



HINDU SWAYAMSEVAK SANGH'S  
**balagokulam**  
HINDU DHARMA FOR KIDS, TEACHERS & PARENTS



# Syllabus

Year I, Quarter I

Age Group : 9 to 12

Gokulam is the place where Lord Krishna's magical days of childhood were spent. It was here that his divine powers came to light.

Every child has that spark of divinity within. Bala-Gokulam is a forum for children to discover and manifest that divinity. It's objective is to enable Hindu children in US to appreciate their cultural roots and learn Hindu values in an enjoyable manner. This is done through weekly gatherings and planned activities which include games, yoga, stories, shlokas, bhajan, arts and crafts and much more.....

**Balagokulam is a program of Hindu Swayamsevak Sangh (HSS).**

**[www.balagokulam.org](http://www.balagokulam.org)**

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## Shloka

## शान्ति मंत्र (shAnti maMtra)

ॐ असतो मा सद् गमय । AUM asato mA sad gamaya |  
 तमसो मा ज्योतिर्गमय । tamaso mA jyotirgamaya |  
 मृत्योर्माऽमृतम् गमय ॥ mR^ityormA.amR^itam gamaya ||

Om! Lead me from the unreal to the real; from the darkness (ignorance) to the light (knowledge); and from the death to immortality.

## शान्ति मंत्र (shAnti maMtra)

ॐ सर्वे भवन्तु सुखिनः AUM sarve bhavantu sukhinaH  
 सर्वे सन्तु निरामयाः । sarve santu nirAmayaAH |  
 सर्वे भद्राणि पश्यन्तु sarve bhadraNi pashyantu  
 मा कश्चित् दुःखभाग्भवेत् ॥ mA kashcit duHkhabhAgbhavet ||  
 ॐ शान्तिः शान्तिः शान्तिः AUM shAntiH shAntiH shAntiH

Om! May all be happy; may all be free from afflictions; may all see the goodness of others and in everything; may no one suffer sorrow.

## Subhashitam (Words of wisdom)

मातृदेवो भव । पितृदेवो भव ।

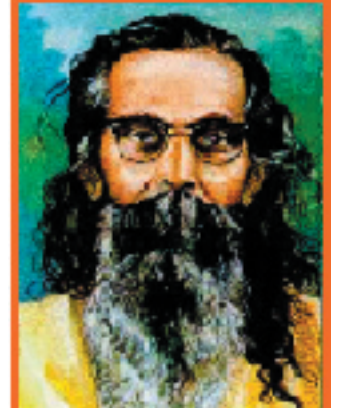
mAtR^idevo bhava . pitR^idevo bhava .

**Meaning:** Honor mother as a God. Honor father as a God.

## Amrutvachan (Quotes)

There is no use merely saying, “Oh! We have a great culture”. What do we know of it? How do we practice it? Do we look at our individual life as an offering to society? Do we feel that we should not merely run after pelf and power but should hold aloft virtues in life?

- **Shri Guruji Golwalkar**



## Do you know that.....

Swami Vivekananda was born on January 12, 1863. He was one of India's leading social reformers of the modern era and was a champion of humanitarianism and service to God through service to others. Vivekananda forged the unity of East and West -- all within the brief period of ten years.

## Geet

### चलो भाई चलो (Chalo bhai chalo)

चलो भाई चलो शाखा मे चलो । थोड़ी देर अब तुम सब काम भूलो  
चलो भाई चलो संग संग चलो । आज के दिन ज़रा हसो और खेलो ॥

राम कृष्ण के वारीस हम । गर्व से कहते हिंदू हम  
भगवा ध्वज है पूज्य परम । वन्दन उसे करो संग संग चलो ॥

सीता का मातृत्व हमे । शौर्य लक्ष्मि का है तन मे  
मौसीजी की आन हमे । आगे बढो और संग संग चलो ॥

छोटे छोटे बच्चे हम । काम बडा करेंगे हम  
धरम की रक्षा करेंगे हम । कहेंगे वन्दे मातरम ॥

शाखा मे है Real Fun । कबडी खो खो मे रमता मन  
करो योग भूलो गम । कदम मिला ओ संग संग चलो ॥

Chalo bhai chalo Shaakha me chalo, Thodi der ab tum sab kaam bhulo

Chalo bhai chalo sang sang chalo, Aj ke din zaraa haso aur khelo ॥

Raam Krishna ke vaaris ham, Garv se kahate hindu hai ham

Bhagvaa dhvaj hai puja param, Vandan use karo sang sang chalo ॥

Jijaa kaa maatritva hame, Shaurya lakshmi kaa hai tan me

Mausiji ki aan hame, Aage bado aur sang sang chalo ॥

Chote chote bachche ham, Kaam badaa karenge ham

Dharam ki rakshaa karenge ham, Kahenge vande maataram ॥

Shaakhaa me hai REAL FUN, Kabaddi kho kho me ramtaa man

Karo yoga bhulo gam, Kadam milao sang sang chalo ॥



## What is Bala-Gokulam?

We, Hindu kids in America, grow up in two different cultures. One at home and a totally different culture outside of home. School and TV make us understand differences between two cultures. And as we grow, we have to balance the two cultures which is a little challenging task. It is important for us to appear cultured at home. At the same time we need to feel and look like every one else in the school. In other words, while we have to assimilate ourselves in American culture, we also have to follow our (Hindu) culture at home. Several questions arise in our mind about our culture – “Why do we have so many Gods? Why does Ganesha have a head of an elephant? Why does Goddess Durga carry weapons? Why shouldn’t I eat beef? And so on and on....” Due to lack of knowledge about our rich culture, we sometime feel inferior and develop tendency to hide our identity. **All of this culminate in the final question “Can I be a Hindu and yet be an American?” Bala-Gokulam is a place where you can get answers to these questions.**

Bala-Gokulam is a forum started by Hindu Swayamsevak Sangh (HSS) for the Hindu kids. Hindu Swayamsevak Sangh (HSS), commonly known as ‘Sangh’, is a religious and cultural organization of Hindu volunteers who work towards organizing the Hindu society in America.

Do you know how this beautiful word - Bala-Gokulam – came from? Well! You must have heard about ‘Gokulam’. It is the place where an ordinary cowherd boy blossomed into a divine incarnation. Did you get who are we talking about? Hmm! Yes! Lord Krishna!! It is here that Lord Krishna’s magical days of childhood were spent and his powers came to be recognized. Every child has that kind of spark of divinity within. The Sangh started a forum for kids to discover and manifest that divinity. Naturally, it preferred to name its forum after the Gokulam. And since this forum is especially for kids (Bala), hence the name is – Bala-Gokulam!

In simple words, Bala-Gokulam is a gathering of Hindu kids that happens regularly which enables Hindu kids to appreciate their cultural roots and

Hindu Swayamsevak Sangh USA, Inc. (HSS) is a non-profit, tax-exempt religious and cultural organization. Its main objective is to retain and promote Hindu Dharma and unite all Hindus spread all over the world. To achieve its goal, it conducts weekly gatherings with various activities at various places in USA.

learn Hindu values (samskaras) in an enjoyable manner. To learn, inculcate and sustain samskaras, rhythm and repetition are necessary. Thus Bala-Gokulam gives emphasis on frequent and regular gatherings.

One might ask, “We are already going to school for an education. Why do we need Bala-Gokulam?”. We live in a great country and the society in this country has a great deal to offer whether it is in education, careers, or recreation. However, it does not give the spiritual and cultural education and guidance that Hindu Dharma encompasses. That is why it is very much necessary for all Hindu kids to participate in Bala-Gokulam or any other cultural or religious activities. Furthermore, Bala-Gokulam fosters a suitable and productive learning environment that is different from schools.

Then, you might ask, “our parents are here to teach our culture. Why should we go to Bala-Gokulam?”. It is true that parents are the first ones who give us first lesson of the life. It is also true that parents give us primary but valuable information about our culture. But there are certain things for which even parents also can not give convincing answer. Everyone has limitations and one has to look out to others for further learning. It is something like your history teacher can not teach science. You need to go to the science teacher. In Bala-Gokulam, we get suitable atmosphere and friends of the same age, which make learning easy and enjoyable. And while we see ourselves a part of a big group with the same cultural background, we naturally develop a confidence. Moreover, we also get chance to make friends and exchange our views and doubts with them.

After reading this, you must have cleared some of your doubts. More and more you keep attending Bala-Gokulam, you will explore the various hidden advantages of it. So! this was your first lesson. Now get set ready to learn more and more.....!







## What is Hindu Dharma?

You must be experiencing now and then that your parents always insist you to do something and to avoid some of the things. Daddy says, “Beta! Raju is your friend. You should not be rude with him!”. Gramdma says, “O Dear! Don’t do this. It is bad!!”. Grandpa says, “Beta! Ye hamse bade hai, chalo inko pranam karo!!”. And mom says, “It is a time for Bala-Gokulam. We should not miss it. Let us get ready!”. And you must be feeling, “Oh! My mom and dad are just crazy!!”. Well! They are not crazy. In fact, they try to teach you what is right and what is wrong. They want you to do only the right thing, in thought, words and deed so that you always be good with everyone and become a good man (or woman) as you grow. As a duty of parents, they try to teach you manners and behavior which is acceptable to the society and to everyone.

In other words, your parents try to teach you a **code of conduct** which is acceptable to everyone. This code of conduct is the Hindu Dharma. Now, you may wrongly think that, “Ok! That is all about Hindu Dharma!”... but that is not. In fact, that (code of conduct) is one of the many many aspects of the Hindu Dharma. Hindu Dharma is so huge and ancient with many many thoughts and aspects. Perhaps, we are too young to understand all aspects of the Hindu Dharma. But let us try to explore some of things here.

Hindu Dharma is known by various names. Each name indicates its important characteristics. Let us try to understand some of them.

**Hindu Dharma is a Sanatana Dharma or Vedik Dharma.** It is said that the foundation of the Hindu Dharma is based on the ancient scriptures Vedas. Vedas describe the basic principles of the life which are eternal such as ‘non-violence’, ‘truth’, ‘non-stealing’, ‘cleanliness’ and ‘control of the senses’. Thus as long as human being exists or life exists, Hindu Dharma will exist. That is why it is a Sanatana (eternal) or Vedik Dharma.

**Hindu Dharma is a compilation of various thoughts.** Unlike other religions, Hindu Dharma did not originate from a single person, a single book or at a single point in time. However, it is evolved by various sages (scholars)

who added more value in it from time to time. Consider Hindu Dharma as a Banyan tree, with its roots representing the Vedas and the Upanishads, the thick trunk symbolizing the spiritual experiences of numerous scholars, its branches representing various theological traditions, and the fruits, in different shapes, symbolizing various sectors and subsectors of it.

**Hindu Dharma is righteousness or duty.** It says to do your duty without involving yourself into immotions or relations and without expecting anything in return. Our scripture, Geeta, says - Do your duty and expect nothing in return. In Mahabharata, Bhishma says, “Don’t do anything that creates a conflict or disharmony”. Always do the right thing that helps to unite all and develop pure divine love and universal brotherhood.

**Hindu Dharma is something that holds together.** ‘Dharma’ is a samskrit word. It means “to hold together”. Anything that keeps the society or entire human being together is a Dharma. Good qualities do not make conflict. One should acquire good qualities so that he/she be likeable to everyone.

**Hindu Dharma is a Vishwa (universal) Dharma.** Our Dharma is truly a universal religion because it is based on basic principles which are applicable not only to Hindus but entire humanity. When a Hindu prays, he does not pray for wealth for himself, his family, his community or Hindu society. Instead he prays for the welfare of all the people of the world. Our all prayers are for the entire humanity and not for a particular sector.

Hindu Dharma is not a closed book. Keeping the basic principles intact, it accepts new changes according to the need of the time. Hindu dharma gives freedom of thoughts. Anybody can practice anything as long as it is not harmful. Religious tolerance is one of it’s virtues. It has a power to assimilate all faiths and beliefs that exist in the world.

After reading this, you must be feeling confident and proud that you belong to the Hindu Dharma. Though Hindu Dharma is complicated, one aspect of it is quite simple to understand which is - whatever good you do is Dharma and whatever bad you do is A-dharma. So, always do good (always do Dharma). Always be nice and humble to everyone. As you grow, you will learn and experience more about the Hindu Dharma. Since ages, our forefathers have retained this treasure. Now it is our turn to do this job.





## Makara Samakranti

The month of January has witnessed several significant events of the history such as birth of Swami (sage) Vivekananda, lord Ganesha, and Martin Luther king. One of the most auspicious days for the Hindus, Makara Samkranti, also falls in the same month, generally on the 14th January. Makara (Capricorn) is a name of one of the 12 signs of zodiac. The analogy of Samkranti is Sama-Kranti. Sama in Samskrita language means balanced, equal or orderly state of existence and kranti means a fundamental change. Briefly, Samakranti means a transition. Thus the basic meaning of the Samkranti is a change towards a balanced life and social setup and brotherhood amongst all individuals.

### Celebrations

Makara Samkranti is celebrated in almost all parts of the Bharat (India). As Bharat is a diverse and multilinguist country, this festival is called by different names in different parts of the country such as 'Pongal', 'Lohri', 'Khichari', 'Paush Samkranti', 'Magha Samkranti', 'Bhogali Bihu'. This festival is also celebrated in different ways. During this day, elders in the family give special gifts to the younger members of the family. Thousands of people fly colorful kites. They also hold kite competitions. Especially kids and youngsters take part in the kite competitions and play enthusiastically. Kite-playing has been a unique and famous game being played in Bharat. People from northern parts of the country get up early in the morning and do the Ganga-Snan (bathing in the waters of the holy river - Ganga) and Surya-pooja (worshipping the Sun). The month January is the peak of the winter. On the eve of Samkranti, people lit huge bonfires around which all friends and relatives gather together. In some parts of the country, a til-gul (a mixture of til - sesame seeds and gul - jagary) is served to friends and family members. In cold days, eating til-gul helps to maintain the body temperature and to keep the health good. Womenfolks, especially recently married ones, invite each other for the get together called 'Haldi-kumkum' and give gifts which are useful in the daily routine. In southern parts of Bharat, it is celebrated by worshipping the god - Sun. The people eat and serve a pongal - a delicious dish



of sweet rice and jaggery. In villages, cows, bullocks and cattle are washed, decorated and worshipped. Birds are fed colorful pongal balls. Bullock cart races are held where the village people get together and participate. There is a tradition of special art called Rangoli, which is drawn during this festival season. This art is done in front of the house with the Rice flour and colors.



As described in the beginning, though Makara Samkranti is being known by different names and celebrated in different ways, the message delivered by it is one and the same and for all. Despite the variety of rituals and customs, there is a unity and homogeneity in the basic concept of this festival.

### Historical Importance

The day of Makara Samkranti has very much historical importance too. It was the day that Pitamaha Bhishma chose to die. It was the day when holy river Ganga flowed down from Heaven to Earth. It was the day when lord Vishnu killed the demons, buried their heads under the Mandar Parvat (mountain) and ended ever increasing terrorism. Just two days before the Makara Samkranti, Swami (a sage) Vivekananda took the birth.

### Social Aspect

On the social ground, Makara Samkranti carries a vital significance for society's welfare. It stands for the brotherhood amongst all individuals which is the basic requisite of the great precepts of liberty and equality. The selfishness, the ultimate destructor of the social fabric can not stand where a spirit of brotherhood; fraternity is alive. As described earlier, it is the tradition to eat and serve til (sesame seeds) and gul (jaggery). Til represents an individual whereas jaggery represents sweetness, love and affection. The paste of jaggery (love and affection) holds all til (individuals) together to form a social harmony. In today's world, where variety of faiths and beliefs exist, this kind of attitude is very much essential. This is the day considered as a time to express gratitude to the elements of mother nature which

Pitamaha Bhishma was one of the greatest characters of an epic Mahabharata. He had a boon to choose the day to die. In the Mahabharata war, he fought with Arjuna. Arjuna wounded him so badly that he could not even move. Even in this wounded condition, he chose to wait for the day of Makara Samakranti to die and he breathed his last on this auspicious day.

help to nurture and enrich human lives. From this day, the duration of sun-light increases and that of night (darkness) decreases. Light symbolizes knowledge, and brighter aspects of our lives and darkness represent ignorance and duller aspects. Thus 'Samakranti' signifies this positive change of increasing the good qualities in us and decreasing the negative ones.

### **Astrological Significance**

As per the Hindu philosophy, the first period of the year (first six months) is called as Uttaraayana. It is also known as northern hemisphere. The second period is called as Dakshinaayana or southern hemisphere. Makara Samkranti is the day when Uttaraayana starts. In other words, it is the day when the Sun changes the direction of its course and starts journey in northern hemisphere. As you know, there are 12 signs of zodiac. Makara (Capricorn) is the first sign that falls in Uttaraayana path; northern hemisphere. Let us consider an example of a train. A train makes a round trip. It reaches the destination, changes its direction and returns back to where it started. Similarly, on this day, the Sun completes the path of Dakshinaayana (southern hemisphere), changes its direction and start journeying Uttaraayana (northern hemisphere). The Sun changes its direction at the point of time when it enters the sign of Makara (Capricorn).

### **Makara Samkranti as a Sangh Utsav**

Makar Samkranti is special for the Bala-Gokulam (Sangh) too. It is considered as one of the six utsavs of the Bala-Gokulam. The Bala-Gokulam focusses on the Makar Samkranti because it promotes brotherhood amongst all individuals which is the need of the time. It is the day of introspection and making resolves for the entire year. In Sangh, the new adhikari gana is initiated and utsav is rounded off by distributing til-gul at the end.

### **Highlights of the Makara Samkranti**

- 1) Makara Samkranti is known by various names and celebrated in various ways.
- 2) It stands for a change towards balanced life and social setup. It promotes brotherhood amongst all individuals.
- 3) Uttarayana is a brighter part (wisdom) and Dakshinayana is a darker part (ignorance). The Sun's journey from Uttarayana to Dakshinayana indicates journey from ignorance to wisdom.
- 4) It is one of the six Sangh utsavs.



## Bharatiya (Indian) Flag

The Bharatiya (Indian) flag is in tri-color; deep saffron at the top, white in the middle and dark green at the bottom in equal proportions. It is called as Tiranga (tri-color). Each color has its own significance. Saffron color stands for courage, sacrifice and the spirit of renunciation. The white color stands for truth, purity where as green color stands for peace and prosperity. The Ashoka Chakra (wheel) represents the Laws of Dharma (righteousness).

Let us try to make our own Tiranga.

a) Purchase a white sheet of construction paper from any craft store. Cut it out in to a shape of horizontal rectangle.



b) Make three equal portions of the rectangle you made by drawing two horizontal lines. Using markers or crayons, color each portion of the rectangle; top portion with saffron color, middle portion with white color and bottom portion with Green color.

c) Draw a spinning wheel in the middle of the flag as shown in the picture.

d) Purchase small wood stick (similar to pipe-cleaners but little wider and longer) from a craft store. Glue that stick to the left back side of the flag as shown in the picture. Spare some portion of the stick from the bottom so that you can hold it.

Your “Tiranga” is ready!!!

## -: Exercise :-

**Match the Pairs**

- |                            |                          |
|----------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1) Bala-Gokulam            | 1) Tri-color             |
| 2) Makara                  | 2) Northern Hemisphere   |
| 3) Hindu Dharma            | 3) HSS or Sangh          |
| 4) Bharatiya (Indian) flag | 4) Southern Hemisphere   |
| 5) Uttarayana              | 5) Gathering of children |
| 6) Dakshinayana            | 6) Universal religion    |
| 7) Hindu Swayamsevak Sangh | 7) Samakranti            |

**Fill up the blanks**

- 1) Makara Samakranti festival falls in the month of \_\_\_\_\_.  
a) February    b) March    c) May    d) January
- 2) Bharatiya (Indian) flag contains saffron, white and \_\_\_\_\_ colors.  
a) black    b) green    c) yellow    d) None of these
- 3) Makara Samakranti is also called as \_\_\_\_\_.  
a) Deepavali    b) Pongal    c) Holi    d) None of these
- 4) One of the many aspects of \_\_\_\_\_ Dharma is a code of conduct.  
a) Hindu    b) Islam    c) Christianity    d) None of these
- 5) Makara Samakranti is the day when \_\_\_\_\_ starts.  
a) Uttarayana    b) Dakshinayana    c) both    d) None of these
- 6) \_\_\_\_\_ is a place where lord Krishna spent his childhood.  
a) Mathura    b) Gokulam    c) Ayodhya    d) None of these
- 7) Hindu Dharma is an \_\_\_\_\_ religion.  
a) National    b) Regional    c) Universal    d) None of these

**Objective Questions**

1) The Bala-Gokulam is a forum of what organization?

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2) What is the objective of the Bala-Gokulam?

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3) Describe at least two characteristics of the Hindu Dharma?

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4) Describe the anology and briefly the meaning of Makara Samakranti.

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5) Describe briefly the social aspect of the Makara Samakranti.

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## Questions for research

(Note that the answers to these questions may not be found in this curriculum. It is expected that you get those answers from other sources such as Parents, Shikshaks, Books or Internet)

- 1) What is RSS? (**Hint:** similar to HSS)

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- 2) How many Bala-Gokulams we have in USA?

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- 3) Which are the festivals that fall in the month of January?  
Hint: Makara Samakranti

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## Shloka

## शान्ति मंत्र (shAnti maMtra)

ॐ सह नाववतु सह नौ भुनक्तु । om saha nAvavatu saha nau bhunaktu |  
 सह विर्यम् करवावहै । saha viryam karavAvahai |  
 तेजस्विनावधीतमस्तु । tejasvinAvadhItamastu |  
 मा विद्विषावहै । mAvidvishavahaI |  
 ॐ शान्तिः शान्तिः शान्तिः ॥ om shanti shanti shanti ||

Om! May the Lord protect us; May He give us joy; May we exert together;  
 May our efforts be successful; May we never be jealous of each other.

## गायत्री मंत्र (gAyatrI maMtra)

ॐ भूर्भुवः स्वः om bhUrbhUvaH svaH  
 तत्सवितुर्वरेण्यं । tatsaviturvareNyaM |  
 भर्गोदेवस्य धीमहि bhargodevasya dhImahi  
 धियो यो न प्रचोदयात् ॥ dhiyo yo na prachodayAt ||

Om! Let us meditate upon the glory of Ishwara, who has created this universe, who is worthy to be worshipped, who is the remover of all sins and ignorance. May He enlighten our intellect..

## Subhashitam (Words of wisdom)

आचार्यदेवो भव । अतिथिदेवो भव ।

aachAryadevo bhava . atithidevo bhava .

**Meaning:** Honor Guru as a God. Honor guest as a God.

## Amrutvachan (Quotes)

(Every now and then, evil elements tried to harm the Sangh. But Shri Guruji never ever harbored any bitterness against those who harmed Sangh. While explaining this attitude, he said.....)

“Once in a way by accident the teeth may bite the tongue; but on that account we do not knock them down. If one leg trips the other, are we to cut that leg? Those who have harmed us are very much our own people, not outsiders. Hence let us forget and forgive.”

- Shri Guruji Golwalkar



## Do you know that.....

Shri Guruji Golwalkar was born on February 19th, 1906. His full name was Madhav Sadashiv Golwalkar. He was a great philosopher, thinker and the second Sar-Sanghachalak (chief) of Sangh. He spread the Sangh-work all over India.

## Geet

### चलो भाई चलो (Chalo bhai chalo)

चलो भाई चलो शाखा मे चलो । थोड़ी देर अब तुम सब काम भूलो  
चलो भाई चलो संग संग चलो । आज के दिन ज़रा हसो और खेलो ॥

राम कृष्ण के वारीस हम । गर्व से कहते हिंदू हम  
भगवा ध्वज है पूज्य परम । वन्दन उसे करो संग संग चलो ॥

सीता का मातृत्व हमे । शौर्य लक्ष्मि का है तन मे  
मौसीजी की आन हमे । आगे बढो और संग संग चलो ॥

छोटे छोटे बच्चे हम । काम बडा करेंगे हम  
धरम की रक्षा करेंगे हम । कहेंगे वन्दे मातरम ॥

शाखा मे है Real Fun । कबडी खो खो मे रमता मन  
करो योग भूलो गम । कदम मिला ओ संग संग चलो ॥

Chalo bhai chalo Shaakha me chalo, Thodi der ab tum sab kaam bhulo

Chalo bhai chalo sang sang chalo, Aj ke din zaraa haso aur khelo ॥

Raam Krishna ke vaaris ham, Garv se kahate hindu hai ham

Bhagvaa dhvaj hai puja param, Vandan use karo sang sang chalo ॥

Jijaa kaa maatritva hame, Shaurya lakshmi kaa hai tan me

Mausiji ki aan hame, Aage bado aur sang sang chalo ॥

Chote chote bachche ham, Kaam badaa karenge ham

Dharam ki rakshaa karenge ham, Kahenge vande maataram ॥

Shaakhaa me hai REAL FUN, Kabaddi kho kho me ramtaa man

Karo yoga bhulo gam, Kadam milao sang sang chalo ॥



# Shri Guruji Golwalkar

A young man, just graduated from college, was surrounded by various questions about his future and career. One question was always bugging him, “What is the goal of my life? Should I do a job and get married just like everyone does?” His parents wanted him to do a job and get married. Doctorji was meticulously trying to bring him in the Sangh fold. He liked Doctorji and his Sangh as well; but he was more leaned towards spirituality. And at one fine morning, he disappeared!! Quietly, without telling anybody, not even to his parents, he went to his Guru - Swami Akhandananda and expressed his desire of becoming a “Sannyasi”. But Swamiji sent him back to work with Doctorji. Who was this young man? Yes!! Madhav Sadashiv Golwalkar!! Our Guruji!!!

## Childhood

Madhav was born in 1906 at Ramtek near Nagpur city of Bharat (India). February 19th was his birth-day. To his parents, he was their beloved ‘Madhu’. Whenever his parents sat for worship, little Madhav too sat beside them and learnt the Mantras by heart. Just like Swami Vivekananda, Madhu had a stupendous memory. He could recall whatever he once heard and read. He had a thirst to learn and understand everything that came in his way.

## School years

Madhav was rather mischievous, but always good in studies as well as in sports. he would read his textbook assignments at home, using his time at school to study other subjects. However, he never lagged behind in his school studies. In fact, he was always the first to reply to any question asked by the teachers. Madhu was an exceptional student in middle school and high school. In addition, Madhu’s high school gym instructor was particularly proud because Madhu excelled in sports and athletics as well.

As Madhav grew older, his father was transferred to different places from time to time. As a result, Madhav lived in several different places, but he viewed these as fresh opportunities to enlarge his circle of friends. He would maintain contact with friends after leaving a town through letters. Naturally, he would always be surrounded by his friends. Though his mother language was Marathi, he was well familiar with Sanskrit, Hindi, and English too. He wrote letters to his friends in

English!

## College years

In 1924, Madhav graduated from the college with a first-class ranking in intermediate science. He later went to Kashi (a city in Eastern Bharat) and joined Benares Hindu University for his bachelor degree. He studied extraneous subjects like sociology, zoology and economics. His room was full of books, and he was always reading. When he was not reading, Madhav would be engaged in discussions with friends, or swimming in the mornings and yogasanas in the evenings. He would also help their friends with their class assignments and studies. He also learned to play flute and sitar. During that time, he also studied the literature of Swami Ramakrishna Paramhansa and Swami Vivekananda. Despite his extracurricular activities, Madhav completed his bachelor of science degree in 1926 and master of science degree with distinction in 1928.

Later, Madhav went to Madras (City in Southern Bharat) to continue his studies, enrolling in a doctoral program in fishery sciences. At about that time, Madhav's father retired and he did not have the income to support him in Madras. With a heavy heart, Madhav returned to Nagpur, without his doctorate.

Madhav came back to Nagpur. During this time, he also came in contact with Doctorji. Doctorji would attract any person towards him through his affability and magnetic personality. Naturally, Madhav liked Doctorji and his Sangh too. Madhavrao keenly observed activities which occurred in the daily Sangh shakha: prayer, exercises, sports, discussions and other intellectual activities conducive to nationalist thinking. These activities were dear to his heart and he became part of the Sangh. During this time, though Madhav shouldered many responsibilities, his mind was wandering somewhere else!

## Prof. Golwalkar 'Guruji'

After a short time in Nagpur, Madhav received a letter in May, 1930: "Shri M. S. Golwalkar is hereby appointed as professor of zoology in Kashi Hindu Vidyapeeth." His parents were overjoyed that their ambition had been fulfilled. Madhav again left for Kashi to become Professor Golwalkar.

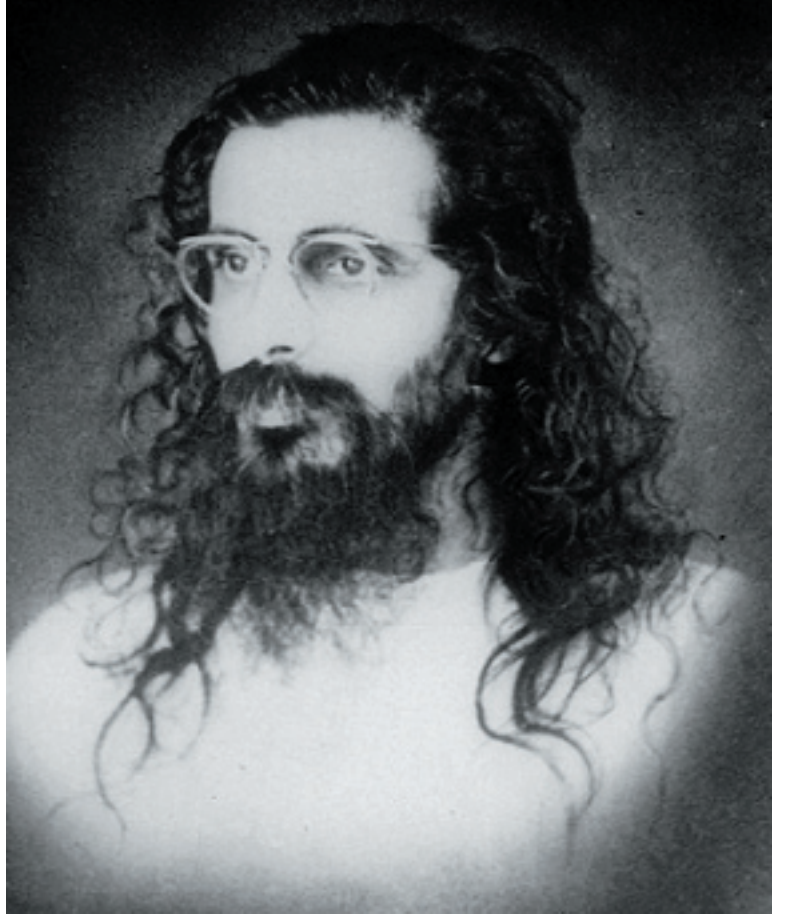
As a professor, Madhav was a strict disciplinarian. With his sharp intellect and clarity of thought, he was a class apart from other professors there. Every single activity in his routine had an assigned place and schedule. Having himself

Shree Guruji's inner urge was for spiritual pursuit. Had he not become the Sarasanghachalak of the Sangh, he would have become a Sannyasi.

experienced poverty in boyhood, he was ever eager to help the poor and needy students in all possible ways. Even though he was a professor of zoology, he tutored needy students in other subjects after hours with a view to helping them. Consequently, he came to be endearingly called as “Guruji.”

### Turning point

It is natural for a young employed man in his early twenties to think of his future, whom he would marry, where would he work, and the like. But Guruji was different. On the contrary, he cherished a desire to take to sannyasa, and go to the Himalayas for penance. And at one fine morning, he disappeared!! Quietly, without telling anybody, not even to his parents, he went to his



Guru - Swami Akhandananda and expressed his desire of becoming a “Sannyasi”.

Swami Akhandananda kept Guruji in his Ashram for few days. But soon he realized that Guruji was made for a noble cause. After consulting with his associate Swami Amitabh Maharaj, he advised Guruji, “Madhav, Sannyasa is not your destiny. Another great cause awaits you.” Swamiji thus ordained Guruji for the service of Bharat Mata. Now Guruji was completely convinced. He found his goal of life. He gave up his desire of being a “sannyasi” and went back to Nagpur. Doctorji was the happiest person to see Guruji back in Nagpur.

Guruji, then, spent all his life in expanding the Sangh work throughout Bharat (India). After the sad demise of Doctorji, he assumed the office of Sarasanghachalak (chief) of the Sangh. After becoming a Sarasanghachalak, Guruji steered the Sangh for 33 years (1940-1973) as its guide and philosopher. Shree Guruji breathed his last on 5th June 1973.





## Shri Guruji - Pioneer of the Sangh

As learnt from the previous chapter, Shri Madhav Sadashiv Golwalkar (Shri Guruji) was a man of great personality. His inner urge was for spiritual pursuit. But after the advice by his spiritual Guru, Swami Akhandananda, he made up his mind that he would make some concrete contribution for the wellbeing of the country (Bharat), serving the society in a spirit of worship. This needed a specific field of activity. He had already seen Doctorji and experienced his Sangh. Now, he began to take more interest in the work begun by Doctorji. The patriotic instinct, which he had developed in his heart at Kashi, grew further as he came in contact with Sangh.

Doctorji assigned Guruji a responsibility of one shakha in Nagpur. However, he noticed Guruji's inexhaustible enthusiasm and devotion to the Sangh-work. He continued to assign him more and more bigger responsibilities. For example, he asked Guruji to go to Mumbai (a city in Western India) as a 'Pracharak' (missionary). Soon, Guruji became one of the main pillars of Sangh-work.

### **Guruji – Sarasanghchalak (chief) of the Sangh**

In early 1940, Doctorji suffered illness. His health seemed beyond recovery. Guruji remained with him like a shadow, nursed him, and served him till his end. Doctorji passed on the responsibility of Sangh work to the able shoulders of Guruji after he died on June 21, 1940.

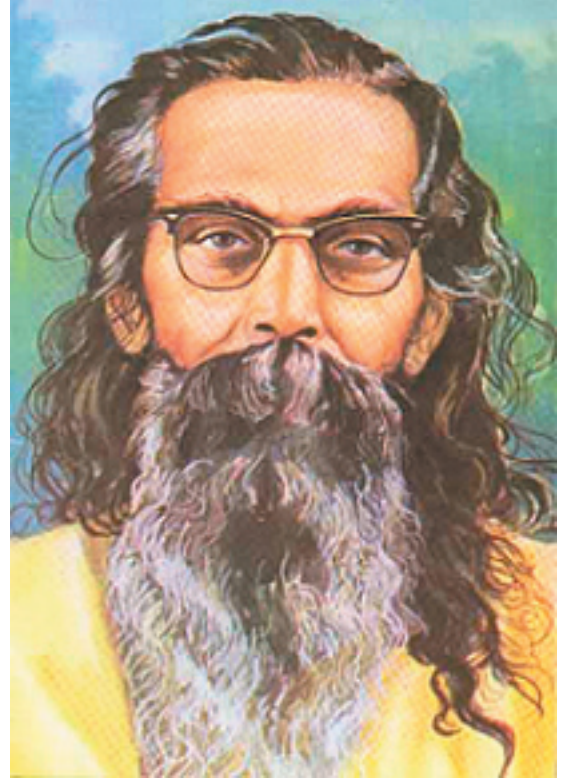
Guruji assumed the office of Sarsanghchalak (Chief) of the Sangh after Doctorji's funeral rites were completed. Guruji was rather new in the Sangh as compared to other associates. He was not much recognized in the India also. This obviously raised doubts in the minds of many well-wishers and others. They were little doubtful about Guruji's capabilities. Someone questioned, "How can Doctorji give such a big responsibility to such a relatively new (junior) person like Guruji?". But soon everyone realized about Guruji's ability and capability and praised Doctorji that he did a right thing by giving leadership of the Sangh to Guruji.

Shri Guruji made the Sangh-work the sole purpose of his life. He changed his life-style and nature as per needs of the Sangh. He also gradually tried to overcome his weaknesses.



As a Sarasanghchalak, Guruji gave a first message to karyakartas: “Let us not depend on any external instruments or sources of power. Let us draw inspiration from the memory of our beloved leader (Doctorji) and his burning patriotism. Let us fulfill our mission with firm faith and let us strive hard to achieve our objective of ensuring a pride of place to Hindu Rashtra on the world stage.” Guruji pursued this goal tirelessly until the very end.

After becoming Sarasanghachalak, Guruji steered the organisation for 33 years (1940-1973) as its guide and philosopher. He began the first of several countrywide, meticulously planned tours. During each journey Guruji was like a wandering sannyasi, spending each night in a different city or village. He ceaselessly participated in camps, rallies, meetings, discussions, and training-camps making contact with thousands of young men, educating them about the significance of the Sangh work and instilling in them a missionary zeal for their wholehearted involvement in the task of national rejuvenation. Indeed, in response, thousands of swayamsevaks all over the India vowed to dedicate themselves entirely for the Sangh work, on a full-time basis. Thus Sangh Shakhas sprouted even in remote corners of the India.



Guruji had clarity in his thoughts, purposefulness in action, firm faith in mental and physical powers, and a fearless disposition developed through his intellectual integrity. Because of his inspiring personality, apart from the Sangh Shakha network, which spread far and wide, a number of affiliates (organizations) also began to sprout forth one after another spreading Sangh ideology. Few handful names are: Vidyarthi Parishad, and Bharateeya Mazdoor Sangh, Vishwa Hindu Parishad, and Bharateeya Vanavasi Kalyan Ashram. To all these, Guruji was the source - figure and a guide.

In the meantime, Guruji also had to protect the growing Sangh from the hostile and evil elements. The Sangh went through some bitter experiences. During the year 1947, Indian Government put ban on the Sangh for some reasons. Courageous Shri

Guruji was traveling throughout the Bharat at least twice a year for the Sangh work. In those days, he was the only person who used to travel so much.....

Shri Guruji has written thousands of letters to his fellow associates and others. He has given hundreds of press statements and delivered countless discourses in his lifetime. Isn't it great?

Guruji advised all karyakartas to start Satyagraha (agitation within constitution). His cardinal faith was that "Ultimately Truth alone triumphs." At last, Government had to lift ban on the Sangh. After that, every now and then, evil elements kept trying to harm the Sangh with false accusations and propanganda. But under the able leadership of Shri Guruji, Sangh not only defended itself against them but also emerged as a strong force serving the society (and eventually India). During this time, Shri Guruji personally went through bitter experiences. Despite all these, he never harbored even the slightest bitterness in his minds about those responsible for causing him harm and injustice.

Shri Guruji was not a blind follower of the Hindu principles. He never supported rituals and traditions which were baseless or meaningless. With the pace of time, Hindu society adapted many unacceptable beliefs such as castism and untouchability. Shri Guruji tried to eradicate those things via Sangh and its affiliates.

Because of his intimate contact with the common people and the elite all over Bharat, he always had his finger on the pulse - beat of India. He used to quickly analyze the situation and predict about likely dangers or issues or consequences of the current situation in future. Accordingly, he used to forewarn or advise the society and Indian Government.

Due to relentless traveling for the Sangh work, Shri Guruji gradually developed bodily ailments. In 1969, Doctors identified a cancer in his chest. Though Guruji underwent dreaded operation, he knew that his days were coming to end. Guruji maintained his calm and poise. In spite of his illness, he never deviated but continued working. At the end, he passed on the stewardship to the shoulders of Shri Balasaheb Deoras (Madhukar Dattatreya Deoras). Guruji breathed his last on 5th June 1973.



Shri Guruji's inspiring and attractive personality brought thousands of people for his lectures. In those days, only Pandit Nehru (Prime Minister of India) and Shri Guruji pulled such a huge crowd for their lectures.



## Vasant Panchami

Vasant Panchami is the spring festival. In Samskrit, 'Vasant' means 'Spring (season)' and 'Panchami' means fifth day. As the name indicates, this festival falls on the fifth day of the Hindu month Magh (February) which is the beginning of the spring season. This festival is dedicated to Saraswati, the goddess of knowledge and wisdom. SHE is considered as feminine counterpart of Lord Brahma.

Hindu Dharma, being more a way of life rather than a religion, is demure to the special significance of seasons in our lives through religious festivals. Vasant Panchami signifies the beginning of spring season. Vasant is the season when nature is at its beautiful and bountiful best. Flowers are in full bloom and trees sprout new shoots. It is a season when nature regenerates and every thing is fresh and new. New life is evident in the woods and fields. Wheat and other crops enliven with new life and vitality. Mustard fields turn into a heady mix of yellow and green as the blossoms add color, poetry and romance to life.

Indeed, yellow color has special importance on this day. Saraswati is usually shown as the fair skinned eternally young goddess, dressed in white and yellow garments. SHE has four hands. SHE is holding a book in one hand and a japamala in another hand. SHE is playing a *Veena* (musical instrument) with other two hands. "Book" symbolizes the Vedas (spiritual knowledge and wisdom) and "japamala" symbolizes meditation and contemplation or concentration. SHE is elegantly sitting on a lotus which symbolizes creation (life), love and kindness. The white swan, that accompanies HER, symbolizes purity and peace. As a patron of Arts, SHE plays a song on the instrument *Veena*.

All HER characteristics symbolizes that she is a Goddess of learning, wisdom and all kinds of knowledge including science. SHE is the master of the 64 arts, of which the art of love is the first and most important. It is said that SHE is the energy of Lord Brahma. With HER knowledge, SHE helps Lord Brahma in generation of the world. SHE represents



Saraswati is a goddess of learning, wisdom and knowledge including arts, and science. SHE is the energy of Lord Brahma. When Brahma creates a new world, Saraswati helps HIM with HER knowledge. Together, they generate a new world. Thus knowledge and wisdom are directly linked to the creation or origin.

creativity and inspiration and presents herself when the weather is complacent and Nature is in its full grandeur. Vasant is therefore a season of inspiration and passion.

Hindu people puts the Learned (scholars) on a higher pedestal than even the king. **A King is honored within his Kingdom only, whereas the Learned is respected, even worshipped everywhere.** For example, Gautam Buddha and Guru Nanak, are better known today than the kings of their times.

Schools, colleges and other educational institutions organize special worship of Saraswati and other cultural activities. In this regards, Bhangra competition in Punjab province of Bharat is quite famous. Great scholar of Bharat, Pandit Madan Mohan Malviya laid the foundation of Kashi Hindu Vishwa Vidyalaya (also called Banaras Hindu University- BHU) on this day of Vasant Panchami which has now become a world class academic institution.

It is customary to begin a child's education on this day. Before starting, the children are expected to recite the following shloka -

*Saraswathi Namastubhyam Varade Kamarupini  
Vidyarambam Karishyami Sidhirbhavatu Mesada*

**Meaning:** Oh Saraswati, sitting on the beautiful Lotus flower, I am beginning my education, so always bless me.

## Celebrations by Hindu people

Another name of this festival is *Vasantotsav* (Vasant + Utsav (festival)). In some parts of Bharat, it is also called as Basant (not Vasant) Panchami. The origin of this festival may be traced as far back as ancient times. The festival is celebrated grandly throughout Bharat in different ways. With the onset of spring, people gear themselves for celebrations. The people wear yellow dresses. The men and boys wear yellow turbans or yellow shirts and the women and girls yellow *chunries* or *duppattas*.



They get together and erect a special dias for this day. They hold puja and community lunch there. Kite flying is popular on this day. As the festival comes close, kite-makers get busy in making kites. Different colors and sizes of kites start flying in the open and clear blue sky.

In some traditional homes sweet dishes are exchanged with relatives and friends. A dash of saffron is added to the sweet dishes to get a yellow tinge. *Kesari halwa* and *Kesari* sweet rice are the favorites in Northern Bharat. Many people go to temple to offer *halwa* or sweet rice as a *prasad* to the God.

Vasant is associated with freshness and a new beginning in all spheres of life. An old Hindi film song says, "Aayee jhoom ke Basant, jhoomo sang sang mein" (The merry spring is here and let us sway together) The end of harsh winter makes a new spring all the more welcomed. There is a song on every lip with a new confidence in every heart to chart a new course. This is a time when everyone gets together to celebrate and enjoy life.

Vasant Panchami is therefore a festival full of religious, seasonal and social significance and is celebrated by Hindu people all over the world with new sense of optimism.

### Highlights of Vasant Panchami

- 1) **Vasant Panchami festival falls in the month of February.**
- 2) **Vasant Panchami is dedicated to the Goddess Saraswati.**
- 3) **Saraswati is the Goddess of Learning, knowledge and wisdom.**
- 4) **Saraswati is the energy of Lord Brahma. SHE helps Lord Brahma in the creation of new world.**
- 5) **It is said that Hindus should chant Saraswati *shloka* before study.**



### Do you know that.....

Our scriptures have lot of references about a river named Saraswati. River was named after the Goddess Saraswati. Just like Ganga, Saraswati river was the holy river for all Hindus. Today, we do not see this river in Bharat. It is said that this river was eroded because of catastrophe.

## Heart Magnet

Mother is honored as a God in our Hindu culture. She teaches us the very first lesson of the life. She not only nurtures but also helps us in our hard time. Thus everyone should respect mother. Let us try to learn how to make a heart magnet that can be presented to mother on mother's day.

a) The heart shaped wood piece and the magnet can be bought in pieces or rolls (which can then be cut into pieces) at any craft store.

b) Decorate the heart wood with stickers/markers/crayons/glitter etc. In the center of the heart, write a message - Maatru Devo Bhava - with the marker or place readymade labels if available.

c) Put the magnet on the back of the wood and it's set to go on your fridge or any other place in your home.



## -: Exercise :-

**Match the Pairs**

- |                       |                             |
|-----------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1) Shri Guruji        | 1) Musical Instrument       |
| 2) Vasant Panchami    | 2) alone triumphs           |
| 3) Saraswati          | 3) Guruji's spiritual Guru  |
| 4) Veena              | 4) Bhava                    |
| 5) Ultimately Truth   | 5) Madhav                   |
| 6) Swami Akhandananda | 6) Spring Festival          |
| 7) Matru Devo         | 7) The Goddess of Knowledge |

**Fill up the blanks**

- 1) Shri Guruji was born in \_\_\_\_\_ of 1906.  
a) 19th Feb    b) 20th Feb    c) 1st Apr    d) None of these
- 2) Vasant Panchami falls in the Hindu month of \_\_\_\_\_ (February).  
a) Kartik    b) Magh    c) Phalgun    d) None of these
- 3) Madhav Sadashiv \_\_\_\_\_ was Shri Guruji's full name.  
a) Keshav    b) Madhav    c) Golwalkar    d) None of these
- 4) Vasant means \_\_\_\_\_ and Panchami means \_\_\_\_\_.  
a) Winter    b) Spring    c) First day    d) Fifth day
- 5) Vasant Panchami festival is dedicated to the Goddess \_\_\_\_\_.  
a) Lakshami    b) Saraswati    c) Durga    d) None of these
- 6) Sarasanghachalak means the \_\_\_\_\_ chief of the Sangh.  
a) Secretary    b) Chief    c) Treasurer    d) None of these
- 7) The Goddess Saraswati is the energy of the \_\_\_\_\_.  
a) Vishnu    b) Brahma    c) Shiva    d) None of these

**Objective Questions**

1) Write down first two lines of Shanti Mamtra (shloka).

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2) Write down first two lines of Gayatri Mamtra (shloka)

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3) What is the Goddess Saraswati known for?

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4) How is the Vasant Panchami celebrated?

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5) What do you know about river Saraswati?

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6) Describe any three virtues of Shri Guruji?

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7) What was Shri Guruji's inner pursuit?

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8) Who became the chief of the Sangh after Shri Guruji passed away?

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### **Questions for research**

(Note that answers to these questions may not be found in this curriculum. It is expected that you get those answers from other sources such as Parents, Books or Internet)

1) What is meant by - Matru Devo Bhava ?

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2) Which are the festivals that fall in the month of February?

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## Shloka

### Verse from Bhagvad-Geeta

यदा यदा हि धर्मस्य	yadA yadA hi dharmasya
ग्लानिर्भवति भारत ।	glAnirbhavati bhArata
अभ्युत्थानमधर्मस्य	abhyutthAnamadharmaSya
तदाऽऽत्मानं सृजाम्यहम् ॥	tadA.a.atmAnaM sR^iujAmyaham

**Meaning:** (O Arjuna !), whenever there is a decline of righteousness and predominant rise in unrighteousness, then I manifest myself. (This shloka is recited in the praise of Lord Krishna)

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### Verse from Bhagvad-Geeta

परित्राणाय साधूनां	paritrANaya sAdhUnAM
विनाशाय च दुष्कृताम् ।	vinAshAya cha duShkR^itAm
धर्मसंस्थापनार्थाय	dharmasaMsthApanArthAya
संभवामि युगे युगे ॥	saMbhavAmi yuge yuge

**Meaning:** For the protection of the virtuous, for the annihilation of the miscreants, and for reestablishing Dharma (righteousness) on a firm footing. I make Myself appear from age to age.

## Subhashitam (Words of wisdom)

विद्याधनं सर्वधनप्रधानम् ।

vidyAdhanaM sarvadhanapradhAnam.

**Meaning:** Wealth of knowledge is the supreme wealth.

## Amrutvachan (Quotes)

Fire is the symbol of yajna in which all our bodily desires and propersities are offered in the pure and blazing flame of spiritual enlightenment lit within our hearts.

- **Shri H.V. Sheshadri**

(Shri Sheshadriji said this while describing significance of the festival Holi. It means: the way we burn huge bundles of wood (waste material) on Holi festival, we should also burn our materialstic desires)

## Do you know that.....

Two important festivals of Hindus, Holi (Dhulivandan) and Mahashivaratri, fall in the month of March. Holi is a festival of colors. It is celebrated by sprinkling different colors at each other and lighting huge bone-fires. Mahashivaratri is celebrated by worshipping Lord Shiva.

# Geet

## MUKTA HO GAGAN SADAA

Mukta Ho Gagan Sadaa Swarg See Bane Mahee  
Sangh Sadhanaa Yahee Sangh Sadhanaa Yahee

Vyakti Vyakti Ko Jutaa Divya Sampadaa Badhee  
Dharma Bhakti Jwaar Laa Sangh Shakti Aa Rahee  
Bhavya Divya Roopkee Ishta Sadhanaa Yahee  
Sangh Sadhanaa Yahee Sangh Sadhanaa Yahee (1)

Jaati Bhinna-Bhinna Vesh Bhasha-Bhinnataa Dhanee  
Vividhtaa Men Ekataa Hindu Maalikaa Banee  
Sainkado Salil Milaa Gangadhaar Jyon Bahee  
Sangh Sadhanaa Yahee Sangh Sadhanaa Yahee (2)

Dharma-bhoomi Punya-bhoomi Karma-bhoomi Moksha Bhoo  
Vishwa Men Pratham Rahee Artha-Kaam-Siddha Bhoo  
Sanghatita Prayatna Se Ho Punah Pratham Wahee  
Sangh Sadhanaa Yahee Sangh Sadhanaa Yahee (3)

### Meaning

Let us bring the the heavenly happiness onto the earth, through the free and open sky.  
This is the aim of Sangh work.

By bringing together different individuals and increasing the spiritual wealth, the strength of Sangh is bringing in the tide of righteousness. The desire is to create a mighty and divine society.

Different castes, different dresses, different languages are like different flowers in the garland of Hinduism. Such is the unity in diversity. Just like many small rivers join in to make the mighty flow of the river Ganga.

The pious land, the holy land, the land of duty and action, the land of salvation (Bharatmaata) and the land as a means of fulfillment had always been ahead in this world. By collective effort, we will again lead the way.



## Activities of the Bala-Gokulam

All organizations try to achieve their goal by various means (methods) such as setting up lectures, hold awareness or educational camps, publish books, campaigning through media, etc. Bala-Gokulam (or HSS) also has its own method - regular shakha (gathering). Regular shakha is the most visible symbol of the Bala-Gokulam. Shakha, in simple term means, coming together regularly and doing some activities that will ensure physical, intellectual, social and spiritual development of all participants. Some activities are described here -

### **Bauddhik Activities:**

As mentioned earlier, Bala-Gokulam is a place where you can learn, understand and practice Hindu values and samskaras via various bauddhik activities. Bauddhik activities not only give education but also help to acquire variety of qualities such a oratory skills, acting skills, debating, etc. Bauddhik activities include –

- 1) Story telling
- 2) Bauddhik (lectures) by elders or knowledgeable persons on various subjects
- 3) Shloka, Bhajan learning and chanting
- 4) Charcha (discussion) on various topics
- 5) Skits
- 6) Hindu Jeopardy/Quiz
- 7) Learning Bharatiya languages and Devnagari script.
- 8) Projects to improve creativity and imagination. Project includes -
  - ◆ Clay Modeling - Especially making icon of Ganesh for Ganesh Pooja.
  - ◆ Rangoli - Demonstration and some hands on training.
  - ◆ Projects on modeling temples with cardboard, foam, sticks, etc.
  - ◆ Arts and Crafts. Art of Skit writing and acting
  - ◆ Preparing posters on different topics.

### **Physical Activities:**

Physical activities include various games, yoga, surya-namaskar, drill, and exercise. Everyone enjoys physical activities the most. It is said that... good thoughts can be flourished only in the healthy body. Evil makes home in the deceased body. Physical activities ensure not only a good health but also improve variety of skills such as efficiency, stamina, elasticity, confidence, etc. These activities also help to acquire leadership qualities such as decision making, quick analysis, and working as a team. These activities automatically create a bond and love amongst all individuals. They also motivate the children to stay committed to the regular Bala-Gokulam classes and partake in the Hindu community events.

### **Special Events**

#### **Festivals**

Bala-Gokulam organizes special events such as celebration of festivals, picnic, community service. Festivals like Ganesh Pooja, Raksha Bandhan and Guru Pooja are celebrated with a special focus on children. Children are encouraged to perform the pooja by themselves and understand the meaning behind the celebration of festivals.

#### **Camps**

Vacation can be magical. That's the time to explore, enjoy and make more friends. Bala-Gokulam conducts various camps such as Hindu Heritage Camps, Family Camps, and picnic during the vacations or any weekends. These camps surely a favorite event for the children. Such frequent get-to-gethers increase bond amongst families and thus help to keep the society united.

#### **Community Service**

Sewa or service is the best way to realize the divinity in all and serve the needy. Bala-Gokulam encourages children to do service (sewa) in their capacity. Visiting elderly people in convalescent hospital and children's wards in hospitals, volunteering at Hindu temples, visiting temples in other areas are the few examples.

The Bala-Gokulam is instrumental in providing the necessary cultural and religious education to the Hindu children via these activities so that they may retain and be proud of their Hindu identity. Activities are not limited. The Bala-Gokulam volunteers are free to conduct any other activity than what described above to achieve its objective.





# HOLI

“Hurray, the spring’s back! — HOLI HAI.....” – words strike on ears. At first, it does not click and then suddenly we figure out, “Oh! It is a Holi Festival!!!”. Holi! Indeed, it is a great spring festival. It falls in the Hindu month of Phalgun (Feb-March) that is right after the Vasant Panchami. The way Deepavali is a festival of lights, Holi is a festival of colors. Like all other festivals, Holi also has some legends associated with it. But one legend is quite interesting. Perhaps, the word ‘Holi’ is evolved from this legend. Let us look at it.

This legend is about the king Hiranyakashipu, his son – Prahlad and his sister – Holika. The king was a bad guy. He commanded everyone to worship him. But his little son Prahlad refused to do so. Instead he became a devotee of Lord Vishnu. King asked Holika to punish Prahlad. Holika, possessing the power to walk through fire unharmed, picked up Prahlad and walked into a fire. Prahlad, however, chanted the names of Lord Vishnu and was saved from the fire. Holika perished because she did not know that her powers were only effective if she entered the fire alone.

## Celebrations

Holi is celebrated in memory of the immortal love of Krishna and Radha. Child Krishna, Radha and his friends used to celebrate Holi by singing songs, enjoying swinging and sprinkling *Gulal* (colored powder) at each other. The same tradition is continued even today.

Holi is an occasion that brings in unadulterated joy, fun and of course, lots of bright colors to make a festive graffiti on every heart. With winter neatly tucked up in the attic, it’s time to come out of our cocoons and enjoy this spring festival. The images of Krishna and his consort Radha are often carried through the streets on this day.

During Holi, images of Holika are burnt in keeping with the legend of Prahlad and Holika. The evening is celebrated by lighting huge bonfires as part of the community celebration when people gather near the fire to fill the air with folk songs and dances. People clean their homes, remove all dirty articles from around the house and burn



**Holi is a festival of colors. Holi means forget enmity and embrace each other. It means burn your ego, lust and ignite cosmic love, selflessness and truthfulness.**



them. It is believed that disease-breeding bacteria are thereby destroyed and sanitary condition of the locality is improved. People take a little fire from this bonfire to their homes. They believe that their homes will be rendered pure, and their bodies free from disease.

The next day is most energetic and fun. Everyone get set to paint each other in the colors of joy. Children, youth, men and women visit each other's homes. *Gulal* are thrown into the air and smeared on each other's faces and bodies. *Pichkaris* and water balloons are

filled with colors and spurted onto people. Even, the enemies forget their enmity and embrace each other. The funny thing is that anybody can sprinkle colors on anybody. Nobody feels offended. In case, if somebody feels offended, you can get away by saying, "*Bura na mano, Holi hai!*" (Don't mind, it's Holi!). It is just like the April Fool's Day. Young people pay their respects to elders by sprinkling some colors on their feet, some powder is also smeared on the faces of the deities, especially Krishna and Radha.



Holi has social importance too. The social aspect is the uniting of the great and the small, of the rich and the poor. It is also the uniting of equals. The festival teaches us to "let the dead bury the dead". Holi also means "sacrifice". Burn all the impurities of the mind, such as egoism, vanity and lust, through the fire of devotion and knowledge. Ignite cosmic love, mercy, generosity, selflessness, truthfulness and purity through the fire of Yogic practice.

So! This is what Holi is! Nowadays, Holi is more social than religious. Festivals like Holi really help to keep the society united.







## Branches of Hindu Dharma

It was a fine and beautiful week-end of the spring. As a regular practice, Raju and his parents visited a nearest temple in their area. Raju's parents met the priest of the temple, took the Darshan of all Hindu deities in the temple and started special pooja of their favourite deity, Lord Shiva. Raju kept curiously observing them, as what he always used to do. The same time, one more couple came up to the temple and did the same what Raju's parents did. But Raju realized that the other couple was worshipping the lord Ganesha, not Lord Shiva. Raju got puzzled with various questions, "Why does my mom worship Lord Shiva? Why don't we worship only one god? ... and my neighbours!! They don't even believe in God. Don't they belong to my religion?" Raju kept thinking about it all day.

You must be surrounded by the same questions what Raju has. Let us try to find out answers to some questions here. To find answers to these questions, we should look at the one of the basic principles of our Dharma. Well! One of the very basic principles of our Dharma is that it gives full freedom of thoughts. It does not enforce to do this or to do that! Following feature points may put some light on Raju's questions.

- 1) Valuable knowledge of Vedas and Upanishadas was interpreted by different ways by different scholars. Some people followed one scholar, some people followed another scholar, and so on.... Consequently, Hindu society got divided into different groups or sectors.
- 2) Due to the freedom of thoughts, various faiths and beliefs came into existence within the Hindu Dharma. People were free to pursue any thought and practice any faith and the way they liked.
- 3) Hindu Dharma has many Gods. It means we have many options. Naturally, when we have many options, we tend to select the option what we like the most. We choose the God by whom we are more impressed; by his powers or deeds and character.
- 4) You might have heard a word – KulDaivat. 'KulDaivat' of a particular

family means the God or the Goddess whom generations and generations of that family have been worshipping. Usually, Hindu people like to keep up with the tradition. They like to worship the God who is being worshipped by their forefathers. They give more focus on the 'KulDaivat' while doing pooja.

Hmm! By this time, you must have got some explanation on Raju's questions. As described earlier various faiths and beliefs came into existence within the Hindu Dharma. We call them as different branches of the Hindu Dharma. Some people belong to one branch and some people to another. Let us try to explore some prominent branches of the Hindu Dharma.

### **Vaishnavism:**

Vaishnavism is one of the principal division of Hindu Dharma. It adherents worship lord Vishnu or one of his incarnations.

### **Shaivism:**

Shaivism is one of the principal division of Hindu Dharma. It adherents worship lord Shiva or Shankar.

### **Buddhism:**

Buddhism was started by a great scholar Gautam Buddha. During his time people were totally in to ritualistic aspect of our Dharma and Buddha wanted people to come out of it and give more stress on karma or actions. He wandered many places with the message of "to do no evil; to cultivate good; to purify ones mind." According to Gautam Buddha, life is full of suffering and to prevent suffering, one has to conquer craving and desire and leads to the path of complete enlightenment.

### **Jainism:**

Another important branch of Hindu Dharma is Jainism. It was founded by Lord Mahavira. It articulates Hindu principles in respect of non-violence and respect for all living beings. It came into existence as a reaction to people over obsession of ritualism. Some of the teachings are... Universe is neither created not sustained by a Supernatural being, it is beginningless, endless and operates in accordance of natural law.

The primary causes of suffering and injustice in the world are - Himsa (violence), nirdaya (lack of compassion), krodha (anger), mada (pride), maya (infactuation), lobha (greed), dwesha (hatred), trishna (craving).

### Sikhism

Sikhism began about 500 years ago. It was established by Guru Nanak. Main scripture of the Sikhism is Adi-Granth or Granth-Sahib. The Granth Sahib begins with the following: “There is but one God whose name is true—the Creator”. It contains a code of high morals. Purity of life, obedience to Guru, mercy, charity, temperance, justice, straightforwardness, truthfulness, sacrifice, service, and love are among the virtues on which great emphasis is laid; while lust, anger, pride, hatred, egoism, greed, selfishness, cruelty, backbiting and falsehood are vehemently condemned.

People who follow Sikhism are known as Sikhs. Sikhs follow path of japa (recitation) of hymn, devotional prayers (kirtana) singing the names of God (e.g., Nama-Smaran).

Some of the teachings of Sikhism are -

- ◆ Belief in ten Gurus (teachers) - spiritual guide who dispels ignorance and darkness.
- ◆ God is creator of the universe. God is saguna (with attributes) and nirguna (attributeless).
- ◆ Attachment to material objects is the primary cause of rebirth on the basis of past karma (action).
- ◆ Only way to achieve liberation (mukti) from the cycle of birth and death is by being God-conscious.
- ◆ Disapprove asceticism and self mortification as path to enlightenment.

All these groups are just like branches of great banyan tree which is Hindu dharma. If we look at a banyan tree, we can see that its roots, stem branches leaves look different. But we all know that these are all parts of the same tree.



**Hindu Dharma is a way of life. It is sanatan (eternal). It is a compilation of various thoughts, faiths and beliefs. It is like a banyan tree with several branches.**

## Trishul

Most of the Hindu Gods and Goddesses carry weapons with them. They use their weapons for good. Lord Shiva also carries weapons. Trishul is a favourite of Him. Let us try make a simple Trishul on a construction paper.

- a) Draw a trishul shape figure (see below picture) onto the construction paper.
- b) Cut this shape and decorate it using your imagination. You can use foil, stickers, markers to decorate it. For a sturdier trishul, you can stick the trishul-shape on a cardboard and cut it out to trishul shape and decorate it.



## -: Exercise :-

**Match the Pairs**

- |                     |                               |
|---------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1) Gulal            | 1) Branch of the Hindu Dharma |
| 2) Holi             | 2) alone triumphs             |
| 3) Games            | 3) Lord Shiva's weapon        |
| 4) Lord Mahavira    | 4) Colored powder             |
| 5) Ultimately Truth | 5) Bala-Gokulam activity      |
| 6) Trishul          | 6) Festival of colors         |
| 7) Vaishnavism      | 7) Jainism                    |

**Fill up the blanks**

- 1) Holi is celebrated in memory of the immortal love of \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.  
a) Radha      b) Ram      c) Krishna      d) None of these
- 2) Holi festival falls in the month of \_\_\_\_\_.  
a) January      b) February      c) March      d) None of these
- 3) Buddhism belongs to \_\_\_\_\_.  
a) Mahavira      b) Guru Nanak      c) Gautam Buddha      d) None of these
- 4) Sikhism was established by \_\_\_\_\_.  
a) Mahavira      b) Guru Nanak      c) Gautam Buddha      d) None of these
- 5) Simple method of the Bala-Gokulam is regular \_\_\_\_\_.  
a) Shakha      b) Camp      c) Tele.Conf.      d) None of these
- 6) Freedom of thoughts is the primary characteristic of the \_\_\_\_\_.  
a) Islam      b) Christinity      c) Judaism      d) Hindu Dharma
- 7) Sarasanghachalak means the \_\_\_\_\_ of the Sangh.  
a) Secretary      b) Chief      c) Treasurer      d) None of these

**Objective Questions**

1) Describe the meaning of this month's subhashitam.

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2) Write down first two lines of first shloka.

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3) Write down the first stanza of this month's Geet.

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4) How is the Holi festival celebrated?

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5) Describe briefly the goal of the Bala-Gokulam.

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6) What is Shakha? What are the activities conducted in the Shakha?

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7) Describe any two branches of the Hindu Dharma?

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### **Questions for research**

(Note that answers to these questions may not be found in this curriculum. It is expected that you get those answers from other sources such as Parents, Books or Internet)

1) Find out at least one branch of the Hindu Dharma that is not covered in this syllabus ?

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2) Which are the festivals that fall in the month of March?

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