



Shanthi Sandesh

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VOLUME 13, ISSUE 1

MARCH 2018

SUPREME YOGA: LIGHT ON BHAGAVAD GITA YOGA FOR BETTER LIVING Dr. A.R. Aroor

Hari Om Tat Sat

Om yoga dharma pradeepaaya vidhmahe

Bhagavad gitaamrithaaya dheemahi

Tanno venu gopala krishna prachodayaat Om

I meditate on supreme Lord who enlightens yoga way of living, I meditate on his nectar of his teachings. May he as a giver of knowledge, wealth and prosperity, and remover of sorrow illuminate me

Supreme yoga of Bhagavad Gita (Hari Gita or simply Gita) is the most authoritative ancient science of the right way of living (yoga dharma) retold by Lord Srikrishna to Arjuna. It was first told to the Sun God by the supreme Lord (Mahavishnu or Parameshwara) and then retold to Arjuna as Bhagavad Gita (Song of the Supreme Soul). The Sun God is the first god considered to be linked to the manifestations of *praana* (energy of the soul) through the power of mother goddess and father god (Narayana Upanishad, para 1, Prashna Upanishad, ch1). When the practice of true yoga (Sathya Dharma) was lost at the end of Dwapara Yuga, Lord Srikrishna was born as a reincarnation of Supreme Lord (Mahavishnu) to tell Arjuna the true way of living. It consists of two parts; knowledge (*jnana*) and its practical experience (*vijnana*). The practice of this yoga will remove sorrow and bestow happiness. Once you understand this science of supreme yoga, knowledge of little else is necessary. Supreme yoga deals with nature, the supreme soul, wisdom and the path to prosperity though both knowledge and action. Lord Srikrishna makes this very clear and removes doubts of many learned people still debating whether action or knowledge is superior. He concludes by telling that intelligence with mind control (*buddhi*) with

selfless action (yoga) is called supreme yoga (*buddhi yoga, brahma yoga or jnaana-yoga vyavasthithi* as mentioned in Gita). He says that it this supreme yoga that leads to peace through purification of soul (*jeevathma*) from impure nature (*ashudhha atma*) to pure nature (*vishuddha atma, jitaathma, satwa samshuddi*) by which one becomes fearless (*abhaya*) which is almost equivalent to immortality (*amritam*). **The science of supreme yoga is practiced in successive manner comprising eighteen steps discussed in eighteen chapters of Bhagavad Gita (astaadasha yoga).** The first chapter of Gita starts with a basis for suffering as seen for King Driitharaastra, Duryodhana (Kauravaas) and Arjuna (although he had divine qualities). When Arjuna was nervous about the war, Srikrishna says Arjuna's nervousness is due to disturbance in emotional intelligence which is unacceptable and will not lead anywhere. He advises Arjuna to get up and fight the war. Arjuna then surrenders to Krishna, requests Krishna's advice on the best approach to his dilemma and seeks answers for his numerous doubts. Thus, Chapter 2 to Chapter 18 covers Arjuna's questions and the Lord's answers, thereby teaching yoga way of living (yoga dharma) as a conversation between the knowledgeable soul (Arjuna)

(continued on Page 2)

Inside This Issue

Supreme Yoga	1,2,4
Executive Board	1,7,11
Sarawasti Pooja in Columbia	3
Yoga Corner	4
Bal Sandesh	5-6
First Ever Thai Poomam	7
Quarterly Fiscal Report	8,10
Bhagavad Gita	9
Donor Acknowledgment	11
Current Programs	12

Executive Board Team wishes you all a very Happy Healthy and Peaceful 2018! Here is a recap of 2017. Shanthi Mandir, HTCC and our community has experienced healthy growth over the past 11 years. Year 2017 seems like it will be remembered in the history as the year in which the Board of Trustees of HTCC made some major decisions to shape its future.

Message from the Executive Board

A new program "Shishu Vihar" was started on January 7, 2017. Krishna Shanmugham and his wife Nithya took the leadership and started "Shishu Vihar", a fun and interactive class held each week. It is meant to spread Sanathana Dharma/Hindu faith to the children through prayers, pledges, bhajans, skits, storytelling, crafts, games,

etc. "Shishu Vihar's" goal is to inculcate a sense of Hindu pride and faith in the young children.

At the HTCC's Board of Trustees meeting held in Spring, 2017, it was decided to extend the term of Ms. Abirami Elangovan (Treasurer), Kiratadas Kutikkad (Vice President) and *(continued on Page 7)*



Supreme Yoga

Continued from page 1

and supreme Lord of yoga (Yogeshwara Srikrishna). The outcome of learning and practicing supreme yoga of the Bhagavad Gita are **sri** (wealth), **vijaya** (success), **bhoothi** (fame), **druvar niti** (right way of living) and **mati** (emotional intelligence) (ch 18, v76).

Supreme yoga is a way of purposeful living

The purpose of yoga dharma per Lord Krishna is to (1) **overcome sorrow** (dukha nivriti, yoga bhavathi *dukha* by appropriate life style, ch 6), (2) **fulfillment of good desires** (*istaa poorti, agatha sukha sampatti* (last verse, ch 18), (3) **skill in action** (*yoga karmasu koushalam* ch 2, *shuchir daksha* ch 12, *yoga samathva uchahathe*, ch 2 and (4) **enlightenment** (*mosksha praapthi* or divine way of purposeful living for society- *moksha sanyasa yoga* ch 18).

The teachings of supreme yoga may be integrated into four principal types as a conducive path for individual and universal wellness: 1.

Wisdom yoga (*manmana bhava*) with knowledge and science (*jnana* and *vijana*), 2. **Devotional yoga** (*madbhaktha*) 3. **Karma yoga** or yoga of action including professional yoga (*madyaaji*) and 4. **Surrender yoga** (*sharanagathi yoga, namaskaara yoga, maam namaskuru*). Therefore, for practical purposes, supreme yoga consists of **medical yoga** for better health and **professional yoga** for prosperity.

MEDICAL YOGA

In Bhagavad Gita, medical yoga includes physical wellness yoga (External or *bahiranga yoga*), mental wellness yoga (Internal or *antharanga yoga*) and social wellness yoga (Integral or *saamyoga*) as practical method which similar to definition of health in modern medicine.

Physical health and wellness yoga The approach includes **wisdom** (ch 13-15), faith including chanting **om tat sat** before any work, (ch 17), **nutrition** (ch 17), **yajna** (ch 4, ch 17) comprising god worship mentally or externally, **tapas** (discipline yoga including physical, verbal and mental discipline ch 17) and **charity** (ch 17), **sleep** (ch 6), **exercise** (including walking and *asanas* ch 6), **breathing** (*pranayama*, ch 4, ch 5, ch 6, ch 7 ch 8) and **divine mindfulness** (*prathyhaara* ch 5, ch 6, ch 8).

Mental health and wellness yoga (Internal or *antharanga yoga*) includes **mind control yoga** (*atma samyama yoga*, ch 6) comprising **dharana, dhyana and samaadhi** (concentration/ consciousness) along with *pranayama* to get rid of sorrow (*dukha vivoga samyoga*) and blissfulness (*mana prasaada*). **Dharana** is concentration on specific parts of the body to get stable mind (*dhruti*) for next stage of yoga, namely meditation.

Meditation is the concentration on one principle for which one may either perform mentally or use recitation of mantras (Brahmana). The final step of yoga is trying to reach **samaadhi** (control of modifications of mindful intelligence, a step that helps to attain consciousness, near to divine consciousness, to attain the state of peace and wisdom (*sthitha prajna* ch2). We will be able to control our emotional intelligence by our inner soul (ch 3,5,6). Intelligence in turn controls our mind (ch

3) and now the divine mind (ch 3) engages in actions that are also divine in nature (**ch 16 v1-3 for divine nature**). The check list for knowing whether we have accomplished mind control is included in ch 6.

Social health and wellness yoga (*sarvathma yoga, paramaatma samaahita yoga*). Once the mind is pure, it will help us to accomplish two objectives: (1) seeing others as ourselves (**sarvaatma yoga**) and (2) gaining strength (**mahaabalaani**) by (a) praising others who do good work (*harsha*), (b) being friends with others who have knowledge and devotion to god (*sneha*), (c) helping others who are in difficulty (*muditha*) and (d) not reacting to the bad quality of others (*nirlakshya*, not irritating them but ignoring them). We could discuss the subject of Gita with others so that it spreads to the society for right way of living (*sathsanga*). Srikrishna describes the social aspect yoga as **samadarshina** (ch 5) meaning seeing god in everybody's heart. This is because the soul represents god in our heart which is immortal and carried from one life to another life (ch 2, ch 15). This integrated approach of physical, mental and social yoga approach helps to practice **life style medicine** for healthy living.

PROFESSIONAL YOGA

Secret of success in professional life: The concept of work environment and professional efficiency and its management is now becoming part of institutional wellness program. It is noteworthy that Bhagavad Gita covers professional yoga in the most practical way. We are either reluctant to accept failure (most of us are restless and get stressed as a result) or we are unable to overcome that failure. But Krishna makes us accept the failure and advises us to seek the blessing of supreme soul so that we become determined to find a way to overcome the failure. Lord Srikrishna tells that one can be successful through continuous effort (*abhyasa*), detachment (*vairgya*), forgiveness (*kshama*) and patience (*shama*), affection (*prema*) and sympathy (*karunya*) and treating everybody equal (*samadarshina*). These are the essential qualities of a team leader.

Work as God worship: According to Gita, work should be done with the supreme Lord as the charioteer and you as doer with his guidance therefore forsaking your ego. One who performs the work as worship knowing that supreme Lord is the one who is universal power (*Maheshwara*) and who has compassion for everybody (*suhrida sarva bhuthaanaam* ch 5) will be successful in his profession (ch 18). When he does his work as an offering to god, while thinking of god in his mind, then he is not doing any work. He is now working like a lotus -- "unattached" (like the lotus is unattached to water that it inhabits in) (ch 9). This is the essence of supreme yoga and path for enlightenment (ch 11, ch 18). Lord Srikrishna emphasizes work should be focused as worship of god with one's own profession (*vyasamathmika buddhi ekaha* (ch 2).

(continued on Page 4)

Saraswati Pooja in Columbia– A journey over the years

Sandra Basu



The 28th Saraswati Pooja in Columbia was held on February 17, 2018 at the American Legion Hall. Since I have long lived in Columbia, I was asked to give a few remembrances of Saraswati Pooja through the years. So here is what I remember and what I spoke about on that day.

My late husband, Asit Basu, and I and our two sons came to Columbia in 1974

so I have seen a lot of activities in the Indian community, many people come and go, and quite a few changes over time.

As with so many important activities in the Indian and Bengali community, the Saraswati Pooja in Columbia began with Dr. Ranadhir Mitra & Mrs. Roma Mitra and a few others of the Bengali community. It was first held in the Mitra's home which at that time was in the Blue Ridge area of Columbia. This was in 1990.

They invited a small group - mostly Bengalis - to observe Saraswati Pooja at their house. There was no image of Saraswati at that time. I believe Dr. Mitra drew one on poster board or some such thing to display. Students, both school and University students, brought their books to place before the representation of Saraswati. There was not a formal Pooja at the very beginning. It was just a gathering in the Mitra's living room and those members of the group who could sing or play an instrument or give recitations did so.

Of course, there was food – the classic menu for the occasion - khichuri, banda gobhi ghonto, begun bhaja, papad, chutney, and various kinds of mishti. I am sure Mrs. Mitra made the khichuri since the occasion was at their house. Guests might have contributed other items but the khichuri was her dish.

And she continued making the khichuri for the Saraswati Poojas, in ever increasing quantities, through the years until about 3 or 4 years ago. She spent the week before the Pooja frying large amounts of dal and rice and preparing the vegetables at home. On Saturday morning, the usual day for the Pooja, she would begin cooking the huge vessels of khichuri in the kitchen of whatever venue was being used that particular year. A changing cast of student and local volunteers and draftees helped her in handling the large cooking pots. Dr. Mitra is given credit for beginning the Saraswati Pooja, as well he should be, but I want to also recognize hard work of Mrs. Mitra in cooking and coordinating the food all these years. She really gave of herself.

In the first years the gatherings were held at the Mitra's house and I think in other homes as well. I know it was at our house one year.

As with any good idea well executed, it began to grow. The guest list expanded and more people wanted to participate. It became necessary to find a larger venue than a home. One of the earlier times was in the community room at the Broadway Village apartments. By that time a small but proper Saraswati image had been brought from India. It was made of shola. Niranjana Goswami, a student in the Chemistry Department, served as the first priest to conduct a Pooja. His wife Shabita

would have helped him. Niranjana continued as priest another time or two, but he was unable to do the Pooja one year due to the death of his father. Soumitra Chattopadhyay then stepped in to perform the Pooja assisted by his wife Durba. Soon after that Niranjana and family moved away from Columbia and Soumitra continued as priest for some years.

I believe the Broadway Village community room was used as the location at least twice, maybe three times. And a time or two the Cosmopolitan Club building off Vandiver was used. After that it was at the American Legion building. The venue then shifted to the Knights of Columbus Hall for a number of years and now back to the American Legion for the last several years.

A second, larger "pratima" of Saraswati was obtained, shipped especially from India to the St Louis Airport where Dr. Mitra and Bimal Ray went to receive it. Years later a third "pratima" was sent for and it was shipped directly to Columbia. It is the one we have now.

With the new "Thakur", a larger backdrop or pandal was decorated and a more lavish cultural program was planned. Rehearsals began months ahead of time. A group of singers joined together and there were some excellent dancers among the community. Together they produced some of Tagore's dance dramas. I recall that "Bhanusingher Padabalee" was performed as well as other programs of Tagore's music through the years.

In addition to these organized performances, there were always other singers, dancers, players of instruments and children's groups who took part in the cultural programs. There was real community participation. It is an event much anticipated and enjoyed every year by the whole Indian community.

There have been so many families and students that have been a part of Columbia's Indian and Bengali communities through the years. I won't attempt to name any – there are too many and I'd leave some out. A few early arrivals in Columbia, the Mitra's among them, came and stayed. Others have come at various times and some stayed on and some just passed through, but all have contributed in various ways and left memories behind.

I'm not sure exactly when Soumitra and family left Columbia – around 2000 to 2002, I think. Since that time Dr. Shivendra Shukla has fulfilled the duties of priest to perform the Pooja with his wife Asha helping.

It takes a lot of work and the efforts of many people to bring the Saraswati Pooja to completion every year. A great deal of planning and organizing is involved. A group of volunteers spends hours the night before to set up and decorate the pandal. A number of families prepare and bring the food. There is serving and cleaning up. Performers must plan and rehearse. Everyone needs to be contacted and invited. Just so much to do. But there are many willing and dedicated people who carry out this work. Great thanks to them all.

Dr. Mitra was always the organizer, guide and driving force of the Saraswati observance. It is part of his rich legacy to the community and we will always remember him and miss him. With the strong foundation he helped build, the Saraswati Pooja will continue in future years as others take up the charge.

Yoga Corner

Ritcha Mehra Chaudhary

This time In “Yoga Corner” we will look at an asana called “*Trataka*” or “The Yogic Gazing”.

“*Trataka*” means ‘to gaze steadily at a fixed point’. There are two parts of this asana-external (*Bahiranga*) and internal (*Antaranga*). In the external or “*Bahirangi*” *Trataka*, the gaze is fixed upon an object for some time. In the later stages of this asana, the gaze is internalized by visualizing the object, at the eyebrow center, with the eyes closed. This is called the external or



Antaranga Trataka.

1. Sit in *Sukhasana/vajrasana* with your spine erect. If you find it hard to sit on the floor you can sit on a chair.
 2. While practicing *Trataka*, the gaze can be fixed on several objects- the tip of the thumb of your hand, flame of a candle, a circle/ point drawn on a wall, pointed end of a sharpened pencil etc.
 3. Focus and look at the object without blinking. Keep your eyes relaxed.
- If using a burning candle, fix the gaze at the top end of the wick. The candle is placed on a stand in such a way that the height of the wick of the flame is at the eye level and the

stand is placed at an arm's length.

- If using a thumb, extend the arm out. Close the fist of your right hand and lift it up with the thumb upraised in front of your eyes. The tip of the thumb should be on a point midway between the eyebrows. Now, fix your gaze at the tip of the thumb
- 4. Keep your gaze constant for some time on the object and then close your eyes. Try and visualize the object at the eye brow center with the eyes closed. Keep the eyes closed for as long as you see the inner image.
- 5. Rub together your palms vigorously and cover your eyes with them for a few seconds.
- 6. Then re-start.

Variation:

This variation can be practiced when gazing at your thumb or a pencil held in your hand.

Fix your gaze at the tip of the thumb or the pointed end of a pencil held in the hand. Move your hand slowly towards left as far as possible, keeping your gaze fixed at the object. Return the hand slowly towards the center keeping your eye fixed on the object. Repeat the process, this time moving the object towards the right, and then returning it to the center with the gaze fixed at it. This constitute one cycle.

Rub together your palms vigorously and cover your eyes with them for a few seconds. Repeat the exercise 3 times. Gradually increase the repetitions

Duration:

Start by looking at the object for ~ 10 seconds. Then concentrate on the inner image with eyes closed for about 30 seconds ☺

Supreme Yoga

Continued from page 2

In profession, one has only right to do the duty but not for its outcome (ch2). Moreover, one should treat success/ failure, happiness/sorrow, gain/loss and praise/insult with equanimity (ch 2). When he does his duty in this manner, he is not bound by action and qualifies for enlightenment (ch 2). Therefore professional yoga means balance in emotional intelligence and skill in action (yoga

samathwa uchhathe, yoga karmasu koushalam ch 2, ch 17).

Srikrishna informs us of **eight versus in ch 12 v13 to v20** which may be used as check list to validate if we have reached perfection in our profession and purposeful living. These are called **dharma amrita** by Lord Krishna and called **dharma astatka** by learned scholars. In conclusion, practice of supreme yoga as told in Bhagvad Gita provides a lasting transformation for overall health and wellness.



***Om sarvadharmam parithyajya twameva sharanam mama
kaarunya bhavena raksha srikrishna parmashwara Om
Om Shaanthih Shaanthih Shaanthih***

Supreme Lord (parameshwara) Srikrishna, (as giver prosperity and remover of sorrow) I will offer all my action/work as god worship and surrender to you. I pray you to protect me (grant health, knowledge and prosperity)

Note. This article is summary of two talks by the author on the Gita recital day in 2016 and 2017. Author thanks all the devotees of Shanthi Mandir as well as devotional group who meet for Gita discussions on week days and special occasions. The explanation of all the terms used and detailed Gita material is easily obtained on the Internet ☺

Bal Sandesh

Newsletter of Bal Sabha of Columbia, MO

March, 2018

Bal Sabha Officers

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Pooja Nistala

Treasurer

Muruganantham



EDITOR'S NOTE

As spring is almost upon us and this icy weather (hopefully) comes to an end, it is time to reflect on our accomplishments from the past several months. It was another year of hard work and success with all the activities and events and Bal Sabha is extremely proud of you all. Bal Sabha and Shishu Vihar kids once again put on a great show for India Nite 2017 on October 28th, along with the remarkable performances in the Pongal festivities on January 20th and Saraswati Pooja celebrations on Feb 17th. Further achievements were made in the Spelling Bee, Science Olympiad, Math Counts/MSTM, Chess tournaments, Tennis or Soccer or Basketball and more.

This issue contains a few write-ups consisting of a poem "the two sides of me", a reflection of how "Thaipooam" festival was celebrated at temple, a drawing on Goddess Saraswati, and another one on "Traditional Rangoli". Keep sending the write-ups, poems, jokes, pictures, book reviews and more as it makes this newsletter of ours interesting and fun to read. The Editors ☺

Bal Sabha Kudos

A fresh update to refresh our minds with another great season of accomplishments by the HTCC Youth.

Science Olympiad: Charu Murugesan, Sriya Pokala, Aarya Kumar, Saloni Chaurasia, and Aparana Sivaraman participated in the Science Olympiad Invitational and Regionals Competition from Gentry Middle School. Akhil Elangovan participated from Jeff Junior and Saathvik Kannan along with Harini Arunkumar from West Middle. All of them received individual rankings in their chosen events. Way to go!

Debate tournaments: Shruti Gautam, Kanchan Hans, Vignesh Kumar, Vishnu Arun, Leela Younger and Tia Rawat from RBHS participated in several debate competitions during the past few months and many of made it to the prize podiums. Good luck to all those headed to the District and State debate competitions!

Marching Band RBHS: Tia Rawat represented Rock Bridge in the Marching Band tournaments. Rock Bridge Marching Band had a phenomenal season placing 1st in two of the tournaments, placing 2nd in third tournament and qualifying for the finals in the big Regional competition at Owasso, OK.

United Nations: Kanchan Hans was a member of the Rock Bridge Model United Nations team that competed at the University of Chicago 30th Annual Model United Nations Conference February 2 -4.

MCTM/Mathcounts: Hasi Yarasi and Meenu Sivaraman, 5th grade, Mill Creek qualified for MCTM Regionals. Sriya Pokala, 7th grade, Shubha Gautam, Ruchi Patil, and Savy Nistala all 6th graders from Gentry Middle also qualified for the Regionals. Congrats girls!

Spelling Bee: Shreeyanka Bardhan, 3rd grade secured 5th position at the Beulah Ralph Elementary School Bee. Hasi came 7th in the Mill Creek Elementary School Bee.

Swimming: Aditi Yerrapu qualified for the District Championship meet to be held in Platte City, Missouri in three swim events – 50 m freestyle, breaststroke and backstroke). Congratulations on your "awesome swim"!

Dance: Sriya Pokala won 2nd prize in the Bharatanatyam competition for the Midwest region organized by Saptami Foundation in Chicago, IL. Anya Kumar has been a member of Rock Bridge Bruin Girls competitive dance team for the last 2 years and has had many accomplishments to her name.

Also, many of our youth had big accomplishments in Chess and Tennis competitions too but we don't have all the details to share yet. We will have updates on the District and State competitions in our next issue, until then...

Thaipooam

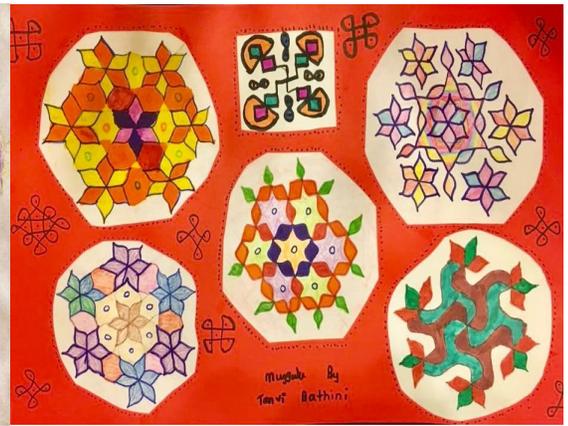
Jaydeep Murugesan - 2nd Grade, Mill Creek Elementary

Thaipooam is a festival celebrated by the people in the southern part of India. It is celebrated on the first full moon in the Tamil month of Thai. Thaipooam celebrates Lord Muruga.

This year we celebrated Thaipooam in the Shanthi Mandhir temple, this was organized by the Columbia community. First all the aunts, including my mom, placed colorful pots on their heads. These pots were filled with pal, thair, panera, and manjalneer. With the pots, they chanted with the Arohara. Next, all of the uncles took kavadis and danced around Lord Muruga, who

was placed on a table in the center of the room. At the same time, my friends and I got to dance with our own kavadis around Lord Muruga as well. After that we all chanted Murugan Bhajans and some people even got to sing. Next we all eat yummy prasadam.

This was the first time I saw the festival and I enjoyed the day very much ☺



Saraswati Drawing by Anu 3rd Grade

Rangoli Drawing by Tanvi 4th Grade

Poem - The two sides of me

One's heartbeat is proportional,
To the tempo
To the time

Why do people think your heart races
when you're rosy-cheeked

No,
It slows down, because
time slows down
The tempo slows down
Till one is waltzing with fate itself
The catching of glances
The stealing of breaths
Hands holding hearts
Hearts holding eyes
It's a waltz yes,
A dance for two
Pas de deux

Now these poems are making me go
crazy
How is one insane enough to write a
poem
about such a fiction
such a fantasy

I'm tired of the poems
The illusions, the lies
The romance as an enchantment
Or rather,
an evil spell
Portraying love as an art
When it only brings pain
Although,
Isn't pain a form of art as well?

The poet chose to remain anonymous



Congratulations to Siddhant Chaurasia of Columbia for winning the The Congressional App Challenge in Missouri's Fourth District! Siddhant is a senior at Rock Bridge High School, and he created an app called "Medicine Manager" that lets users manage and set reminders to take their medications. When Siddhant is not on his Mac trying to come up with the "next big thing", he says you can find him playing sports or listening to Travis Scott. Five years from now, he wants to launch his own company in Silicon Valley where he can expand his vision and grow his passion on a much larger scale. Congratulations again, Siddhant! The Fourth District is proud of you 🎉

From the Facebook page of Congresswoman Vicky Hartzler December 12, 2017

Bal Sandesh needs you!

We welcome submissions of all types (reports, poetry, short stories, artwork, puzzles, jokes etc.). Work can be submitted to the Editors or the Parent Advisor. We prefer electronic version of the submission (e-mail or diskette). Artwork can be submitted on paper. Older kids interested in volunteering to serve on the editorial team should contact the Editorial Staff or the Parent Advisor.



Bal Sabha meets every fourth Sunday of the month from 3:00 - 5:00 p.m. at Shanthi Mandir

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First-ever Thai Poosam celebration at the Shanthi Mandir!



Thai Poosam (sometimes also written as Thaipusam) is a festival dedicated to Lord Murugan, the son of Lord Shiva and Goddess Parvati. Lord Murugan is also known as Kartikeya, Subrahmanya, Shanmukha, Skanda and Guha. It is believed that on this day (coincidentally, his birthday), Goddess Parvati presented a lance to Lord Murugan to vanquish the demon army of Tarakasura and combat their evil deeds. Therefore, Thaipusam is a

celebration of the victory of good over evil. Thaipusam is celebrated during the full moon in the Tamil month of Thai (Pausha in Sanskrit) To mark this day of penance and thanksgiving, devotees carry the Kavadi and/or pots of milk on their heads during the procession to the temple. The simplest Kavadi consists of a short wooden pole surmounted by a wooden arch. Pictures or statues of Lord Murugan or other deities are fixed onto the arch. The

Kavadi is decorated with peacock feathers and a small pot of milk is attached to each end of the pole. Thaipusam was celebrated at the Shanthi Mandir for the first time on February 3, 2018 (pictures above) in grand style. The devotional event attended by over 75 devotees also generated over \$1,250 in donations for HTCC. The celebration also provided an excellent “teaching moment” for the numerous children and youth at the celebration.

Executive Board

Continued from page 1

Meena Thawani (Elected BoT Trustee) for a period of two(2) more years. HTCC’s board of directors decided to extend the term of these elected officials due to the fact that no nominations were received for these positions during the nomination period. We wish these elected officials all the best in their new term.

ANNUAL DEVOTIONAL PROGRAM: It was decided to celebrate HTCC’s Anniversary in 2017 with a grand Homam during the Annual Devotional Program on Saturday, April 22, 2017. Visiting priest Sri Iyengar performed the Homam in which many members participated. It was a very good program enjoyed by all present.

FESTIVALS: HTCC’s members and the members of community celebrated all major Hindu festivals at “Shanthi Mandir”. Mahashivratri (Feb 25, 2017), Akhand Ramayan (April 8-9, 2017), Janamshtmi (August 19, 2017), Ganesh Chaturthi (August 26, 2017), Devi Jaagran (September 23, 2017), Karva Chauth (October 8, 2017), Deepawali (October 21, 2017), Guru Nanak Jayanti (November 18, 2017) and Gita Paath (December 2, 2017) were celebrated with great devotion at “Shanthi Mandir”. “Sunder Kand” Paath was hosted on September 16, 2017 by Mrs. Suruchi Aggarwal and Group. We thank the volunteers of HTCC’s Devotional Programs Committee for organizing such wonderful programs for the community.

FUNDRAISING: Volunteers of HTCC also participated in the annual “CROP WALK” on September 17, 2017 at Stephens Lake Park. Having raised over \$800, HTCC Helping Hands team had 16 walkers at CROP Hunger Walk 2017, including Amulya, and Sheel (our youngest walkers). “Thank you” to all the volunteers who helped support this cause.

SERVICE: HTCC’s Service Programs Committee along with Shishu Vihar undertook the annual service project “Sharing the Warmth” to help out fellow Columbians by arranging for donation of winter clothing and related accessories. They donated part of the adult and youth items collected to Public Schools of Columbia, MO, and the other part of adult, youth and children’s items to Refugee Services of Columbia, MO. These organizations serve the Columbia community very well. The col-

lection drive was held at the “Shanthi Mandir” during the month of November, 2017 during which the volunteers collected, sorted, and donated winter jackets, gloves, caps, winter shoes, socks, and blankets collected from the Mandir community and their friends as a part of Sharing the Warmth project. We thank all the HTCC volunteers who worked very hard to bring warm clothing to the needy families in the Columbia community.

VIOLIN-TABLA Musical concert hosted by HTCC Cultural Programs Committee in coordination with “Raagas of Columbia” was held on March 18, 2017 at the “Shanthi Mandir”. Thanks to volunteers who worked hard to bring such a nice concert to our community.

FUN & LEISURE: Annual Bal Sabha Bike Ride/Picnic was held on May 21, 2017 HTCC youth Committee in coordination with Bal Sabha group organized annual Bike Ride to Rocheport & back followed by Picnic at MLK Memorial garden Shelter in Columbia. This was a fun day for all young and young at heart.

PODCASTS: We are pleased to recognize Mrs. Anantha Gopalaratnam, Dr. Gopalaratnam and Mr. Nishant Jain who were guests recently in two separate podcasts on “Hinduism” and “Jainism” respectively. Thank you for spreading the good word and increasing the awareness of HTCC in the City of Columbia.

Summer Workshops : The following workshops were held during the summer of 2017:

1. **Vedic Chanting Workshop** (July 9, 2017): Instructor Abilash taught Vedic Verses from Hinduism Scriptures.
2. **YOGA WORKSHOP** (July 15, 2017): Instructor Vimal Vyas taught attendees about science/philosophy of yoga, popular yoga asanas and sequences for beginners such as Suryanamaskar, Pranayama, Bhadrasana, and relevant Bhagavad Gita commentary.
3. **Tech Workshop on VIRTUAL REALITY:** Instructors Prasad and Sai Shreya Nuguri coached attendees with hands-on demonstrations of HTC Vive Technology and taught how the latest virtual reality technology is shaping new industries in gaming, healthcare, education and commerce. exercise.

(Continued on page 11)

HTCC Quarterly Fiscal Report
For the period January 1st, 2017 – March 31th, 2017
Prepared by Abirami Elangovan Treasurer, December 12th, 2017

Quarterly Revenues

Interest Income			
Interest income	\$238.72	\$238.72	
Membership:			
Annual Family Membership	\$1,000.00	\$1,030.00	
Annual Individual Membership	\$30.00		
Donations:			
Check Donations	\$701.00	\$1,393.00	
Hundi Donations/Prayer Services	\$187.00		
Capital Campaign	\$505.00		
Facility Use	\$535.00	\$535.00	
Total Quarterly Revenues		\$3,196.72	
Quarterly Expenses			
Administrative	\$269.46		
Bank Charges	\$20.56		
Maintenance and Supplies	\$88.40		
Utilities	\$1,464.86		
Total Quarterly Expenses		\$1,843.28	
Net Income for the Quarter			\$1,353.44

HTCC Quarterly Fiscal Report
For the period April 1st, 2017 – June 30th, 2017
Prepared by Abirami Elangovan, Treasurer, December 12th, 2017

Quarterly Revenues

Interest Income			
Interest income	\$62.75	\$62.75	
Membership:			
Annual Family Membership	\$100.00		
Annual Individual Membership	\$30.00	\$130.00	
Donations:			
Check Donations	\$841.00		
Hundi Donations/Prayer Services	\$102.00		
Capital Campaign	\$1,607.00	\$2,550.00	
Faciliti	\$50.00	\$50.00	
Fund Raiser:			
Mandir Cookbook/ Towels Sales	\$30.00	\$30.00	
Other Revenues:			
Eleventh Anniversary Celebrations	\$3,787.00	\$3,787.00	
Total Quarterly Revenues		\$6,609.75	
Quarterly Expenses			
Eleventh Anniversary Celebrations	\$2,040.74		
Lawn and Garden	\$630.28		
Maintenance and Supplies	\$222.55		
Special Events	\$101.00		
Utilities	\$1,155.67		
Total Quarterly Expenses		\$4,150.24	
Net Income for the Quarter			\$2,459.51

Shreemad Bhagavad Gita – Part 30

Saroj Mohan

In verses 1 and 2 of Chapter 8, Arjuna wanted Lord Krishna to explain to him how a person who is near death remains aware of *Brahman* and remembers him.

Shri Krishna says, “*Akshara Param Brahman* or the Imperishable Supreme is *Brahman*, the formless subtle Self, expressed in individual form or *Jeevatma*, is said to be *Aadhyaatma*. The force, with which the creative power of the nature helps the manifestation of things and beings, is called *Karma* or action- work.”

The subtle, imperishable or *Akshara*-Self is all-pervasive; in its perishable form of individual *Jeevatma* and in the creative force which brings forth the manifestation of all things and beings is called *Karma*, which is *Kshara* or perishable. It is the same Self-Effulgent power of the Self that works behind everything.

Our beloved Lord Krishna continues in the 4th verse, “Arjuna, all the perishable (things and beings that are created, born and die) elements are *Adhibhoot*, the *Hiranyagarbha Purusha* or the indweller, the essence behind each individual is *Adhideva*. I alone am *Vasudeva* in this world or worship worthy. Lord Krishna is the ultimate recipient of all *yagna* and is called *Adhiyagna*”.

The same one majestic Self is behind everything, even though they look different, have different names, forms and functions but the indwelling essence remains, as the supreme Self.

Arjuna wanted to learn what happens to those who meditate exclusively on the Lord, and who have learned to control their minds, at the moment of their death. Shri Krishna, in the 5th verse, provides this remarkable answer. Lord Krishna responds, “Without any doubt, whosoever at the time of leaving his body, or at the moment of death, remembers Me, attains Me, comes to Me.”

Continuing on the same subject the Lord says in the 6th verse, “O son of *Kunti*, (*Kaunteya*), at the time of death, at the time of leaving his mortal body thinks of any idea, attains the object of that idea and that state.”

Because of constant churning of a thought or a being, remembering him, results in the manifestation of the same thing or being. As you think so you become, is an old saying. It seems the individual ego, setting out for an unknown place, clings to the known thoughts and patterns. Therefore, to ensure that the individual attains the divine, he or she should contemplate upon the Divine at every moment.

So in the 7th verse Lord says, “Therefore O

Part 30 in this series by Saroj Mohanji on Shreemad Bhagavad Gita includes discussions from the 3rd-11th verses of Chapter 8.



Arjuna, constantly remember Me, at all times, *Mam-Anuswara-Yudhya-Cha* or also keep fighting the battle of Real and un-real. Thus totally absorbed in Me with your mind and intellect, you will attain Me, without any doubt.”

Faith in the words of Shri Krishna is our only refuge. Since subjective experience is beyond us at this time, an Infinite Consciousness, an awareness of real and unreal may be the true solution to happiness in the life and beyond. This is the reason that the Lord says to keep fighting the battle, and to remember Him at all times. This is a memorable verse of instruction. It is best to fight against base instincts and remember the Lord at all times.

In the 8th verse, Shri Krishna says that a steadfast mind and intellect, constantly absorbed in the contemplation of the Lord, attains the Supreme *Purusha*.

Shri Krishna says, “O Parth, (son of Pritha), Arjuna, *Aatmayoga yuktha* or whose mind is totally in the constant practice of contemplating on Me, without any wandering here and there, attains *Paramatma Divya Purush* or the Self-Effulgent, full of bright Light, *Divya Purush* or Divine Supreme Lord.”

It is a promise fulfilled. An unbroken, finely focused contemplation and meditation on the Lord Supreme or the substratum-self, begets

a state of supreme peace, bliss, and dissolution of ego, into the Self-Effulgent self. This is a beautiful word *Aatmayogena* or *Yoga of Atma*, attaining communion with the Ultimate Consciousness.

In the 9th and 10th verses Shri Krishna defines the characteristics of the Supreme Being, painting a dazzling picture of a brilliant, omniscient, *Purusha* or *Paramaatma*, the sustainer or maintainer of supreme wisdom, on whom one should meditate at the time of death.

Shri Krishna says, “Whosoever *Sarvagya* or the knower of all, meditates upon the Ancient, Omniscient, Supporter of all, smaller and subtler than an atom, without beginning or end, beyond ignorance, more brilliant than sun, is *Satchitananda Paramaatma*” or the embodiment of eternal truth, knowledge and bliss, he or she becomes Him, and attains Him.

Further, in the 10th verse, Shri Krishna explains that, such a devotee, who, full of devotion for the Lord, at the time of death, by the power of *Yoga*, fixes his *Prana* between the eyebrows, on the forehead, then concentrates intently, unwaveringly, with focused devotion, on the Lord, attains the Self-Effulgent *Paramaatma*.”

In these two verses, Lord Krishna iterates the instructions for a method of meditation at the time of death, which is *Atmayoga*. At the time of death, full of devotion for the Lord, contemplating on the Divine Self, results in merging with the Divine itself. When the superimposed duality dissolves in the substratum, then there is only the Self or, the substratum remains.

In the 11th verse Shri Krishna talks about His own power and glory. He describes His formless existence.

He says, “O Arjuna, that state which is described as imperishable by the *Vedvidas* or knower and experts of the *Vedas*, that in which the desire-free and self-controlled *Mahatmas* enter, for which they vow to practice and do *Brahmacharya*, I will describe that *Paramapada* or coveted high state, to you briefly.” Clearly, the state of self-realization is a very coveted, high, state for which the seekers of truth do a lot of spiritual practices. It is an ardent longing or yearning for which men follow *Brahmacharya* or the vow of celibacy. This is the state where resolute and unswerving ascetics, free from passion and desire for sense objects, strive to enter☺

तस्मात्सर्वेषु कालेषु मामनुस्मर युध्य च | मय्यर्पितमनोबुद्धिर्मा मे वैश्वस्य संशयम् ॥ 7॥

**tasmāt sarveṣhu kāleṣhu mām anusmara yudhya cha
mayyarpita-mano-buddhir mām evaiṣhyasyaśhayaṃ.**

Therefore, always remember Me and fight! Surrender your mind and intelligence to Me and you will surely attain Me.

HTCC Quarterly Fiscal Report

For the period July 1st, 2017 - September 30th, 2017

Prepared by Abirami Elangovan, Treasurer, December 12th, 2017

Quarterly Revenues

Interest Income		
Interest income	\$1,073.54	\$1,073.54
Membership:		
Annual Family Membership	\$50.00	
Annual Individual Membership	\$30.00	\$80.00
Donations:		
Check Donations	\$2,745.00	
Hundi Donations/Prayer Services	\$210.00	
Capital Campaign	\$1,138.00	\$4,093.00
Fund Raiser:		
Picnic Food Sales	\$940.00	
Plant Sales	\$329.00	\$1,269.00
Other Revenues:		
Eleventh Anniversary Celebrations	\$350.00	\$350.00
Total Quarterly Revenues		\$6,865.54

Quarterly Expenses

Administrative	\$96.50	
Bank Charges	\$2.36	
Insurance	\$2,277.00	
Lawn and Garden	\$861.17	
Maintenance and Supplies	\$170.28	
Special Events	\$1,255.72	
Sponsorship	\$100.00	
Upgrades & Repairs	\$2,468.30	
Utilities	\$1,155.38	
Total Quarterly Expenses		\$8,386.71
Net Income for the Quarter		-\$1,521.17

HTCC Quarterly Fiscal Report

For the period of October 1st, 2017 - December 31st, 2017

Prepared by Abirami Elangovan, Treasurer, March 16th, 2018

Quarterly Revenues

Interest Income		
Interest income	\$713.22	\$713.22
Membership:		
Annual Family membership	\$450.00	\$450.00
Donations		
Check Donations/Special Events	\$2,657.22	\$5,542.47
Hundi Donations/Prayer Services	\$127.25	
Capital Campaign	\$2,758.00	
Fund Raiser		
Plant sales	\$55.00	\$55.00
Facilities Use	\$40.00	\$40.00
Total Quarterly Revenues		\$6,800.69

Quarterly Expenses

Administrative	\$6.65	
Bank Charges	\$78.28	
Lawn and Garden	\$320.00	
Legal and Professional Fees	\$2,010.00	
Special Events	\$359.96	
Sponsorships	\$100.00	
Upgrades & Repairs	\$2,308.04	
Utilities	\$1,076.77	
Total Quarterly Expenses		\$6,259.70
Net Income for the Quarter		\$540.99

Thank You!**Donor Acknowledgement June 1, 2016 – February 28, 2018**

We gratefully acknowledge the following donations made during the above period. If we have inadvertently made an error in not including your name, please let us know.

**Upto \$50**

Arunachalam, Vairam and Alagu
Arunachalam, Vikram
Balla Sudharshan and Archana
Chaudhary, Kunal and Ritcha Mehra
Gupta, Sumit and Neha
Hatwalkar Shrikant & Sudha
Katti, Kattesh and Kavitha
Krishna, Gopal and Santosh
Kumar, Ashwath
Kumar, Senthil and Kalai
Mohan, Rajiv and Sunilima Sinha
Nagasmitha Akkinapragada
Parashar, Tarang and Ranjana Sharma
Puri, Raman and Rachna
Raghuraman, Kannan and Anandhi Upendran
Tewari, Sanjit and Netra Sreepakash
Ugadi Group

\$51 - \$100

Calyam, Anjaneya Prasad and Sudha
Kumar, Asha
Lal, Manmohan Sohan
Manusmare, Purushottam and Usha
Mohan, Saroj
Naik, Yogesh and Rashmi
Ratneshwar, Srinivasan and Subbalakshmi
Rawlani, Vinay & Roshini
Sethi, Sanjiv and Punam
Vedavalli Srinivasagopalan

\$101 - \$150

Cutkosky, Dale and Hema Srinivasan
Mahal, Satnam and Jasvir

Executive Board**Continued from page 7**

4. NUTRITION and MINDFULNESS WORKSHOP: Instructor was Anand Chockalingam. During this workshop, attendees learned the benefits of being more 'conscious' about their food, extend their mindfulness towards their surroundings and even in their daily thinking

The summer workshops were well attended and appreciated. Thanks to all the volunteers for a successful summer of learning and fun!

Volunteers make the Mandir and all its programs work. We thank all the volunteers for their continued support and encourage you to help by joining one or more committees that interest you. We

Palaniappan, Kannappan and Visala
Patel, Nitin and Harsha
Raganathan, Raman and Anusha
Rawlani, Ramesh and Chandra
Shukla, Shivendra and Asha
Singh, Amalok and Kuljit
Thawani, Ravi and Meena
Tolani, Bhisham and Rajini

\$500-\$750

Mettu Sangeetha and Krishna Kanth (*Expenses for new carpet, pad and installation in the priest home*)

\$751 - \$999

Aggarwal, Kul and Archana
Kalavala, SriRamachandra and Gowri
Malhotra, Anil and Kusum
Sharma, Krishna and Sandhya

\$1001-\$1,999

Hareh and Hansaben Patel
Jashnani, Ghansham and Leela
Ramachandran, V. and Anuradha Rajagopalan
Ramadoss, Umasankar and Sasi
Khurana, Inder and Jasmit

\$2,000-\$4,999

Balakrishnan, Elangovan and Abirami
Gopalaratnam, Vellore and Anantha
Loyalka, Sudharshan and Nirja
Rawat, Gagneesh and Aditi

\$5,000 and up

Senthilkumar, Annamalai and Smruthi

want you to get involved and be part of the change! Please contact the chairperson of the committee that interests you or contact one of the EB officers who will gladly introduce you to the appropriate committee chair ☺

See you at the Mandir

Ravi Thawani
Kirtadas Kutikkad
Kusum Malhotra
Abirami Elangovan

We are pleased to inform you that HTCC has recently hired a Full Time Priest at "Shanthe Mandir". Priest Siva Shankar Phani Kumar Bodducherla has joined HTCC on Thursday, March 15th, 2018. He is an erudite scholar with vast knowledge in the field of Vedas and Shastras. He has over 15 years of experience in Vaidika Panchadasa Karmas, Smartha and Saiva Agamas and Dharma shastras, Vastu and muhurtha bhagam in Astrology. He knows vedic and western astrology which aid him in finding the auspicious time for any Pooja or occasion. He is an expert in performing all shubakaryam and ceremonies. He is well versed in Telugu, Hindi and also fluent in English. We encourage all members to visit Mandir to get to know Pandit Phani Kumar and take advantage of all the services offered via HTCC

Shanthi Mandir

Hindu Temple and Community Center of Mid-Missouri (HTCC)

2006 Holly Avenue, Columbia, MO 65202-2043

HTCC is registered as a Nonprofit Corporation in MO

HTCC is tax-exempt under IRS Section 501 (c) 3

Non-Profit Org
U.S. Postage Paid
Permit No. 286
Columbia
MO 65201

Current Programs at the Mandir (March 15, 2018)

Devotional Programs

Open prayer time/Aarti	Tuesday	6:00 - 8:00 p.m.
Geeta Study Circle	Tuesday	7:00 - 7:30 p.m.
Sai Bhajan	Thursday	7:00 - 8:00 p.m.
Venkateshwara Suprabhatam/Vishnu Sahasranaamam	Saturday	9:00 - 10:00 a.m.
Open prayer time/Aarti	Saturday	6:00 - 8:00 p.m.
Kirtan (Monthly event)	1 st Sunday	10:30 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

Educational/Youth Programs

Tamil Classes	1 st / 3 rd Sunday	3:00 - 5:00 p.m.
Bal Pooja	3 rd Sunday	2:00 - 3:00 p.m.
Bal Sabha	4 th Sunday	3:00 - 5:00 p.m.

Service Programs

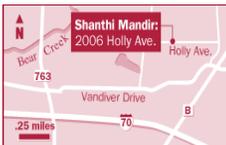
Volunteering at Central Missouri Food Bank	1 st Tuesday	5:30 - 6:30 p.m.
Narayan Seva (Sai Group - St. Francis Home Lunch)	2 nd Sunday	11:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.
Non-Perishable Food Collection (Ongoing continuously)		
Soup and Sandwich Service	4 th Sunday	5:30 - 7:00 p.m.

Fitness and Cultural Art Programs

Tabla classes (instructor fee required)	Sunday	Flexible for now
Carnatic vocal music classes (instructor fee required)	Sunday	1:00 - 3:00 p.m.
Yoga classes (instructor fees required)	Saturday	Flexible for now



Shanthi Sandesh is a quarterly publication of the Hindu Temple and Community Center of Mid-Missouri (HTCC). It is published on behalf of HTCC by its Publications Committee. Editor: Tarang Parashar <tarangparashar@gmail.com>.



Directions: Take Exit 127 on Interstate 70, Head north on Rangeline Street, Right at first traffic light on Vandiver Drive, Left on Parker Street, Right on Holly Avenue, Shanthi Mandir sign will be visible on the right after 5-6 homes. (Note: Holly Avenue is immediately before the Sunrise Optimist building).

Please visit our web site and send us your e-mail address if you would like to be included on the **Friends of the Mandir** distribution list to receive timely program notices.

