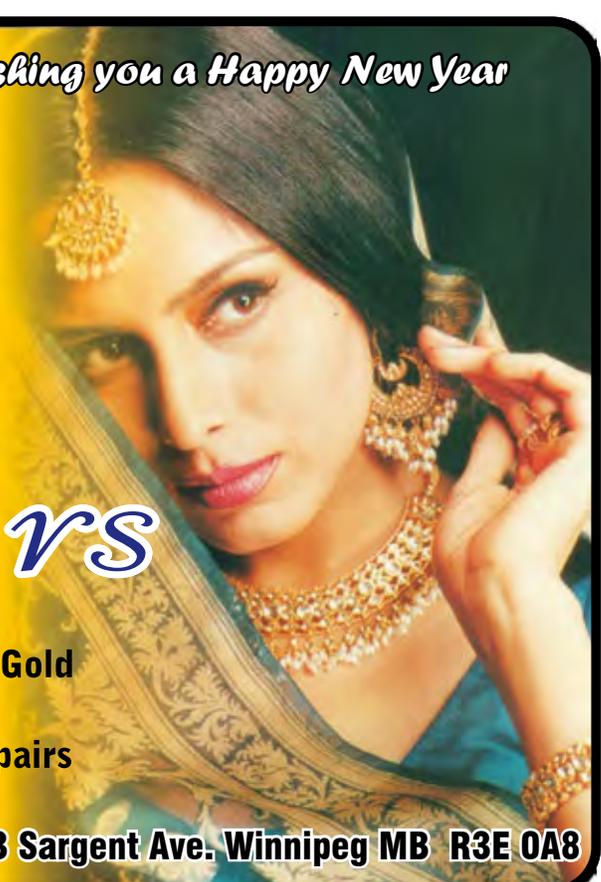
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time and continue to influence the lives of millions of Indians. “India That is Bharat” by J. Sai Deepak is a profound exploration of India’s philosophical heritage. It goes beyond academic discussions, offering readers a transformative journey through the intricate realms of dharma, karma, moksha, and the diverse philosophical schools. Deepak’s work serves as a guiding light, illuminating the path towards ethical living, spiritual growth, and a harmonious society. By delving into the philosophical treasures of India, readers are not merely presented with knowledge; they are offered a transformative experience that transcends the pages of the book, leaving a lasting imprint on their hearts and minds. Through this exploration, Deepak invites readers to embrace the timeless wisdom of India, fostering a deeper understanding of the self, society, and the universe, and ultimately leading towards a more enlightened and compassionate world.

While rooted in India’s past, “India That is Bharat” also addresses contemporary challenges facing the nation. Deepak discusses issues related to identity, nationalism, and cultural preservation, all of which are pertinent in today’s rapidly changing world. He advocates for a balanced approach that embraces modernity without losing sight of India’s heritage.

“India That is Bharat” by J. Sai Deepak is a compelling and thought-provoking exploration of India’s cultural and philosophical heritage. Through a combination of historical analysis, cultural insights, and philosophical contemplation, the book offers readers a comprehensive view of India’s identity. It serves as a valuable resource for those seeking to understand the depth and complexity of India’s rich heritage while contemplating its relevance in the modern age. J. Sai Deepak’s work is not just a book; it is a celebration of India’s timeless legacy and an invitation to explore the depths of its Spiritual and cultural treasures.



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Affordable access to fitness activities is an ongoing challenge for our community. Lack of access to such a facility limits our seniors, adults, and children to engage in fitness activities. Studies have suggested that the sedentary lifestyle is the primary cause of many diseases. Medical care cost for chronic illness caused by sedentary lifestyle accounts for 42% of the total direct medical expenditure - approximately \$39 billion a year in Canada! Canada's high rate of chronic diseases and the associated costs for disease management can be significantly reduced by promoting fitness activities and a healthy lifestyle to Canadians.

The Hindu Society of Manitoba understands the importance of fit body and mind and fosters healthy living to members of the community. The Raj Pandey Hindu Centre on St. Anne's Road is a unique facility in Winnipeg that offers a temple for worshippers along with a sports complex with badminton courts. The Dr. R.C. and Shakuntala Patel Sports Complex is one of the only two facilities in Winnipeg that exclusively offer badminton courts to its members. Most other court spaces are shared for different sports.



For a nominal annual membership fee (\$200 for an individual and \$150 for a family membership) people can access this facility and enjoy playing badminton. Playing badminton with your spouse and children is a great family activity especially in the winter. Also, it introduces and promotes healthy lifestyle to our children. Some of the children who started playing badminton at Dr. R.C. and Shakuntala Patel Sports Complex are top players in Manitoba in age group badminton today.

Yoga is a group of physical, mental, and spiritual practices or disciplines which originated in ancient India and aim to control and still the mind, recognizing a detached witness-consciousness untouched by the mind and mundane suffering. Regular practice of yoga provides significant health benefits by improving blood flow, activating various endocrine glands, therapeutic benefits for various elements, improves energy, concentration, self-esteem etc.

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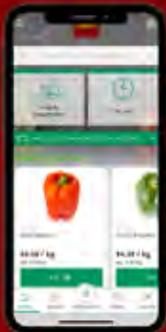
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Regular yoga classes are being conducted, since 2015, at Dr. R.C. and Shakuntala Patel Sports Complex by a certified (Internationally and Canadian Yoga Alliance certified) Yoga Teacher for a nominal cost. The classes are scheduled on Sundays between 3:30 PM to 4:30 for children and from 5:00 PM to 6:00 PM for adults. The classes include stretching exercises, practice of yoga poses (tailored to individual limits) and Pranayama.

Pranayama is the art of breathing consciously by prolonging inhalation, retention, and exhalation. Pranayama helps increase human body's vital energy, thereby strengthening the various systems.



Pickleball is one of the fastest-growing sports in the North America. Pickleball is a paddle sport that combines elements of tennis, badminton, and ping-pong using a paddle and plastic ball with holes. It is a game that is appropriate for players of all ages and skill levels and is very popular with seniors.

The Hindu Society of Manitoba recently received a grant from New Horizon's Senior Program to setup infrastructure to play pickleball at our Sports Complex.

The Hindu Society of Manitoba encourages everyone to participate in any of the above fitness activities at a nominal cost.



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DR. MADHURI JAIN VIDYA BHAVAN

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Education is not the amount of information that is put into your brain and runs riot there, undigested all your life. We want that education by which character is formed, strength of mind is increased, the intellect is expanded, and by which one can stand on one's own feet.

Swami Vivekananda (Chicago in 1893)

Dr. Madhuri Jain Vidya Bhavan is Hindu Society of Manitoba's initiative to ensure that Bhartiya (Indian) cultural heritage knowledge is preserved especially among our community and children.

Vidya Bhavan offers language, mathematics, yoga, and bhajan classes. The language classes in Hindi, Tamil, Malayalam, and Nepali focus on developing reading, speaking, and writing skills and enhancing cultural appreciation among its students. The mathematics classes include both Vedic and modern mathematics that focus on engaging and sharpening numeracy, critical reasoning, and analytical skills. The volunteers and teachers of Vidya Bhavan work very hard to foster the values and ethics of Sanatana Dharma and the Hindu way of life to our students.

Our 2023 session has started with more than one hundred students enrolled for various classes.

Hindi – Teachers: Sanjay Moudgil, Manjeet Chaudhari, Chhaya Contractor and Suvira Prashar. Niketa Sareen & Ankit Behl as substitute teachers. Dr. Vadi Vambal Rajagopal as Yoga Instructor.

Our focus is to teach Hindi at age-appropriate levels by effectively engage students: 1) Akshar Gyan level for beginners where alphabets and basic Hindi are introduced. 2) Matra Gyan: Develops verbal and writing skills 3) Vakya Gyan: Emphasizes writing and oral skills. Co-curricular activities are also part of the school. These routines include Indian art forms, drama, stories, prayers, bhajans and patriotic songs to expose our students to Indian culture and heritage.

As always, the Hindu Society of Manitoba organized the annual Diwali Mela at RBC Convention Centre on November 4th, 2023, Vidya Bhavan students performed a well-choreographed dance that impressed the audience. This was only made possible by the tireless efforts of students, volunteers, and teachers of Vidya Bhavan. Having parental support and very dedicated and enthusiastic volunteers made this event memorable.

Mathematics – Dr. Ranganathan Padmanabhan, Dr. Ruppa K. Thulasiram, and Mr. Patel

This year started excitingly with more than 15 students registered for Math classes and more students joined in as the class progressed. Mr. Patel joined the team to continue his curriculum for the students who have been attending his class since last year. Prof. R. Padmanabhan and Prof. Ruppa Thulasiram have covered the following topics this Fall 2023 term.

Topic 1: Laws of Arithmetic, Our language, our Mathematical Approach, Definitions, Proofs and Counter Examples, Natural Numbers, our building blocks, Integers, Fractions, Laws of Arithmetic and Laws of Exponents and Problems

Topic 2: Decimal Place Value Notation with Zero, Rational numbers and repeating decimals, non-repeating decimals are irrational.

Topic 3: Primes and Composites, Factorization, Greatest Common Factor, Rational and Irrational Numbers, Square Roots, Aryabhata's algorithm for square roots, Modulo arithmetic. Barcode application using modulo arithmetic.

Topic 4: Pythagorean Theorem, Statement of the Theorem, Mentioned in Sulva Sutras (Sanskrit), and by Bodhayana (Tamil). Actual examples from these sutras and Problems were covered in class. All materials covered in class were distributed to the students (and to parents). These Notes contained sample practice exercise and problems. Interactive classes encourage students to participate and explain their understanding using the white board and answering the questions.

Following topics are planned to be covered for rest of the academic year 2023-24:

Straight edge and compass constructions; Finding areas of bounded figures; Solving Equations with two unknowns; Word Problems; Mathematical Induction; Sequences and Series; Finding n^{th} term of sequences by the method of differences; Fibonacci Sequences; Set Theory; Counting the number of subsets; Venn Diagram; Indian contribution for these topics; Problems and solutions.

Nepali– Coordinator: Suresh Regmi; Level 1 – Mahendra Adhikari, Level 2 – Asish Mishra, Level 3 – Sharada Upadhyay, Level 4 – Prakash Shrestha, Level 5 – Bishal Dhakal

Nepali school has 20 students, aging from 5 to 15 years, who are divided in to five groups based on their knowledge of Nepali language. The school focuses on developing the speaking, reading, and writing skills. We have developed our own curriculum and separate books for each level. Both exercise book and reading books are provided to each student free of cost. The school starts with a short students led prayer that is attended by all the students as a group. After prayers students proceed to their respective classes where beginner group learning starts with coloring Nepali alphabets and higher-level groups learn complex words, sentence making and reading. The last 15 minutes of the classes of higher groups are dedicated to one-on-one reading assisted by the teacher and parents. The classes conclude with light snacks provided by the volunteer parents, which is very popular among students. Each level has a designated teacher, a support teacher, and volunteer parents who act as teachers and help with teaching and learning activities. Nepali School runs almost on all Saturdays. Cultural activities are scheduled on the no class days providing students opportunities to learn Nepali culture along with Nepali language.

Malayalam – Santhosh Thomas. Group has recently joined to teach Malayalam.

Tamil – Long serving Coordinator: Chandraleka Kamaleswaran, Teachers: James Manickam, Raji Nixon, Viji Noil, Priya Swathi Sarvanan and Balakrishnan.

The purpose of the Tamil class is to ensure that our children do not forget their mother tongue and carry the language along with their family. This class is being conducted with the thought that our students will later teach the Tamil language to their children. We teach these students from the elementary school age. Basically, all the children learn gradually to read speak and write well. There are 4 Tamil classes:

1. **Elementary Grade One:** Beginners class for children who cannot speak or write.
2. **Grade Two:** Develop reading and writing abilities further for those who speak and write a little.
3. **Grade Three:** Learn to improve reading and writing, along with arts of singing and dancing.
4. **Higher-Level:** Students are taught to read and write, and to start presenting on a stage.

Beside Tamil, students learn performance arts, including singing and dancing that enable students to speak the Tamil language socially. While the Language class is well used to speak, write, and read; the teachers assist students in developing the performing arts, poetry, dance and singing, and prepare students for the stage performances.

My sincere gratitude to all volunteers, coordinators, and teachers, for their valuable contributions. The Vidya Bhavan greatly appreciate support from the community and the board members.



Hindi Class Students - Diwali Performance Year 2023

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Trevor Hayden & Manju Lodha



Namaste: I have been blessed with being able to attend and participate in the “yoga wellness group”, offered by the temple with their “in person” yoga classes on Thursday mornings at 10:00 and their Monday/Wednesday “ZOOM” classes. It has been an opportunity to nourish my mind, body, and soul with people I have learned to respect and love dearly. Our Thursday morning sessions commence right at 10:00 and last until 11:00. At 11:00, we take a short break for tea, cookies and/or fruit. We are then privileged to have many educational speakers (many from the Hindu community), addressing topics relating to our health and wellness issues. At noon, we sit down to a meal of outstanding East Indian fare, catered by several Winnipeg restaurants. This yoga experience is such a pleasure and honour for me to join my “yoga family”. Over my many years of attendance, I have bonded and formed many wonderful relationships. I want to personally thank Dr. Vadivambal Rajagopal (Vadi, as we call her), for her superior involvement and leadership. I wish to thank everyone for making me feel so very accepted and welcome.

The Sharing Circle of Wellness of the Hindu Society of Manitoba started in 2011 with generous contributions by its members and the Winnipeg Foundation. It started with a handful of people since then it has been growing in numbers and has become very popular. It is not limited to Seniors only but is open to all ages, cultures and faiths.

Our gratitude to the Hindu Society of Manitoba for the program. We are thankful to all the presenters for sharing their knowledge and the funding agencies. In the last but not the least we thank all those participants, who volunteer and those who donate.



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VOLUNTEER APPRECIATION



Jeyamalar and Jeyanthan Kumarasurier

Jeyanthan Kumarasurier is a talented, dedicated, and honest individual, originally from Jaffna, Sri Lanka. He is married to Jeyamalar and together they have two children. The Kumarasurier family have been living in Winnipeg, Manitoba since 1985.

Jeyanthan comes from a devout and traditional Hindu family. He had his early education in Sri Lanka and has a BSc. in science from the University of Manitoba. Presently, he works for the Federal Government of Canada. In addition to his formal education, he has acquired an in-depth knowledge of City, Provincial, and Federal regulations that he used successfully to navigate many procedural obstacles in managing community work. He has a natural talent to foresee challenges, look for implications in changing course, and take preventive actions in managing community affairs.

His dedication to his family, office work, and community service is exceptional. He will offer his best once he commits and undertakes an assignment, ensuring the assignment reaches the finish line to the satisfaction of everyone involved in the project.

Jeyanthan has been committed to community work since his teenage years. Initially, at the age of seventeen years, he submitted his application to contest for membership of the Village Council. Still being a minor at that time, his application was rejected. From then onwards, he took part in various community work.

The Kumarasurier family has been a member of the Tamil Cultural Society of Manitoba (TCSM) ever since they called Manitoba home. Jeyanthan held multiple positions in the TCSM, such as a Board member, Secretary, Treasurer, Vice-President, and President of the society. During his tenure, he made significant positive changes to the society, including amendments to the constitution of the society. In addition, he played a noteworthy role in fundraising for the tsunami victims of 2004 through the TCSM and the Hindu Society of Manitoba (HSM). He was the architect of obtaining the Folk Arts Council's Folklorama pavilion for the TCSM. His contribution to the annual TCSM Folklorama pavilion is meritorious and well-appreciated by the Tamil community and the Folk Arts Council. He served on the Boards of many non-profit organizations, such as the Vedanta Society and the Folk Arts Council of Manitoba.

Jeyanthan began volunteering in the HSM in early 1986 with the temple activities on Elice Avenue. Since that humble beginning, he continued to be a member of the HSM. He served as a Treasurer and Vice-Chairperson of HSM, responsible for the Hindu Temple and Dr. Raj Pandey Cultural Centre at St. Anne's Road. During these terms, he was punctual, attended to his duties, and helped the HSM immensely.

The Board of Governors of the Hindu Society of Manitoba appreciates his service to the society and hopes he will continue to serve the community for years to come.

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VOLUNTEER APPRECIATION



Rashmi Mehta

Rashmi Mehta is a passionate, dedicated, and devoted member of the Hindu Society of Manitoba (HSM). She regularly volunteers at our temple and her charming presence is a fixture during all major events observed by our society.

Before calling Winnipeg home, Rashmi established her identity in a small town Pinawa-Manitoba as a caregiver to her family, and a successful entrepreneur. Rashmi introduced the Indian culture and cuisine to the local community of Pinawa.

Ever since her arrival in Winnipeg decades ago, Rashmi has been a regular volunteer and supporter of the Hindu Society of Manitoba. She has been serving the community wearing many hats. Her unlimited energy, enthusiasm, ideas always serve to add values to the projects she undertakes.

She has worked diligently behind the scenes for many years and successfully completes the tasks assigned to her. Her boundless energy, enthusiasm, and desire to learn made her skilled and knowledgeable in many areas which she successfully incorporates in her various volunteer roles that

she played over the years, roles such a HSM Board Member, a front desk in-charge at the Diwali Mela, the Coordinator of the Personal Greetings published in the Hindu Darshan, managing the library, member of the Cultural and Nomination committees etc. and the list can go on and on.

Rashmi is a vital member of a group of volunteers who manage the HSM library - the Dr. Dakshinamurti Academy of Hindu Studies located at the HSM temple on 999 St. Anne's Road. Rashmi continuously promotes Indian values and morals with her engaging and charming conversations with all the library users.

Her selfless dedication has not gone unnoticed. The Hindu Society of Manitoba acknowledges her years of invaluable service, dedication, and commitment to our community. Her unwavering commitment towards our society is a role model for all of us.



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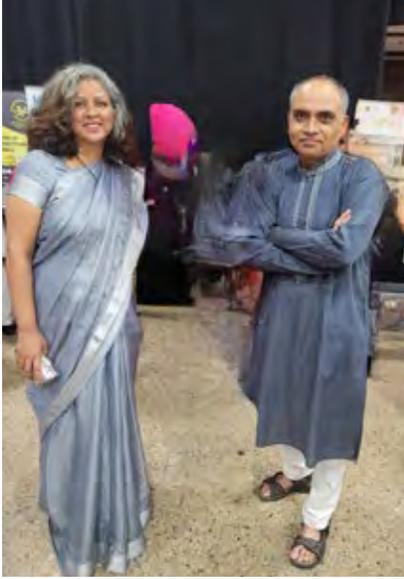
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VOLUNTEER APPRECIATION



Meenal & Sanjay Moudgil

Sanjay Moudgil – the name and face that anyone who has ever attended Sundarkaand Prayer either in the temple or virtually, must know him.

Sanjay is a very sincere devotee and staunch follower of Sanatan Dharma, who has spearheaded the Sundarkaand traditions for many years along with late Pundit Dinesh Sharma. Even during the challenging time of COVID-19 and on-site temple services closure, Sanjay persistently maintained Sundarkaand recital virtually from the Hindu Temple on Ellice. Whether it is a late night Mata Jagrataa or Shivratri Puja, Sanjay is the last one to leave the temple. He stays behind to ensure that the temple is tidy and clean; a very serene place ready to receive its devotees the next morning. In all the devotional activities he does for the community, Sanjay is continuously supported by his wife, Meenal. An administrative services officer by profession, Meenal is the quietest and kindest lady one would know. Her gentle persona

perfectly complements the considerate personality of Sanjay.

Sanjay was instrumental in organizing and actively participated in many fund-raising charity events for the Hindu Society of Manitoba - particularly for the construction and development of Hindu temple at St. Anne's. Additionally, Sanjay has a very melodious voice and sings from the bottom of his heart and with impassioned devotion. You can always expect from him correct pronunciation and intonations in Hindi and Sanskrit. Gifted with the dexterity of knowledge and communication skills in many Indian languages, Sanjay distinguishes himself as a volunteer teacher of Hindi at the Vidya Bhawan School for more than a decade. There, he always encourages all students to learn the teachings of Sanatan Dharma through artistic, creative, and insightful pieces in Hindi and English languages- many of which have been featured in previous Hindu Darshan – an annual publication of the Hindu Society of Manitoba.

Sanjay has been involved with Hindu Darshan as an editorial team member and now as a lead editor for several years. As an editor, Sanjay always carefully reviews all contributions with the utmost diligence and looks to every minute detail. Thanks to his initiative and efforts, the Hindu Darshan is now available free of cost on the Hindu Society of Manitoba's website to the wider public.

Whether it is a matter of following decorum or order in the temple, or singing a Bhajan during Satsang or editing articles for the Hindu Darshan, Sanjay's persistence for quality and excellence reflect his diligence and is inspired by the heart of a true devotee. Many colleagues call Sanjay as 'हनुमान जैसा सेवक'- (A true servant like Hanuman), determined to serve Lord Rama in Winnipeg who resides in the hearts of all his devotees. As such rare servants of humanity are always revered in all ages as immortals, we wish that Sanjay will continue to serve with his multi-talented mind, helping hands and devotional heart for many more years to come.

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Sonali Joshi**

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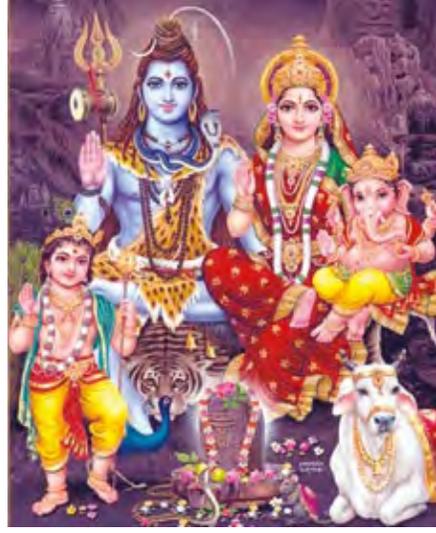


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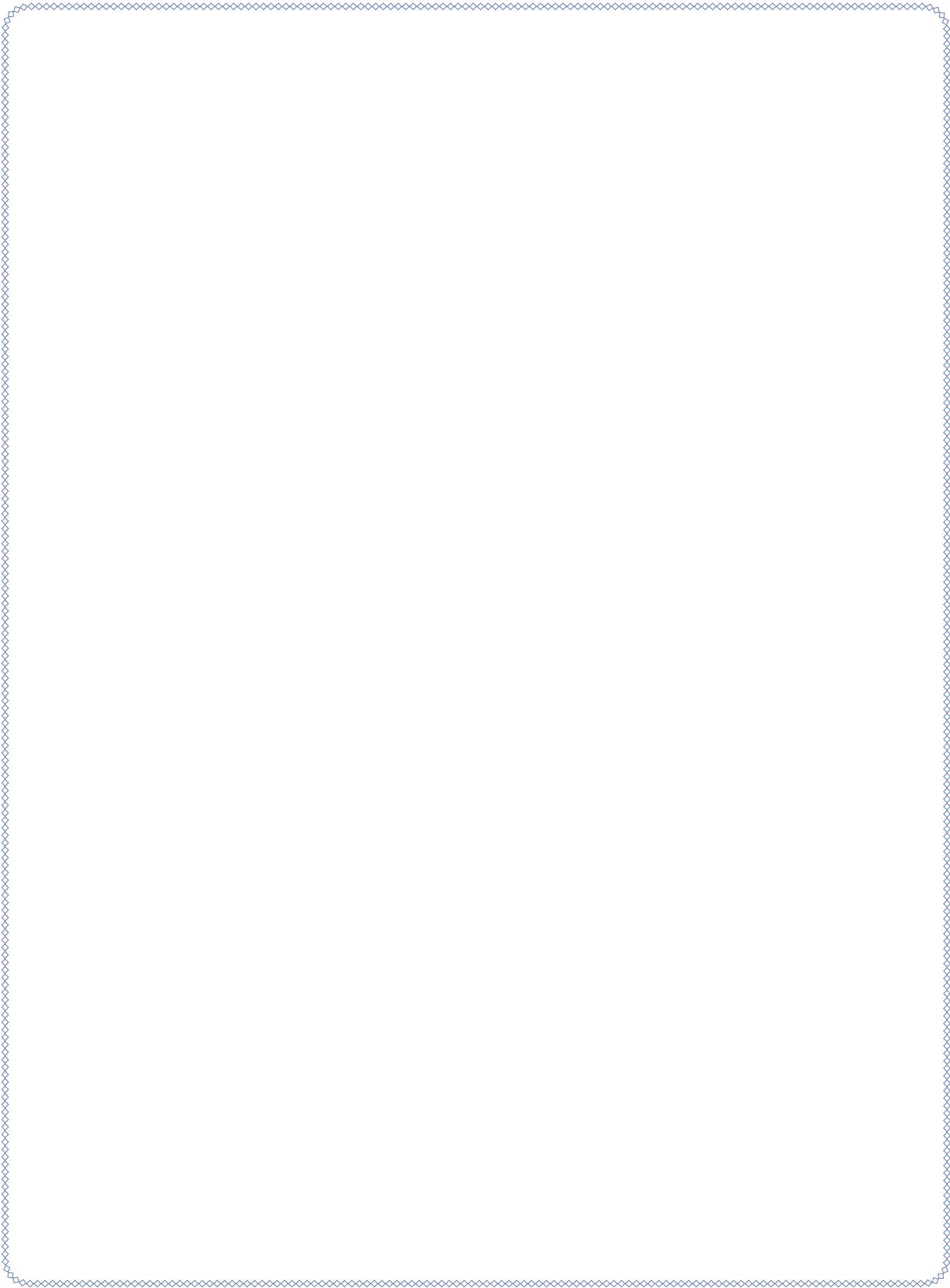
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