



# NAMASKAR

(An In-house Newsletter of Hindu Samaj of Southern Saskatchewan)  
July 2008



## **MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT**

Dear Devotees, Members and Friends:

OM GURUVEY NAMAHA. Namaskar and welcome to year 2008. We thank you all for giving us, the Board members, an opportunity to serve the Gods in shape and form, that is “You”.

A very good participation was observed during the celebration of Makara Sankranti, Maha-Shivratri, Holi, Gudi-Padwa, Rama-Navami and Hanuman-Jayanti. The annual supper night (Varshik Bhojan) was successfully completed on May 10, 2008. The surprising and encouraging fact was that we had a good number of young volunteers available to support the various tasks involved. Our special committee for this event worked hard to put together a show full of devotion, entertainment and celebration.

The Hindu Vidyalaya Public speaking contest was held on June 21<sup>st</sup> and was very well received by all. On behalf of the Board of Trustees I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the volunteers and sponsoring families for their involvement in the above activities.

The focus and goal of the Board this year is to perform SEVA WITH SMILE (SWS). According to my Guru, Sri Sri Ravi Shankar, “Seva is not an action, it is an attitude.” So with the attitude of Love and Compassion we would like to serve our community. We request community members to join in various Seva tasks at our temple, in whatever capacity they can, and remember it is an attitude. Some of the Seva opportunities at the temple are, sponsoring prasadam, temple clean-up, participating in various committees like Public relations committee, Administration committee, Program coordination committee, and Parents committee.

We would like to see an effective communication between the Board Members and the congregation. An E-mail address ([hsss-regina@yahoo.ca](mailto:hsss-regina@yahoo.ca)) and a website for the temple ([www.reginahindutemple.ca](http://www.reginahindutemple.ca)) has been created to facilitate this communication. Similarly, we would like to reach-out to the other like-minded organizations based in Regina. So far, we have attracted more than 50 visitors including the religious studies’ students from U of R. We were also invited to attend the U of R South Asian student association (URSASA) inaugural function.

Our goal is to educate the community and children about our scriptures and values. We intend to organize a Gita study group, and an adult workshop. Our Hindu Vidyalaya is working with different activities for children, including a Spiritual Camp

-Harjit Bajwa.



## **The Board of Trustees of the Hindu Samaj of Southern Saskatchewan, 2008**

Mr. Harjit Bajwa (President) Ms. Alpana Trivedi (Vice President)  
Mr. Ashok Goyal (Administration coordinator) Mr. Himamshu Sharma (Treasurer)  
Mr. Damodar Pokhrel (Secretary) Mr. Makhan Sharma (Public Affairs Coordinator)  
Ms. Vaijayanthi Aravinthan (Program Coordinator) Ms. Rajula Pandya (Program Coordinator)  
Dr. Kalpana Patel (Principal of Hindu Vidyalaya) Ms. Neeru Bhasin (Past-President)  
Ms. Sarla Mann (Rental coordinator) Ms. Urmila Nigam (Member)  
Mr. Dinesh Kashyap (Member)

Ms. Alpana Trivedi & Ms. Anjana Kaushal -----Representatives to Regina Multi-Faith Forum

### **Board Committees: (President is Ex-officio member of all committees)**

*Program Coordinators Committee:* Vaijayanthi Aravinthan, Rajula Pandya,  
*Finance Committee:* Himanshu Sharma, Anajana Kaushal, Ved Arora, Sarla Mann  
*Admin Coordinators Committee:* Jagdish Bodani, Ashok Goyal, Joginder Bhangu  
*Public Affairs Committee:* Makahn Sharma, Srinivas Kalburgi, Sanjeev Chopra.  
*Secretary Committee:* Damodar Pokrel ,  
*Priest Committee:* Dr Shreedhar Jachak, Mr Krishan Kapila, Dr Jaya Prakash Makam  
*Bereavement Committee:* Krishan Kapila, Dinesh Kashyap. Jai Ram  
*Parents' Committee:* Poonam Sood, Krishan Kapila, Alpana Trivedi, Vaijayanthi Aravinthan, and  
Kalpana Patel

### **Some important dates:**

Town Hall Meeting: Sunday, January 27, 2008  
Varshik Bhojan: Saturday, May 10 (Mother's Day Weekend), 2008  
Buddha Poornima (falling on Victoria Day Holiday): Monday, May 19, 2008  
Semi-AGM: Sunday, July 13, 2008  
Raksha Bandhan: Saturday, August 16, 2008 (Only Poornima falling on a Saturday in 2008, ideal  
for Samoohic Sathya Narayan Katha in the temple)  
Children's Spiritual Camp: Saturday, August 9 & Sunday, August 10, 2008  
Maha Durgashtami: Tuesday, October 07, 2008 (For Samoohic Durga Pooja)  
AGM: Sunday, December 07, 2008  
Board Meetings: As required (Minimum once every two months)

### **Hindu Vidyalaya Spiritual Camp- 2008, August 9-10:**

This 5th Annual Spiritual Camp is scheduled at Echo Valley, Fort Qu'Appelle.  
Only 25 campers shall be registered, the deadline for which is July 10th, 2008.  
Registration forms have been available since June 15th, 2008. Please Contact:  
Mr. Krishan Kapila: 789-6759; Mrs. Sudha Kalburgi: 584-8929  
Mrs. Maya Sharma: 789-6821; Dr. Kalpana Patel: 761-1285

### **Lord Kartikeya murthi stapana:**

With divine grace, Hindu temple of Southern Saskatchewan, is adding a celestial member to its family of deities. We were requested by South Asian community to complete the family of Lord Shiva with an installation of Lord Kartikeya's Murthi.

Dr. Natarajan and his family supported us by getting a divine idol of Lord Kartikeya.  
Dr. Shreedhar Jachak is leading the project and is planning a big celebration full of divine chants, pujas and performances. The final dates for this function are tentatively planned for September, subject to

availability of a priest. This is once in a life time event. So the congregation is requested to participate in whatever capacity they can, to make this function a memorable one.



### OUR FESTIVAL CELEBRATIONS

<b>FESTIVAL</b>	<b>ACTUAL DATE</b>	<b>Temple Celebrates on</b>
Makar Sakranti/Pongal/Lohri	Monday, 14 Jan 2008	Sunday, 20 Jan 2008
Vasant Panchami	Monday, 11 Feb 2008	Sunday, 17 Feb 2008
Maha Shivaratri	Wednesday, 05 Mar 2008	
Holi	Friday, 21 Mar 2008	Sunday, 23 Mar 2008
Ugadi, Gudi Padwa, Navratri (Spring) starts	Sunday, 06 Apr 2008	
Ram Navami	Sunday, 13 Apr 2008	Sat, 12 April - Sun, 13 Apr 2008
Baishakhi , Tamil & Bengali New Years, Vishu (Kerala)	Monday, 14 Apr 2008	Sunday, 20 Apr 2008
Hanuman Jayanti	Saturday, 19 Apr 2008	Sunday, 20 Apr, 2008
Guru Poornima	Thursday, 17 Jul 2008	Sunday, 20 Jul 2008
Raksha Bandhan	Saturday, 16 Aug 2008	Sunday, 17 Aug 2008
Krishna Janmashtami	Saturday, 23 Aug 2008	
Ganesh Chaturthi	Wednesday, 03 Sep 2008	Sunday, 07 Sep 2008
Onam	Friday, 12 Sep 2008	Sunday, 14 Sep 2008
Navratri (Fall)	Monday, 29 Sep 2008 to Wednesday, 08 Oct 2008	
Vijaya Dashami (Dashera)	Thursday, 09 Oct 2008	
Karva Chauth	Friday, 17 Oct 2008	
Deepavali (Diwali)	Tuesday, 28 Oct 2008	
Vikram Savant 2065 (New Year)	Wednesday, 29 Oct 2008	Tuesday, 28 Oct 2008
Tulsi Vivah	Wednesday, 12 Nov 2008	Sunday, 16 Nov 2008



During meditation when we chant Om, we create within ourselves a vibration that attunes sympathy with the cosmic vibration and we start thinking universally. The momentary silence between each chant becomes palpable. Mind moves between the opposites of sound and silence until, at last, it ceases the sound. In the silence, the single thought—Om—is quenched; there is no thought. This is the state of trance, where the mind and the intellect are transcended as the individual self merges with the Infinite Self in the pious moment of realization. It is a moment when the petty worldly affairs are lost in the desire for the universal. Such is the immeasurable power of Om. .... Contributed by Sandeep Chopra.



## **HINDU VIDYALAYA REPORT**

**Semester I:** Begins on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of January with Sri Saraswati Pooja and ends in Mid June. A major activity is " Public-Speaking Contest." (This year it was rescheduled on 3rd Saturday in June as that gives enough time for Baisakhi and Mosaic celebrations and does not interfere with high school exams.) The students participate in a Havan on last Sunday of each month and also present a speech on various topics (Vidyalaya Vicharana Series ) to the congregation, each class taking turn. Each Sunday, students also participates in Dhoon at 11.45 A.M. The children also participate in the festivals such as Holi, Ramanavmi, Maha Shivaratri and Ugadi/Gudi padawa.

**Semester II:** Begins on 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday after the public schools start in the fall, with Sri Ganesh Chatruthi Pooja and ends with an Award Night Celebration (and Talent show) in mid-December. As in the first semester, students participate in Havan on the last Sunday of each month and also present a speech on various topics (Vidyalaya Vicharana Series) to the congregation, each class taking turn. Also, each Sunday, the students participate in Dhoon singing at 11.45 A.M. All students take an active part in the celebration of major Hindu festivals -- Dashara and Diwali.

Parents Committee is chaired by Mrs. Poonam Sood. The other members are: Mrs. Pokhrel, Mr. Makhan Sharma and Mr. Sunil Jani.

### **Teachers of Vidyalaya:**

Mrs. Vanishree Makam: Age 4 and 5      Mrs. Sudha Srinivas: Grade 1 and 2  
Mrs. Maya Sharma: Grade 3 and 4      Mr. Krishan Kapila: Grade 5 and 6  
Dr. Kalpana Patel: Grade 7 and up      Support Teachers are: Mr. Chandra Mohan, Mrs. Nalini Kumar, Dr. Srinivas, Dr. S. Jachak and Dr. Jaya Prakash.

### **Vidyalaya Committee**

Mr. Krishan Kapila: Senior Teacher      Mrs. Poonam Sood: Chair Parents' Committee  
Mrs. Alpana Trivedi- Hindu Samaj Board      Mrs. Vijayanthi Aravinthan – Hindu Samaj Board.  
Dr. Kalpana Patel – Principal

Please do contact Vidyalaya committee if you have any concerns related to the Vidyalaya.

### **Up Coming**

Annual Vidyalaya Spiritual Camp: August 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup>, Echo Valley Camp in Fort Qu' Appelle.  
(Major Sponsors Drs. Kalpana and Rajni Patel )

OM TAT SAT



"The goal which all the Vedas declare, which all austerities aim at, and which men desire when they lead the life of continence ... is Om. This syllable Om is indeed Brahman. Whosoever knows this syllable obtains all that he desires. This is the best support; this is the highest support. Whosoever knows this support is adored in the world of Brahma." ~ Katha Upanishad I ....  
Contributed by Sandeep Chopra.



## **Temple Administration**

For better administration and conformance to Provincial regulatory bodies the Hindu Samaj Board of Trustees have developed various forms as explained below:

- 1) Prasadam Sponsorship forms: This form is filled by Prasadam Sponsoring family. The family sponsoring Prasadam shall get Program coordinators approval and submit the filled form to Temple treasurer. The Treasurer will then process the request and prepare \$250 tax deductible receipt.

The form is located in a wall mounted organiser beside the Prayer room entrance door or can be printed from Hindu Temple website [www.reginahindutemple.ca](http://www.reginahindutemple.ca) in forms section.

- 2) Donation in 'kind' forms: Families and individuals interested in donated gifts to the temple as requested by temple board or committee members shall fill this form to receive tax deductible receipt for an equivalent amount. This form shall be accompanied by a gift receipt, for finance committee to assess the price of item(s) gifted

The form is located in wall mounted organiser beside the Prayer room entrance door or can be printed from Hindu Temple website [www.reginahindutemple.ca](http://www.reginahindutemple.ca) in forms section.

- 3) Rental forms: Families and individuals interested in renting temple for family/religious occasions can do so by contacting the Rental coordinator (Mrs Sarla Mann). Thereafter, confirm the booking by filling the rental form and submit it to the rental coordinator along with the requisite fees.

The form is located in wall mounted organiser beside the Prayer room entrance door or can be printed from Hindu Temple website [www.reginahindutemple.ca](http://www.reginahindutemple.ca) in forms section.

- 4) Membership forms: All family and individuals shall fill the membership form to maintain their membership status in good status. The membership fee is \$30 for family and senior family class, and \$20 for student class. Discuss the associate and life membership requirement with any Board members. Submit the completely filled form to temple treasurer committee.

The form is located in wall mounted organiser beside the Prayer room entrance door or can be printed from Hindu Temple website [www.reginahindutemple.ca](http://www.reginahindutemple.ca) in forms section.

*All congregation members are required to conform to the above requirements for smooth and trouble free transactions.*





## AM I A HINDU ?

From time to time a little voice in me has been raising the question whether I am a Hindu. At first I laughed it off as a silly quirk of the mind. But it kept coming back. Indignantly then I said to myself, “Of course I am, I was born Hindu, brought up by Hindu parents, have a Hindu name, a Hindu wife, attend the Hindu temple... .” I felt a bit stupid having this conversation with myself. A lot of people think this sort of reasoning is sufficient. I too was content to remain a ‘surface Hindu’ for a number of years. (That is a story in itself.)

The persistence of the little voice set me thinking. I wondered if I was shallow in my comprehension of the Hindu pantheon, the rituals, mythology, festivals and folklore. I tried to recall everything I had heard and seen in my past. Wanting to test myself of the extent of this knowledge, I found a number of tests and questions on the Internet. While I did not know everything, I scored enough to fetch me a certificate in Hinduism. Most of us have picked up our Hinduism from what we have seen and heard in our younger years and we feel that is enough even after our higher education. Childhood conditioning typically prevails over higher education when it comes to religion. My high score on the tests induced a bit of self-righteousness in me. It also moved me towards poojas, mantras, jagrata and such other traditional practices. However my little voice came at me with a bite at my ego, “So, you think you are a Hindu, don’t you?”. The direct dig deflated my ego. Was I trying to convince myself that I am a Hindu by the externalities of rituals, poojas and mantras? We all know how some persons have passed themselves off as doctors by putting on a lab coat and a stethoscope. And many church attendees are-- mere churchians, not real Christians. Similarly many born-Hindus claim to be authentic Hindus by virtue of conforming to the externalities of social practices and rituals they do not understand. The little voice made me realize that I did not have a full understanding of the ‘ism’ in Hinduism. I realized that rituals are useful only when undertaken with full understanding of the symbolism.

At about this time when I was trying to find new and acceptable answers to my doubting little voice, some friends started a *Gita* study circle. I was drawn to it. We read several different commentaries and interpretations. Our discussions were spirited. I felt the *BhagavadGita*, simply put, is ‘Vegetarian (not Chicken) Soup for the Soul’. I wished I had read it much earlier in life. I continue to feel it holds the best advice for life and living – how to live a sane and happy life, what the ideal personal qualities to aspire for, the prime importance of action and detachment, the connection between mental anguish and cognitive orientation, the distinction between needs and wants, between standard of life and standard of living, between choice and duty. The commentaries and interpretations by Swami Dayananda Saraswati and Swami Rama are particularly suited to the North American context. After reading the *Gita* some of us went on to read Shankaracharya’s *Aatmabodha*. From this book I learned that one does not have to accept anything on mere faith; one can and should bring to bear one’s intellect, analyse, try out, and accept only if convinced.

From *Ashtavakra Gita* I learned not to hang on to any convictions; convictions are like mile stones, and hanging on to them serves to prevent further progress. I found reinforcing thoughts in the simple but powerful writings of Sri Aurobindo and Sri Ramana Maharshi, particularly their

advice on 'problems of life'. Alongside these readings I explored and experienced several schools of meditation and had some upending experiences. I found the non-denominational Vipassana meditation most helpful in cleansing the mind. With the above readings and experiences, my emotional and intellectual commitment to Hinduism became firmer than ever before. I felt confident the little voice would now be satisfied.

Nope, the demanding little voice was not satisfied. I was thrown back to more introspection. After a while it dawned on me that it is not the knowing that matters. What matters is the bringing into practice of what you know. Duryodhana of *Mahabharata* was aware of what was right and what was wrong, but could not refrain from doing what was wrong, and could not bring himself to do what was right. In the same vein, one of the great men of our times has said that if only mankind did half of what they know to be right, this world would be a much better place. Not acting on the wisdom we have, has been the greatest lapse of our times.

The little voice, by continually pulling back my ego, showed me where I was stalled. It eventually led me to ask blunt questions about myself in relation to Hindu values and behaviours: am I humble, am I considerate of others, am I honest and truthful in my dealings, do I take advantage of others, do I blow my own horn, do I give credit to others for work they do or did, am I detached enough, am I self-centred, am I too quick to react, do I let anger possess me, do I gossip, do I play mind games, am I fixed in my ideas, am I flexible, am I doing my share for the betterment of the orphans, the poor and the hungry? Am I giving my time to charitable causes. (More often than not, we give money and feel we have done something good, and with our precious time, we do trivial things. The immediate drowns out the important.)

My little voice eventually led me to engage in Hindu behaviours and actions. It was not easy, let me confess. In this context I should note here that a well respected Indian sociologist has observed that it is a national character of Indians (our kind) to regard something as done, when it has merely been talked about. Talking about walking is not walking. (One definition has religion as mostly talking, and spirituality as walking) A recent family crisis showed me how strong my attachments were and how difficult it is to acquire the attitude of detachment. It was an intense lesson. Life continuously holds lessons in the situations it presents us. The more attached we are, the more is the help we need from the little voice in us.

Being a true Hindu is not a spectator sport. It is a full time voluntary undertaking to lift oneself up to a higher level of consciousness. It is a life-long journey. The little voice is a necessary companion. I have come to the conclusion that temple, pooja, mantra, havan, scriptures, mythology, are all aids to spiritual growth, not ends in themselves. If only we are not fixated in our focus, they help to awaken the little voice and get us to introspect in order to uncover our higher self. Now, it matters not to me when or whether I will get to the destination of being a true Hindu. Because, I am on a journey and the journey itself is the destination.

The above narration is essentially a personal diary cast in an upwardly inclined straight line, only in order to provide clarity to the readers. In reality, it was more of a chaotic spiral in fits of up and down shifts. Also, no claim is being made here that growth does or should occur only in this fashion. We are all unique human beings, and I believe there are as many equally valid paths as there are individuals.

- Kalburgi Srinivas



## **TRUE SURRENDER, THROUGH ACTION: Karma-Yoga**

We started this year with lots of challenges that are testing our faith in the divine. I am proud of our present Board members and all support groups for their commitment to our larger temple-family responsibilities in spite of their active personal life. The Board of 2008 is the youngest team ever. As such the transfer of responsibility to a younger generation is worth appreciating at the same time challenging. My master Sri Sri Ravi Shankar rightly appreciates volunteers in following verses : “Poor people fight for food. Rich people share their food. Richer are those who share power. Richer still are those who share fame. Richest of all are those who share themselves. A person’s wealth is measured by his ability to share and not by what he hoards.” These words need to be pondered and realized.

We all share ourselves to various extents within our primary family. But sharing ourselves (or volunteerism) more broadly has a deeper meaning. Volunteerism is not out of convenience or comfort, but it is a commitment to serve without expectation. A true volunteer is like a flowing river that keeps moving ahead pacifying the thirsty and forgiving the rocks that try to stop the flow, yet disciplined enough to flow within their boundaries. As the river flows from a higher elevation to a lower platform, the true volunteer grows over time from high ego to selfless ego. Many volunteers start with big flows but dry out quite quickly or lose their spirit. This is where the spiritual practices and faith in the Divine play crucial role. A frustrated volunteer is like a flooded river that can ravage the community if not controlled with true spiritual power. A volunteer can and should gain enough discipline by following a daily routine consisting of:

1. Active Surrender to the divine without expectation of fruits. This comes as true faith and trust in Divine that whatever happens is for his/her own good.
2. Commit to Spiritual practices or “Sadhana”. Practices can be as simple as sitting relaxed and focusing on breath or doing Pranayam
3. Celebrate with “Satya-Sangh”. Company of “truth” is listening to audio, video discourses of spiritual masters. Singing divine songs is one of the simplest yet most powerful tool to rejuvenate oneself.
4. Perform Seva (“Sa + Eeva”) means “God like” behaviour towards all who are Served.

Good things come in simple form and the above rules may be simplified as

$$\boxed{4s = S}$$

Where,

4 (small) “s” stand for Samarpan (Surrender), Sadhana, Satsang and Seva without Ego, and (Big) S represents “Self” or “Atman”

Uncommitted mind is miserable and will perceive happiness in temporary things. Nothing can bring satisfaction other than realizing “Self” and it is only Selfless actions through four small (Egoless) “s” will take us closer to “Self”.

The Hindu Samaj endeavours to promote these attributes in each individual through various festivals and occasional discourses. We would like to hear from our congregation any suggestions to bring Holistic growth in our Community.

With Divine Grace -Harjit Bajwa.