



Balagokulam



Syllabus

April - June

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 will 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)

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Shloka

हनूमान (hanūmān)

मनोजवं मारुत तुल्यवेगम् ।	manojavam māruta tulyavegam
जितेन्द्रियं बुद्धिमतां वरिष्ठम् ॥	jitendriyam buddhimatām varishṭham
वातात्मजं वानर-यूथमुख्यम् ।	vātātmajam vānara-yūthamukhyam
श्रीरामदूतं शिरसा नमामि ॥	śrīrama-dūtam śirasā namāmi

I take refuge in Hanuman who is as fast as the mind, equals his father, Maruta, in speed, is the master of the senses, the foremost amongst the learned, the leader of the Vaanara forces and the great messenger of Shri Rama.

Subhashitam

अयं निजः परो वेति गणना लघुचेतसाम् ।
उदारचरितानां तु वसुधैव कुटुम्बकम् ॥

Consideration like “he is mine or he is another’s” occur only to the narrow minded persons. To the broad-minded persons the whole world is a family.

Amrutvachan



To succeed, you must have tremendous perseverance, tremendous will. ”I will drink the ocean”, says the persevering soul; at my will mountains will crumble up.” Have that sort of energy, that sort of will; work hard, and you will reach the goal.

- Swami Vivekananda

चलो भाई चलो (Chalo bhai chalo)

चलो भाई चलो शाखा मे चलो । थोडी 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 । कबद्दी 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 ॥



Yugadi (Varsha Pratipada)

Festivals are an integral part of our life and culture and Hindu tradition offers them in plenty. There is a festival for every reason and for every season. Every celebration centers around rituals of prayer, seeking blessings, exchanging goodwill, decorating houses, wearing new clothes, music, dance and feasting. Do you know the most important festival that falls in the month of April? It is Yugadi!!

Yugadi is one of the most important festival among numerous festivals that we celebrate. Yugadi means “Beginning of New age” (Yuga=Age and Aadi=beginning). Hindu culture is diverse and hindu people speak many languages. No wonder! this festival is recognized by various names and celebrated in various ways and on different days. Some called it as “Varsha Pratipada”, and some as “Gudi Padva. Some called it as “Naba Barsha” and some as “Goru Bihu”.

Ugadi comes close on the heels of festival Holi every year. While the strong colors of Holi start fading away, the freshness of spring lingers on with sprightliness all around. It is a spring festival when the Goddess of Nature gets bedecked as a divine bride. This season has a characteristic fragrance in the air; fully blossomed neem trees make the air healthy. We listen to chanting of birds and smell fragrance of flowers from distance. The onset of spring also marks a beginning of new life with plants (barren until now) acquiring new life, shoots and leaves. The vibrancy of life and verdant fields, meadows full of colorful blossoms signifies growth, prosperity and well-being.

The day of Yugadi is also a beginning of a new year according to the Hindu Panchang. You may be puzzled and ask, “What is Hindu Panchang?” Hindu Panchang is a Hindu Calendar. Just like English Calendar, Hindu people also have their own calendar. They use it for the religious customs and

ceremonies. Since it is a start of new year, people launch many new projects, start new ventures, open new offices. They purchase jewelry, and gold on this auspicious day.

Ways of celebrations

Hindu people celebrate this festival in various ways. Preparations for the festival begin a week ahead. Houses are given a thorough wash. Shopping for new clothes and buying other items that go with the requirements of the festival are done with a lot of excitement. People wake up before the break of dawn, apply coconut oil on their skin and take a bath after which they decorate the entrance of their houses with fresh mango leaves and intricate rangoli designs reflecting the brightness of the spring. Wearing new clothes, they offer Pooja for the God and seek his blessings before they start the day. They pray for their health, wealth and prosperity and success in business too. Some people celebrate this festival by hoisting a gudi – a bamboo pole with a rich and gorgeous cloth of magenta or saffron color and a small branch of neem tree and garland. It symbolizes Shree Rama’s triumphant entry into Ayodhya and is erected in homes as a mark of triumph of good over evil. It also symbolizes the bra-Mha-dhwa-j (flag of the Creator).



Some find a different way of celebrating the festival. Kavi Sammelanam (poetry recitation) is quite famous in southern Bharat (India). Yugadi is also a time when people look forward to a literary feast in the form of Kavi Sammelanam. Many poets come up with new poems written on subjects ranging from Yugadi to politics to modern trends and lifestyles.

As the day starts, they eat the paste of bitter-sweet leaves of Neem tree, tamarind and jaggery. The neem paste is believed to purify blood and build up immunity in the body against diseases. Special dishes such as “pulihora” (like tamarind rice), “bobbatlu” (sweet rotis), “Shrikhand” (like sweet yoghurt) are prepared for the occasion. Yugadi is thus a festival of many shades. It ushers in the new year, brings a rich bounce of flora and fills the hearts of people with joy and contentment.

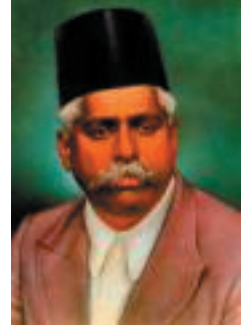
Mythological and Historical Importance

It is believed that, on this day, the Universe was created by Lord Brahma. This is the day when Lord Vishnu incarnated himself as Matsya (the Fish Incarnation). On this day, Shri Rama killed Vali. The great Indian Mathematician Bhaskaracharya's calculations proclaimed the Yugadi day from the sunrise on as the beginning of the New Year, new month and new day. This day recalls the inspiring occasion when the kings Shalivahana and Vikramaditya defeated the barbaric forces of Shakas who came from Central Asia and invaded Bharat (India) during the 1st century A.D. The founding of new Eras in the names of Vikrama and Shalivahana signifies the supreme importance accorded to them in the Hindu history. And what a happy coincidence!! A great patriot, revolutionary and the founder of the organization - Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) , Dr. Keshav Baliram Hedgewar was also born on this day of Yugadi.

Spiritual Significance

All the major Hindu festivals have their own purpose and significance, i.e., to show their relevance and importance in the context of the eternal world cycle of history. As mentioned earlier, people eat the paste of bitter-sweet leaves of Neem tree, tamarind and jaggery. Apart from its medicinal value the eating of this mixture has an inner significance. Jaggery represents joy and happiness and Neem represents sorrow. Mixture of them indicate that life is a mixture of good and bad, joy and sorrow, success and disappointment, and all of them have to be treated alike. Every one should resolve to face calmly whatever happens in this year, accepting it with good grace. Consider everything is for one's own good. Men should rise above sorrow and happiness, success and failure. Jaggery represents Krutayuga and Tretayuga which is full of purity, prosperity and peace. Neem represents Dwaparyuga and Kaliyuga which consists of sorrow, chaos and impurity. So, it is the time to change ourselves or to purify ourselves by inculcating the divine virtues.





Stories of Dr. Hedgewar

More than 100 years ago, Bharat (India) was under British rule. On 22nd June of 1897, Queen Victoria of England completed 60 years of her ascent to the British throne. Naturally the British Government had arranged grand functions in all villages, towns and cities of Bharat. Especially in schools, they distributed sweets among the children and children were happily enjoyed them. But amidst all this, one young boy was not happy. He threw away the sweets given to him, and sat alone in a corner brooding.

His elder brother came and asked him, “*Why are you downcast? Didn’t you get the sweets?*” “*What’s there in that sweet?*” - the boy pointed to the sweets thrown away by him and added, “But why should we celebrate the jubilee of the Queen who has snatched away our country’s freedom?”

The sweets, which were sweet to others, were bitter for this boy. He was barely eight at that time. Even at such a tender age, he was so patriotic. His name was **Keshav!** The boy was eventually to become famous as Dr. Keshav Baliram Hedgewar. He spent all his life in awakening self-respect and patriotism among the Hindus. Following passage describes few incidents of Keshav’s life.

This incident indicates the leadership qualities of Keshav and how the idealism and unity that Keshav had inspired into his fellow students that no threats could unsettle their resolve. One day, another great patriot, Lokmanya Shri Tilak was sentenced to undergo 6 years of imprisonment for participating and leading the Freedom Movement of Bharat. This happened when Keshav was a student of Neil city High school at Nagpur. The principal had sternly warned the students from even uttering “*Vande Mataram*” [I bow to the Mother (land)] on the high school premises, and especially when British school inspectors were visiting. Taking this as an indirect blessing,

Keshav organized the protest against Shri Tilak's arrest by shouting "*Vande Mataram*". Accordingly, as soon as the British inspector entered the school, the whole premises resounded with "*Vande Mataram*", shouted by the students. The British inspector was angered and humiliated. Such kind of activism was banned in those days. Knowing fully well who had organized this, the principal and the staff members tried their best to persuade, cajole and threaten Keshav's fellow students to testify against Keshav. No one came forward and no one confessed. Angrily, the principal ordered the school to be shut down, threatening the students with the loss of their academic year. Finally, concerned parents negotiated a solution. Keshav was debarred from the school and the school was re-started. The Principal spoke highly of Keshav even after many years!

This incident goes back to the year 1932. Keshav was in his middle age. He was a doctor and people affectionately called him as "Doctorji". One day, Some Muslim fanatics rioted and beat up some Sangh *Swayamsevaks* (sangh attendees) in Nagpur city. The news came as a shock to Doctorji who was then in Wardha city. He immediately returned to Nagpur and began to walk towards the injured *Swayamsevaks*' homes. His path would have taken him through the worst of the rioting areas. His close friends warned him against going. When he did not listen, they implored him to take at least a "Lathi" (Stout Stick) with him for self-defense. Upon this, he said: "*How can such an inanimate stick protect me? Let me see who dares to come forward to attack me!*" Then he set forth, walking and went through the rioting areas. He reached the *swayamsevaks*' homes and arranged for their medical care. He then returned, walking again through the so called "dangerous" areas. Who could have dared to cross paths with such a Lion-like man of courage? Doctorji was not only courageous but also brave and determined and without thinking a bit about himself, he took care of his *swayamsevaks*.

On a Saturday evening, Doctorji and his associates went to their another friend's (Shri. Shankar Rao Bharat) house at Adegaon vilage to attend some important ceremony. On the next day morning, back in the Nagpur, a Sangh Parade was scheduled. In the evening, after attending the ceremony, Doctorji decided to return to Nagpur because he wanted to attend the Sangh Parade. He asked his companions, "*Now that the ceremony is over, let us go back to Nagpur*". His companions replied, "*Doctorji, we can not go back today because*

there is no transportation. We will have to wait until tomorrow morning". Doctorji said, "Well! if there is no transportation, we can walk!>". Again his companions questioned, "Nagpur is 32 miles away from this place. How can we walk?". But Doctorji made it a point and his companions could not convince him. They began to walk towards the highway which was 10 miles away from that remote village. While walking in a pitch black night, stumbling on stones, rocks and dense overgrowth, accidentally Doctorjee stepped on a sharp, needle-shaped wood fork that lodged itself deep inside his foot, causing intense pain. Steeling himself against it with iron determination, he kept going with his companions and somehow they made to the highway after midnight.

Without taking a rest, they kept walking along the highway towards Nagpur, which was still 22 miles away. After walking a few miles, a late night bus going towards Nagpur came by, and the driver, being from Nagpur, immediately stopped the bus, when he recognized the limping Doctorjee in his headlight. He implored Doctorjee to come on board along since the bus was extremely over crowded. Doctorjee politely refused to board the bus also. He said : *"I will come only if all of us in the group are allowed to come on board"*. In spite of his swollen, bleeding foot, intense pain and exhaustion, Doctorjee did not forsake his companions, even when they wanted him to go. Finally, the driver allowed the whole group to come aboard. Since there really was no room, some sat on the bus engine, while some others sat on its roof. Somehow they made it to Nagpur in the early morning and attended the Sangh Parade.

These incidents indicate that Doctorji (Keshav) was a man of virtue. He possessed great qualities. He was a great patriot, revolutionary and true leader. He was determined and confident. He was strong in mind, and in body as well. He was popular among the people. Despite all these, he never posed himself as a great person. On the contrary, he shunned publicity. His life was simple and austere. To inculcate awareness and self-respect among the Hindu people and to organize them, he founded an organization - Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) popularly known as Sangh. He sacrificed his entire life to increase the sangh work. On the morning of 21st June 1940, at the age of 51, Doctorji breathed his last. His life is always going to inspire us.





The Hindu Calendar (Panchang)

The Calendar (Panchang or Kalaganana) is a system of timekeeping that defines the beginning, length and divisions of the year. In other words, it is a table showing the beginning and length of the years, months, weeks, and days. Though the time is immeasurable, efforts were made to measure time and design a perfect calendar in different parts of world. Most of the calendars are influenced by the motion of Sun, Moon and other planets.

The Hindus, Our seers (rishis), also have had a comprehensive study of time. They had a correct knowledge of the motion of planets and their paths. They developed the necessary tools like Mathematics and calculated the time with utmost accuracy. The minute details covered by those fantastic minds in reckoning time is outstanding. The calendars designed by them are lunar calendars, based on the natural cycles of the moon. They are practical to use because they follow the phases of the moon which can be visually be seen. Those calendars are widely being used for the religious customs and ceremonies. Following passage explains few characteristics of the Hindu Calendar.

Diwas or Din (Day)

According to the Hindu Calendar, the smallest unit of time is called *Nimesha*, the duration taken to bat an eyelid, which is equal to 0.1778 seconds. One day including night is a practical unit of time. Following chart describes different units of time and their equivalent seconds or minutes.

1 Nimesha	Smallest Unit	0.1778 seconds
1 Kashta	18 Nimeshas	3.2 seconds
1 Kala	30 Kashtas	96 seconds
1 Muhurta	30 Kalas	48 minutes
2 Ghatikas	1 Muhurta	48 minutes
1 Diwas (Day)	60 Ghatikas	24 hours

Saptah (week)

7 diwas (days) make 1 saptah (week). Each day is named after a planet. The moon, though a satellite of the earth, is also included. They are as follows.

Name of Diwas (Planet)	Name of Day (Planet)
Ravivar (Ravi)	Sunday (Sun)
Somvar (Moon)	Monday (Moon)
Mangalvar (Mangala)	Tuesday (Mars)
Budhvar (Budha)	Wednesday (Mercury)
Guruvar (Guru)	Thursday (Jupiter)
Shukravar (Shukra)	Friday (Venus)
Shanivar (Shani)	Saturday (Saturn)

Mas (Month)

Mas, which is derived from the word Chandrama (the moon), is equivalent to the month. There are 12 months in a year. Each month has two halves - Shukla Paksha (brighter half) and Krishna Paksha (darker half). These 12 months make up the six seasons (Ritu). Following table describes the months and seasons of the Hindu Calendar and their corresponding months of the English Calendar.

	Months of the Hindu Calendar	Months of the English Calendar	Seasons
1)	Chaitra	Mar / April	Vasanta (Spring)
2)	Vaishaakha	April / May	Vasanta (Spring)
3)	Jyeshtha	May / June	Greeshma (Summer)
4)	Aashaadha	June / July	Greeshma (Summer)
5)	Sraavana	July / August	Varsha (Rainy)
6)	Bhaadrapada	August / September	Varsha (Rainy)
7)	Ashwin	September / October	Sharad (Autumn)
8)	Kaartika	October / November	Sharad (Autumn)

9)	Maargashirsha	November / December	Hemanta (Winter)
10)	Pushya	December / January	Hemanta (Winter)
11)	Maagha	January / February	Shishira (Winter)
12)	Phaalguna	February / March	Shishira (Winter)

Varsha (Year)

12 Mas make one varsha (year). Varsha is the time taken by the earth to go round the Sun once.

Eras

Just as there is the Christian Era in which the years are supposed to be counted from the birth of Jesus Christ, Hindus have their own Eras. They are many in numbers. The most important names are :

- 1) Yugabda: The Yugabda tells us what year is passing after the commencement of Kaliyuga.
- 2) ShalivahanaShaka: The Shalivahana Shaka was started in commemoration of Samrat (King) Shalivahana. It is based on lunar calendar and the new year starts with Chaitra Mas.
- 3) Vikram Samvat: The Vikram Era started with Samrat (King) Vikramaditya of Ujjain, following his victory over the Saka in 56 B.C. It is also based on the lunar calendar and the new year begins with the 4th day of Deepavali.

Note that there are numerous features of the Hindu Calendar which are out of this curriculum and not mentioned here. Those who are more interested can always get more information from other sources such as books or internet.



-: Exercise :-

Match the Pairs

- | | |
|-------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1) Yugadi | 1) Month |
| 2) Keshav | 2) Week |
| 3) Saptah | 3) Shalivahana-Shaka |
| 4) Mas | 4) Day of the Saptah |
| 5) Shanivar | 5) Hindu Calendar |
| 6) Panchang | 6) Beginning of New Age |
| 7) Era | 7) Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) |

Fill up the blanks

- 1) Yugadi is also called as _____.
a) Deepavali b) Gudi-Padwa c) Samkranti d) None of these.
- 2) Kaartika is the name of _____.
a) Saptah b) Mas c) Varsha d) Era
- 3) One nimesha is _____ seconds.
a) 2 seconds b) 0.67 seconds c) 0.1778 seconds d) 5 seconds
- 4) Doctorji died on _____ (this day).
a) 01-JAN-1989 b) 20-FEB-1967 c) 21-JUN-1940 d) 21-JUN-1950
- 5) _____ and _____ are two halves of the Mas (Month).
a) Shukla Paksha b) Chaitra c) Krishna Paksha d) Ashwin
- 6) Swayamsevaks are Sangha _____.
a) believers b) attendees c) sympathisers d) None of these
- 7) _____ is one of the 7 days of the Saptah.
a) Shanivar b) Chaitra c) Ashwin d) Magha

Questions

- 1) What is the meaning of *Vande Mataram*?

- 2) List any 4 months of the Hindu Calendar.

- 3) Describe the story of Keshav (Doctorji) that happened in the school.

- 4) List three most popular eras that Hindus have.

- 5) List any two events that happened on Yugadi.
 - 1) Lord Brahma created Universe.
 - 2)
- 6) Write first two lines of the Shloka.

- 7) Write any two lines of the Geet

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 the most important festival other than Yugadi that falls in the month of April? Describe its importance.

- 2) What is meant by “aadhik mas” in the Hindu Calendar?

- 3) What is meant by “Yuga” in the Hindu Calendar? What are they?

- 3) Where and when did Keshav (Doctorji) born?

- 4) On what day Doctorji started RSS?

Art of Story Telling

(Few points are given below. Shikshaks should initialize the subject and demonstrate as and when required. More points can be explored with the help of Shiksharthi. Next day, a small competition can be arranged giving three to four minutes to each participant)

- 1) Read the story and understand the message that is to be conveyed through this story. Story telling should revolve around that theme. Story teller need not have to tell at the end of story 'the moral of this story is ...'
- 2) Do not read, but tell the story. We will miss eye contact when we are looking at the book. Reading a story is useful with small group of 2-3 children at home.
- 3) Modulations in the voice. Vary the volume and tone with the story.
- 4) You should enjoy the story, so the expressions come out on your face and in your voice. Drop all the inhibitions about acting.
- 5) Eye contact: Move your eyes so that you can see every one.
- 6) Slow down the pace. During normal conversation, most of us speak fast and without much modulation. Children should be able to follow you. So, don't rush. By looking into their eyes, you can see whether they are enjoying it or not.
- 7) The pace should vary with the meaning of the sentence. When you say, "The lion came slowly", slow down the speed. When you say, "She started running fast without looking at the back", speed up your telling also.
- 8) Before or after you make a strong point, pause for a while. That gives some time for them to feel the story.
- 9) You can make it gently interactive, Ask questions in between. Questions which require them to say 'YES' or 'NO'. Don't end up in a discussion!
- 10) Have a smiling face.
- 11) Body language: Make use of your hands to bring in the expression needed at places.
- 12) Use examples from their day-to-day life to make it more interesting.
- 13) You can use some pictures to show them.
- 14) Every one of us have our own strengths. Use all your creativity and come up with a style that suits you best.

Shloka

श्री राम (śrī rāma)

रामाय रामभद्राय ।	rāmāya rāmabhadrāya
रामचन्द्राय वेधसे ॥	rāmacandrāya vedhase
रघुनाथाय नाथाय ।	raghunāthāya nāthāya
सीतायाः पतये नमः ॥	sītāyāḥ pataye namaḥ

My salutations to Bhagawan Sri Rama, the protector of all, one who knows all, the descendant of the Raghu dynasty, the husband of Sita and the Bhagawan of the entire universe.

Subhashitam

काव्यशास्त्रविनोदेन कालो गच्छति धीमताम् |
व्यसनेन च मूर्खाणां निद्रया कलहेन वा ||

A intelligent ('buddhiman') man spends his time in the research and studies of literature ('Kaavya') and philosophy ('Shastras' like Veda Shastra, dharma shastra etc.). Or in other words the said subjects are means of his entertainment (He gets satisfaction due to the studies of 'kaavya' and philosophy). In contrast a unintelligent ('Murkha') man gets satisfaction in bad habits like sleep (Laziness), quarrel or some type of addiction.

Amrutvachan



Doing is very good, but that comes from thinking.....Fill the brain, therefore, with high thoughts, highest ideas; place them day and night before you; and out of that will great work

- Swami Vivekananda

चलो भाई चलो (Chalo bhai chalo)

चलो भाई चलो शाखा मे चलो । थोडी 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 dhwaj hai pujya 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 ॥



Symbols in Hinduism

The Hindu symbols are divine and have a scientific, logical and spiritual significance. Understanding them lends meaning and appreciation to all Hindu customs, traditions and beliefs. Hindu culture tailors itself constantly to take the best of the modern technological age without losing its roots. It is this adaptability that has enabled Hinduism to be recognized as one of the world's oldest living religion.

The term 'symbol' means 'representation'. Each symbol in Hinduism represents an aspect of Hindu way of life. Here are some of the most prominent and frequently used symbols.

Aum (Om)

Aum is the universal name of Eshwara. The Aum symbolizes the three states (waking, dream and deep sleep), the three deities (Brahma, Vishnu and Maheshwara), the three Vedas (Rig, Yajur and Sama), the three worlds (Bhuh, Bhuvah, Suvah). Aum is also called pranava that means 'that (symbol or sound) by which the Eshwara is praised'.



It is believed that Eshwara began to create the world after chanting Aum. Hence its sound is considered to create an auspicious beginning for any task that we undertake. Aum creates profound effect on the body and mind of the one who chants and also on the surroundings.

So it is a frequently chanted sound by Hindus all over the world. The Hindus repeat Aum as a mantra for meditation. They greet each other saying 'Hari Om' or Om etc. They worship and use this auspicious sign for all spiritual occasions.

Swastika

Swastika is derived from sanskrit word 'svastika' which is composed of 'su' meaning 'good' and 'asti' meaning 'to be'. Together it means 'well being'. In India, it is used as a symbol of fertility and good luck. Swastika in Hindu culture also symbolizes the sun and the positive energy from it. It is most commonly associated with Ganeshji, the bhagwan of prosperity and wealth. Hindus all around the world use this symbol to denote auspiciousness, good luck and prosperity in their homes and in all kinds of religious occasions.



Bhagwa Dhwaj

Bhagwa (saffron color) represents the "sun". The sun has the highest place in vedic literature as the sustainer of all and the source of energy. It acts as a reminder of the power of God, the act of selfless service and renunciation. The Bhagwa Dhwaj in the same way represents selfless service and righteousness. It stands for our sustained effort to uphold dharma through self sacrifice. The Bhagwa dhwaj reminds us of our duty towards the Hindu community and the society as a whole. The bhagwa dhwaj can be found on Hindu temples and other Hindu religious sites.



Kamala (Lotus)



Lotus is a symbol of truth, auspiciousness and beauty (satyam, shivam , sundaram). Eshwara is also that nature and therefore, his various aspects are compared to a lotus (i.e. lotus eyes, lotus feet, lotus hands, lotus of the heart etc.). Hindu scriptures extol the beauty of the lotus. Many comparisons have been made to the nature of the Lotus. The lotus blooms with the rising sun and closes at night. Similarly, our minds open up and expand with the light of knowledge. The lotus grows in slushy areas yet remains beautiful and untainted despite its surroundings. In the same

way we too should strive to remain pure and beautiful from within under all circumstances, not giving up on our basic nature of bliss. Lotus is also said to have emerged from the navel of Bhagwan Vishnu. Brahmaji originated from it to create the world. Hence, the lotus also symbolizes the link between the creator and the supreme cause. Lotus posture (padmaasana) is recommended when one sits for meditation. Lotus is also drawn as a rangoli for festive occasions. Lotus flowers are offered to the hindu deities during pujas.

Shankh (Conch)

Shankh represents dharma or righteousness that is one of the four goals of life. The sound of conch is thus also the victory call of good over evil. The story goes, the demon Shankhaasura defeated the devas, stole the Vedas and went to the bottom of the ocean. Bhagwan Vishnu in the form of matsya (fish) killed Shankhaasura. Mahavishnu blew the conch-shaped bone of the asura's ear and head. The sound of Om emanated, from which emerged the Vedas. All knowledge enshrined in the Vedas is an elaboration of Om. The conch therefore is known as shankh. Conch is blown traditionally in poojas and sacred occasions. The sound of the conch produces auspicious sounds and drowns all negative noises that disturb the minds of worshippers. Lord Krishna blew the conch called the paanchajanya when he was charioteer to Arjuna in the Kurukshetra war.



Kalash

A kalash is a pot filled with water. Mango leaves are placed in the mouth of the pot and a coconut is placed over it. Sometimes red and white threads are tied around the Kalash. The water in the kalash symbolizes the giver of life to all and from which the entire creation emerged. The mango leaves and coconut represent creation and the threads around it signify the love that binds all in creation. The kalash is therefore considered auspicious and worshipped.



Kalash as a poornakumbha (full pot) is used to greet learned men acknowledging their greatness and knowledge of the infinite Truth and as a sign of respectful welcome. Kalash is also used in poojas and in kumba asbisheka in temples invoking the holy rivers, the knowledge of the vedas and the blessings of all devas.

Tilak

A tilak is a mark on the forehead. A tilak is applied both by females and males. It can be in the form of chandan, kumkum or bhasma(ash). The tilak covers the spot between the eyebrows, which is the seat of memory and thinking. It is known as the Aajna Chakra in the language of Yoga. The tilak is applied with the prayer – ‘May I remember Eshwara. May this pious feeling pervade all my activities. May I be righteous in my deeds.’. Even when we temporarily forget this prayerful attitude the mark on another reminds us of our resolve. So the tilak is a blessing of Eshwara and a protection against wrong tendencies and forces.



Rangoli

A Rangoli is a creative expression of art through the use of color. It is a (alpana or kolam) is a symmetrical or freehand design drawn by the traditional Hindu woman in front of their pooja room or house. These designs represent auspiciousness and hospitality. It is a warm and colorful way of welcoming every visitor home. A Rangoli can be drawn with rice flour or white stone powder. In ancient times rangolis adorned the walls and floors of all rooms. Rangolis drawn with rice flour served as a source of food for ants and little insects. This concept of ‘giving’ or feeding every living thing was installed in the minds of Hindus right from when they were small.





The Life of the Buddha

Siddhartha (Gautama) was born in the sixth century BC in the country Nepal. In those days, Nepal was a part of Bharat (India). Siddhartha's father, Suddhodana, was the ruler of the Sakya people, and Siddhartha grew up living the extravagant life of a young prince. But, looking at the behavior of his son, Suddhodana felt that his son (the prince) might leave the palace to take up the life of a religious wanderer. So he arranged for him to be sheltered from all the harsh realities of life. When the prince reached the age of sixteen, Suddhodana arranged for him to be married to his cousin, a charming princess named Yasodhara.

One day, however, Siddhartha ventured out into the world and was confronted with the inevitability of aging, illness, and death. Overcome by dismay, the young prince wondered if there might be a happiness that was not subject to change and decay. Then, seeing a forest wanderer, he decided that only by taking up the wilderness life could he find the answer to his question. That night, at the age of twenty-nine, he left his kingdom and newborn son and entered the wilderness.

For six years, Siddhartha submitted himself to rigorous ascetic practices. First he studied with different religious teachers, but, dissatisfied with what they saw as their highest goal, he set out to practice extreme physical austerities on his own. Yet even through the ultimate in self-denial, he did not reach his goal. Then one day he remembered a state of calm mental absorption he had experienced while sitting under a tree as a child, and realized that only through such a state of calm could liberation be found. And yet the strength of that calm could not be reached when the body was weak through austerities. The path to true happiness required balance—the middle way—rather than extremes of indulgence or self-denial. So on that day he ended his extreme austerities and accepted a gift of milk-rice offered to him by a young woman.

That night Siddhartha sat under the bodhi tree and meditated until dawn.

In the first watch of the night he remembered his past lives; in the second watch, around midnight, he saw how beings die and are reborn through the power of their karma, which in turn was shaped by the skillfulness of their intentions; in the third watch, toward dawn, he purified his mind of all cravings, attachments, and defilements, and finally of all intentions, both skillful and not. With that, he attained awakening at the age of thirty-five, thus earning the title Buddha, or “Awakened One.”

For the remainder of his life, the Buddha taught the dharma to others—men, women, and children; rich and poor; people from all walks of life and all levels of society—so that they, too, might attain awakening. He established a sangha, or community of monks and nuns, to maintain his teachings after his death.

What were the teachings of this great man? According to Buddha, there are Four Noble Truths and they are of vital importance in life. They are the very pivots on which human life rests. These four truths are:

- 1) The world is full of misery and sorrow.
- 2) The main cause of misery is desire.
- 3) Misery and sorrow can be ended by killing desire and
- 4) Desire can be suppressed by following the Eight-fold Path
 - 1) Right Action
 - 2) Right Belief
 - 3) Right Effort
 - 4) Right Speech
 - 5) Right Thought
 - 6) Right Meditation
 - 7) Right Living and
 - 8) Right Recollection

Then, one full moon night in May when he had reached the age of eighty, he lay down between two trees in a forest park and gave his last teachings to the assembled followers, counseling them to be heedful in completing their practice of dharma. With that, he entered total nirvana. He died in 487 BC.





Meaning of Sangh Prarthana

'Prarthanaa' means prayer. In Sangh, we sing Prarthanaa at the end of every Shakha. It is a collective vow. Prarthana sheds light on the following questions.

1. Whom are we praying to?
2. Who are "we"?
3. What qualities are we praying for?
4. What is our collective vision, mission ?
5. What is our means to realize that vision ?
6. Firm conviction that this is divine mission - God's work

This topic is to be covered in two weeks. In each week, practice how to sing and then explain the meaning of Prarthana.

Whom are we praying to?

*Sarva Mangala Maangalyaam
Deveem Sarvaartha Saadhikaam
Sharanyaam Sarva Bhootanaam
Namaamo Bhoomi Mataram (1)*

*Sachchidaanada Roopaaya
Vishwa Mangala Hetave
Vishwa Dharmika Moolaaya
Namostu Paramaatmane (2)*

First two stanzas provide answer to this question. First, we are offering our salutations to Mother Earth. Mother Earth is described as the auspiciousness of all that is auspicious, fulfiller of all our needs and the refuge of all the beings.

Since the Vedic times, Earth has always been looked upon as Mother and is respected by Hindus. Truly it is Mother Earth, who fulfills all our necessities and provide the shelter for all the beings. Exploitation of earth and nature in general is deplored in our traditions. Mother earth has enough resources to satisfy every one's need but not their greed.

Next, we offer our salutations to God, who is described as the very embodiment of truth, consciousness and bliss. God is also addressed as the source of all good things happening in the world. God is also the source for Dharma, which upholds the universe.

Who are "We"?

*Vishwa Dharma Vikaasartham
Prabho Sanghatitaa Vayam
Shubhaam Aashisham Asmabhayam
Dehi Tat Paripoortaye (3)*

In the 3rd stanza, we introduce ourselves as people who are getting organized for the sake of spreading and blossoming of 'vishwa dharma' (universal dharma). To realize this grand vision, we are seeking the blessings of the God.

What qualities are we praying for?

*Ajayyam Aatma Saamarthyam
Susheelam Loka Poojitam
Gyanam Cha Dehi Vishwasha
Dhyeya Maarga Prakaashakam (4)*

We are praying God to make us better equipment to fulfill this noble mission. In the above stanza, we are asking God to bless us with three qualities.

'Ajayyam Aatma Saamarthyam' - Invincible Strength: We should be strong so that no one would dare insult us, offend us. Our strength is not to do harm to any one, but to ensure that no one does harm to us. The world understands

the language of Strength. The world respects and worships Strength. That's why Hindus worship Mother Durga, the Goddess of Strength.

'Susheelam loka puujitam' - Good character that commands respect from all: Along with the physical strength, we should possess good character. Strength without character is dangerous to the society. Character without strength is not of much use.

Dhyeya maarga prakaashakam Jnaanam: Knowledge that would throw light upon our mission: Here we are asking for the right knowledge that would enlighten us and bring clarity in our minds about our chosen mission.

Material progress and Spiritual upliftment

*SamutKarshostuno Nityam
Nishreyasa Samanvitah
Tatsaadhakam Sphuratwantah
Suveera Vratamujwalam (5)*

Our aim is to achieve splendid material progress and facilitate spiritual development of each individual. The two phrases, 'samutkarsha' and 'nishreyasa' convey these two concepts of material and spiritual progress.

We pray for that enlightening vow to realize such a society to spring from our hearts.

Let our commitment to the cause be firm

*Vishwa Dharma Prakaashena
Vishwa Shaanti Pravartake
Hindu Sanghatanaa Kaarye
Dhyeya Nishthaa Sthiraastunah (6)*

We want to achieve world peace and harmony in the light of our universal Dharma. In this mission of organizing people towards that, let our commitment be firm.

Our grand Vision - Pinnacle of Glory

*Sangha Shaktir Vijetreeyam
Krutvaasmad Dharma Rakshanam
Paramam Vaibhavam Praaptum
Samarthaastu Tavaashisha (7)*

Our grand vision is to establish peace and harmony in the world. It will be a glory to the human civilization whereby every individual can realize his or her potential to the fullest. The means to achieve this is by protecting the 'Dharma'. We are seeking your blessings so that this organized strength will be triumphant.

This is God's work. Offerings

*Tvadiiye Punya Kaaryesmin
Vishwa Kalyaana Saadhake
Tyaaga Seva Vratasyaayam
Kaayome Patatu Prabho (8)*

This mission of welfare of the entire humanity is God's work. We are only instruments in this noble task. We are praying God that let our life be offered in this life of sacrifice and service.

Vishwa Dharma Ki Jay

|| Victory to the Universal Dharma ||



-: Exercise :-

Match the Pairs

(Following are the lines of Sangh Prarthana)

- | | |
|-----------------------------|------------------------|
| 1) <i>Dhyeya Maarga</i> | 1) <i>Pravartake</i> |
| 2) <i>Tyaaga Seva</i> | 2) <i>Ki Jay</i> |
| 3) <i>Vishwa Dharma</i> | 3) <i>Vijetreeyam</i> |
| 4) <i>Hindu Sanghatanaa</i> | 4) <i>Vratasyaayam</i> |
| 5) <i>Sarva Mangala</i> | 5) <i>Prakaashakam</i> |
| 6) <i>Vishwa Shaanti</i> | 6) <i>Kaarye</i> |
| 7) <i>Sangha Shaktir</i> | 7) <i>Maangalyaam</i> |

Fill up the blanks

- 1) A _____ is a mark on the forehead.
a) Shankha b) Kalash c) tilak d) None of these.
- 2) A _____ is a creative expression of art through the use of color.
a) Shankha b) Tilak c) Rangoli d) Kalash
- 3) Siddartha (Gautama) was born in the _____ century BC.
a) sixth b) seventh c) first d) second
- 4) The _____ reminds us of our duty towards the Hindu community.
a) Kalash b) Tilak c) Rangoli d) Bhagwa dhwaj
- 5) The Hindus repeat _____ as a mantra for meditation.
a) Aum b) Kalash c) Shankha d) None of these
- 6) Siddartha is _____.
a) Buddha b) Suddhodana c) Mahavir d) None of these
- 7) In prarthana, we offer salutations to _____.
a) Friends b) Parents c) Mother Earth d) None of these

Questions

1) What is the meaning of Subhashitam?

2) Write last two lines of the Shloka.

3) Write second stanza of the Geet

4) According to Siddarth, what are the four truths?

5) Describe the Hindu Symbol - Aum?

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) List at least two Hindu Symbols that are not included in this curriculum. Describe them.

- 2) What are the main scriptures in Buddhism?

Competition of Story Telling

(Note: shikshaks should conduct the competition. Ask each participant to remember the points of art of story telling they learnt last week. Four to five minutes can be given to each participant to tell the story. Competition should be friendly. In first attempt they may not perform well. So give them a second chance.)

Suggested stories are -

- 1) Tanaji Malusare, Commander of Shivaji, wins Kondhana Fort.
- 2) Krishna kills Shishupal
- 3) Story of Monkey and Crocodile
- 4) Lakshamana kills Shurpankha
- 5) Keshav (Doctorji) refuses to eat sweets that were distributed in his school.

Shloka

त्वमेव माता च पिता त्वमेव ।
 त्वमेव बन्धुश्च सखा त्वमेव ।
 त्वमेव विद्या द्रविणं त्वमेव ।
 त्वमेव सर्वं मम देवदेव ॥

tvameva maataa cha pitaa tvameva.
 tvameva bandhushcha sakhaa tvameva.
 tvameva vidyaa draviNaM tvameva.
 tvameva sarvaM mama devadeva..

O Bhagawan, you only is (my) mother, you only is (my) father, your only is (my) relation, you only is (my) friend, you only is (my) knowledge, you only is (my) wealth, you only is everything, you are the BHAGAWAN of the Devas.

Subhashitam

आदित्यस्य नमस्कारं ये कुर्वन्ति दिने दिने |
 जन्मान्तरसहस्रेषु दारिद्र्यं नोपजायते ||

The people who bow down to the Sun (perform SUryanamaskArs) everyday, poverty does not arise in their lives for thousands of births. (The people who are punctual in their duties like Sun, never become poor.)

Amrutvachan



The test of true friendship is the ability to remain unoffended in face of adverse comments. Even if a person says or does something which in the eyes of others appears to harm or insult him and still he does not in the least feel its prick, then alone can he claim true friendship with that person.

- Shree Guruji

Geet**BAAL HAI GOPAL HAI**

Baal Hai Gopal Hai, Hum Dharma Ke Bhaal Hai
Hum Dharma Ke Bhaal Hai

Poorshottam Maryaadaa Dhaaree, Dwaapar-men Hum Krushana Muraaree
Har Yuga Men Kar Dharma Dhawajaa Le, Vaijayntee Gal Maal Hai...
Bal Hai Gopall Hai...(1)

Veer Shivaa Ranaa Abhimaanee, Guru Govind Sinha Theh Balidaanee
Bandaa Vairaagee Jaisn Ke, Tejasvee Hum Laal Hai...
Bal Hai Gopal Hai...(2)

Naana Taatyaa Raanee Jansi, Pralayankar Ban Chumee Phaansee
Pandey Mangal Kukaa Phadake, Dhadhak Uthay Ve Jwaal Hai...
Bal Hai Gopal Hai...(3)

Dayanand Aravind Vivekaa, Eka Tatvake Roop Aneko
Divya Jyoti Keshava Maadhava Ki, Sampaadita Har Praana Hai...
Bal Hai Gopal Hai...(4)

Meaning

Our baal are the Gopal and the armoury of Dharma (Duty to uphold righteousness).

In Treta-yuga the magnificent complete being was baal Raam and in Dwaapar-yuga was baal Krishna. In every yuga, the establishing of the victory flag of dharma is the precious wealth we give.

The brave Shivaji and Rana are our pride and Guru Govind singh was a great martyr. Like Banda Vairagee, our bravery shines magnificiently.

Naana, Taatyaa and Queen of Jansi met death in the flames of fire. Our rage cannot be controlled as the flames rise high.

Dayaanand, Aravindo and Vivekanand all had the same vision but with variation only in approach. The bright light given by Keshav (PP Doctorji) and Madhav (PP Guruji) is present in everyone of us.



Vandaneeya Mausiji

100 years ago, there was a baby girl born in Maharashtra. Her name was Kamal, which means “Lotus.” Kamal’s mom’s name was Yashodabai and her dad’s name was Bhaskarrao. As Kamal grew up, everyone loved her. She loved going to the temple with her auntie, whom she called “Dai.” At the temple, she enjoyed singing bhajans and mantras, and listening to stories. Kamal was greatly influenced by Yashodabai and Dai. They taught Kamal about the Hindu gods and goddesses. She loved listening to these stories and grew up loving her culture.

Soon, it was time for Kamal to start school. But there was only one school in the whole village, and that was a Christian Missionary School. All the teachers in this school made fun of the Hindu culture. Kamal did not like this at all, but tried to ignore it for the sake of learning. Then one day, Kamal stood up against the teachers. When it was prayer time, the teacher said, “Class, close your eyes and pray.” After a few seconds, Kamal opened her eyes and noticed that her teacher was not closing her eyes. “Kamal!” yelled the teacher. “Close your eyes!”



Kamal was so brave that she said, “But Madam, why aren’t you closing your eyes. You should practice what you preach!” The teacher became very angry and she slapped Kamal across her cheek. When Kamal went home, she told her mom the whole story and said that she would never go to the Missionary School again.

From then on, Kamal was taught at home by her mom and Dai. They taught Kamal all about the Hindu Samskars and patriotism. Kamal loved her country. At this time, India was ruled by the British. The British treated the Indian people very badly. Kamal did not like this at all. Yashodabai also disliked the British rule. She held meetings at her home for all the ladies

in the neighborhood. They read and discussed Kesari magazine. Kesari was a magazine published by Lokmanya Balgangadhara Tilak, a famous freedom fighter. These discussions also influenced Kamal and increased her patriotism.

Once, during a Kesari meeting, a British officer knocked on the door and interrupted the meeting. "Buying Kesari is illegal," he said to Yashodabai. "Your husband is a government servant. You cannot use his money to buy Kesari." But Yashodabai was so brave that she said, "No! I buy Kesari with my own money, and I am not a government servant!" the British officer could not argue with this statement, and he left. Kamal greatly admired her mother's bravery and boldness.

Kamal loved playing outside with her brothers, and she also enjoyed playing dolls with her friends. She was very good at playing games; whenever there was a fight, she would give inspiring speeches to patch things up and make everyone friends again. "Look here, let us forget our petty quarrels. No one is either inferior or superior. Each person has his own importance. Let us not indulge in petty disputes". Everyone was mesmerized by Kamal's speeches. Kamal was also very kind to others. Whenever someone was sick, she and Dai went to help them out and take care of them, no matter how rich or poor they were.

After Kamal was married to Purushottama Rao, her name was changed to Lakshmibai Kelkar. Unfortunately, Lakshmibai's husband and her eldest daughter died of tuberculosis. Two of Lakshmibai's sons went to shakha and Lakshmibai liked the shakha very much. But, at that time, only boys went to shakha, not girls. So Lakshmibai decided to start shakhas for girls.

Even though she was very busy raising 7 children by herself, Lakshmibai still found the time to start Rashtra Sevika Samiti, an organization that started shakhas for women and girls. The girls liked the shakha a lot. They affectionately called Lakshmibai "Mausi ji" which means Aunt. Mausi ji traveled all over the country setting up shakhas and inspiring women. Soon, there were Samiti shakhas all over the world. Today, we remember Mausi ji as brave and determined. She was never scared to stand up for her beliefs, and she never gave up.





Introduction to Hindu Scriptures

The Hindu scriptures are the product of relentless investigations into the facts and truth of life carried out by the ancient sages of Bharat. They contain systematic treatises on varied subjects in the fields of science, religion, metaphysics, philosophy and spiritual knowledge.

They are not limited to a few books because Hinduism does not confine ideas; therefore the scriptures have become a home for many different schools of thought. There is no single textbook for Mathematics nor is there a last or only Mathematician. Mathematics is the collective knowledge of all the Mathematicians over the ages. Similarly what we call Hinduism is the collective knowledge of all the sages who went to discover the Truth. 'Veda', the oldest scripture known to humankind, literally means 'knowledge'.

In Hinduism, there are two categories of books:

1. Shrutis, which deal with never changing, eternal principles, and
2. Smritis, which often deal with the practical application of those principles to the ever changing social order.

'Shruti' means 'what is heard' and 'Smriti' means 'what is remembered. Shruti being divinely revealed to the great Rishis of yore in the depths of their mystical experience, its authority is supreme. Smritis are the secondary scriptures, which derive their authority from the Shruti. Their business is to explain, elaborate and illustrate the fundamental teachings of the Shruti.

However, according to the Hindu view, revelations are not limited to any individual, time or place. Just as there have been revelations in the past, they can occur at present or in future also. The seer is only a medium to transmit the insight, which he receives. Hence he is no more the inventor of the Veda than Newton is the generator of the law of gravity. The laws always existed and

they were only 'discovered' or 'seen'. That's why the Rishis are called 'seers'.

The Vedas are four in number-the Rig Veda, the Yajur Veda, the Sama Veda and the Atharva Veda. The Rig Veda is the most ancient scripture of the world. Lokamanya Tilak, on the strength of astronomical evidences, concludes that it is at least 8,000 years old.

The Rig Veda consists of hymns which are mostly prayers. The Yajur Veda deals mainly with sacrificial rites. The Sama Veda contains a portion of the Rig Vedic hymns set to music. These have to be sung at appropriate stages during a sacrifice. The Atharva Veda, which is a later composition, consists mostly of morals and ethical codes as also a few worldly sciences.

Each Veda is usually divided into four parts: Samhitas, Brahmanas, Aranyakas and Upanishads. The Samhitas contain prayers and mantras used in sacrifices. The Brahmanas give the know-how of sacrificial rites, Aranyakas teach the art of certain types of meditation, based mostly on well-known sacrifices. The Upanishads contain the highest philosophical flights of the Vedic sages, which can be the pride of the whole human race for all time. Schopenhauer, the famous German savant, has declared: "In the whole world there is no study, except that of the originals, so beneficial and so elevating as that of the Upanishads. It has been the solace of my life, it will be the solace of my death."

Then comes the Bhagavad Gita, the most popular of all the Hindu scriptures. The Gita, as it is shortly called, is so well-known all over the world that it has been the second most translated work. Though the Bible ranks first in this regard it should be remembered that its translations were sponsored by the mighty machinery of the colonial rulers of Europe with the enormous material resources at its command. As for the Gita, its beauty, sublimity and universality prompted its admirers to translate it into different languages of the world.

It's probably the only religious book that was taught in a battlefield, a place filled with action. It was not taught to the disciples in the serene mountains of Himalayas. It is in the form of a dialogue between Sri Krishna, the great incarnation of God, and Arjuna, the warrior prince and a man of

action, who was caught in a dilemma about his duties. He was confused as to what is right and what is wrong. Serious questions concerning life and death, duty and devotion, knowledge and meditation were discussed, and sensible solutions offered which hold good even to this day. Manliness and selfless devotion to duty are the keynotes of this great little scripture of 700 verses.

There is a verse in Sanskrit that compares the Upanishads to the cows and the Gita to the milk. In other words, the Gita gives the essence of the Upanishadic philosophy in a simple and practicable form. It is an integral part of the Mahabharata.

Any list of the Hindu scriptures is incomplete without the two great epics, the Ramayan and the Mahabharata. Though these two great books deal primarily with the story of Sri Rama and that of the Kuru dynasty respectively, they can more rightly be called the encyclopedia of Hindu religion and culture. These two popular works have influenced and inspired the Hindu civilization for thousands of years. They are technically called Itihasa (history) since they contain the history of the two most important dynasties that ruled and shaped the destinies of our Hindu civilization.

The Puranas are another class of scriptures that describe the teachings of the Vedas through myths, legends and examples of great people. They were created to popularize and simplify religious teachings. There are eighteen main Puranas and many other lesser Puranas. There is also the Devi Mahatmya which describes the worship of God as the Divine Mother.

The Smritis of Manu, Yajnavalkya and Parashara, the Agamas and the treatises on the Darshanas are the other scriptures forming the magnificent edifice of Hinduism built upon the foundation of the Vedas. The Smritis are mostly codes of law intended to regulate Hindu society from time to time, according to the principles of the Veda. The Agamas are scriptures dealing with the worship of a particular aspect of God and prescribing detailed courses of discipline for the worshipper. The Darshanas are schools of philosophy.

The Buddhism and Jainism deny the authority of Vedas. In Sanskrit, those accept the authority of the Vedas are called 'Astika' and those who reject the Vedas are called 'Nastika'. Buddhist, Jain and Charvaka (materialism) scriptures are often termed 'Nastika' literature, though they remain firmly

within the fold of Hinduism. Dharmapad and Tripitakas in Buddhism and Kalpa Sutra in Jainism are the main scriptures.

Tamil is the oldest of the Dravidian group of languages. It has both Shaivism and Vaishnavism in its classical literature. On the Shaivite side are the four great teacher-saints: Appar, Sundarar, Thirujnaanasambandhar and Manikkavacagar. Their compositions are known as 'Thevaram' and 'Thiruvacakam'. Another literary masterpiece describing the idealistic forms of behavior, conduct and ethics is 'Thirukkural'. This anthology of two-line verse numbering 1330 in all, was written by Thiruvalluar in Tamil. The most popular Vaishnava literature in Tamil is 'Nalayira Divya Prabandham' which is a collection of 4000 verses and comprises devotional songs written by poet saints known as 'Alvars'.

As mentioned earlier, Hinduism is not a closed book. From time to time, sages in Bharat have given new impetus to the faith by removing bad or misleading practices and re-establishing the teachings of the Vedas. One example is Sikhism, which was founded by Guru Nanak Dev about 500 years ago. The 'Guru Granth Sahib' is the main scripture of Sikhism. It is written in Punjabi. The concept of 'Ek Omkar' taught by Guru Nanak Dev is rooted in Vedas.

Another example is Arya Samaj movement started by Swami Dayananda Saraswati more 100 years ago. His best known books are 'Satyarth Prakash' (Light of Truth) and commentaries on the Vedas.

There are many more books, some lost in the past, some still being written, and there will no doubt be many in the future. This is the secret of dynamism in Hinduism. Unity in diversity is the strength of our culture, enabling us to survive as the world's oldest religion and yet remain modern.





Raja Shivaji

A young prince is seated on the throne. His soldiers have brought a handcuffed Patil (a village chief) before him. Patil, with a thick and long moustache, had dishonored a helpless widow. In a stern and majestic tone the Young prince announced the judgment, “cut off his both hands and feet!! This is the least punishment for the crime he has committed”. All present were taken aback at the firm devotion of the prince to justice. Not only were they wonder-struck but also pleased beyond measure. The village people began to say to one another: ‘Ah! Look! How devoted to justice our young prince is!’ He is not in the least afraid of the wicked people. He is kind and loving towards the poor, the downfallen and the wretched. He is ever determined to help them and to protect them. What is more, he regards all women as mothers!

Don’t you wish to know who this young prince was? He was none other than Shivaji. At the time of this incident he was just fourteen. In another incident... in Nachani village of Pune province, a ferocious and huge cheetah was creating nuisance. He used to attack villagers suddenly and run away into the jungle. Scared villagers ran to Shivaji for help. They cried, “Save us from this wild animal. He has killed so many children. He attacks us especially in the night!”. After patiently listening to villagers, he said, ‘don’t worry!! Calm down. I am here to help you”. Shivaji, with his chieftain Yesaji and few soldiers, went to the jungle. As soon as the cheetah appeared, Shivaji’s soldiers frightened and backed off. But Shivaji and Yesaji bravely confronted the Cheetah and killed him in no time. Villagers rejoiced and hailed, “Jay Shivaji!!”

Shivaji’s father name was Shahaji. He was always away from home, fighting wars. How he became aware of this fearless and unique nature of his son is itself an interesting story. On a certain occasion, Shahaji took his son to the court of the Sultan of Bijapur. Shahaji and all others touched the ground thrice and saluted the Sultan. He asked his son Shivaji to do the same thing. But.....! Shivaji stood erect with his head unbent. He seemed to be determined that he would not bow down to a foreign ruler. He walked back from the court with a lion-like gait and bearing.

How did Shivaji acquire all these noble virtues - courage, heroism, love of the motherland and Dharma? Even when he was a little child, his

mother Jijabai used to tell him stories of heroes, of sages who appear in the Ramayana, and the Mahabharata. She taught him all about Hindu Samskars and patriotism. As Shivaji listened to these tales of heroism and Dharmik deeds, he grew more and more eager to be like Rama or Krishna, Bheema or Arjuna. His teacher, Dadoji Kondadev was a great man. He not only taught Shivaji about all kinds of warfare tactics but also about politics and good administration. Both, Dadoji kondadev and Jijabai, carved his personality.

Though Shivaji was a prince, he enjoyed playing with anyone of his age and easily mixed up with the common people. Soon, he became the heart of all. At the age of twelve, He and his friends took the oath of defeating foreign rulers and establish swarajya where people can live fearless and happy and follow their dharma. At the young age of sixteen, he started raising his own army. In the same age, he captured one of the forts. It was the fort of Torana. Another meaning of Torana is garland. Jijabai proudly said, 'look! Shivaji has brought us a garland of independence!'

As Shivaji grew old, he fought many wars and defeated several lieutenants and commanders of foreign rulers. He not only established his independent sovereign against all odds but also undertook reforms to make his people happy. He inspired and united the common man to fight against the tyranny of foreign rulers such as Aurangzeb, by inculcating a sense of pride and nationality in them. Isn't it great about Shivaji? Sant (sage) Ramadas was his spiritual guru (teacher). He sang in praise of Shivaji: "The land and its Dharma have been uplifted. A kingdom of bliss has arisen." Why Shivaji was so successful? Though there are several reasons, one of the most important reasons is his warfare strategy.



Warfare strategies and tactics

Shivaji was a great visionary and had lot of zeal to accomplish his mission. Shivaji seemed to be successful in reading the minds of enemies. He adopted guerilla warfare. He believed in sudden attack, make damage and run away

before enemy gets alert. Speed was his mantra. He would leave the enemy miles behind after he carried out the strikes. His ultimate aim was absolute victory for which he would not mind a tactical retreat or to step back and run away from the battle whenever required.

Shivaji was a meticulous planner. He developed a well-oiled network of spies across Bharat to keep the track of all the activities of the power centers of enemies. His strong intelligence network was the basis of his victory. He conducted ambitious operations like joint attack using cavalry, army and navy. He was aggressive. He preferred to attack enemy rather than sitting defensive. As and when required, he took bold but safe decisions. Unlike other rulers, he discouraged use of slow animals like elephant and camels in his army. He preferred horses. His favorite quote was... “yasya ashwah tasya medini”. Shivaji developed new forts that were invincible. He built more than 140 forts in his lifetime. A unique record in itself!! These forts were his power.

Though Shivaji was a warrior, he was religious too. He visited spiritual places and sought the blessings of spiritual persons. Despite all these, he never mixed religion with politics. Neither did he allow anybody to bring the religion or castism in administration.

Unique King

In his private life, his moral virtues were exceptionally high. Shivaji did not spare the enemies when captured, neither did he show any kindness to them. He preferred to take active part in all battles rather than just sitting on the throne and ordering his generals and commanders. That is why all his ministers, commanders and soldiers truly loved him. They were even ready to sacrifice their lives for him. Immediately after coronation, he started his digvijaya by attacking inner pockets of Mughal kingdom instead of enjoying Aristocracy. He defended the honor of enemy's women. But when Shivaji captured a daughter-in-law of Subhedar of Kalyan, he not only saved her, but sent her back to her house with all respect.

Coronation

Shivaji coronated himself after insisting by his family members, people and a prominent Brahmin. As soon as Shivaji declared himself as a king, several aristocrats and warriors from various parts of Bharat joined him. As all kings do, Shivaji also regulated his own currency - Shivarai hon. To eradicate

foreign (persian) words from the administration, he published a Rajvyavahar Kosh (a glossary of equivalent words with Samskrit origin) and implemented it in his kingdom. He established the Ashta Pradhan Mandal (a Council of 8 Ministers) to serve the people properly and effectively. Each minister was given the responsibility of major departments like administration, military affairs, etc.

A caretaker of Praja (people)

Whatever it takes, Shivaji always used to take care of his people. His people were his first concern. He introduced a new system of revenue collection. He regulated dual tax structure where different brackets of taxes were prevalent depending on the condition of soil/land (whether irrigated or



barren). He never ever increased taxes or put burden of paying taxes on people. He provided all kinds of help to farmers. In the days of scarcity, he spent money from the govt's treasury and provided food and shelter to people. He dug wells, lakes and constructed water tanks, new temples across his kingdom. He gave all types of facilities to the families of soldiers who died in the battle. He had a good espionage system. He stopped the practice of slavery which was prevalent in Bharat. He imposed severe punishment for the trading of bonded labor. He gave full protection to women. Women fearlessly moved around in his tenure. He gave extreme punishment to criminals (accused) for their misbehavior and

crime and while giving justice he did not even spare his own relatives.

Shivaji, such a great king, lived around 50 years. He was born in the year 1630 and took his last breath in the year 1680. All his life, he cherished a dream of Hindavi Swarajya and brought it into reality. He has been a source of inspiration and pride to the past generations and will continue to inspire today and future generations too.



-: Exercise :-

Match the Pairs

(Following are the lines of Sangh Prarthana)

- | | |
|-----------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1) <i>Mausi ji</i> | 1) <i>A Hindu King</i> |
| 2) <i>Jijabai</i> | 2) <i>Hindu Scripture</i> |
| 3) <i>Shivaji</i> | 3) <i>Spiritual Guru of Shivaji</i> |
| 4) <i>Sant Ramdas</i> | 4) <i>What is heard</i> |
| 5) <i>Shrutis</i> | 5) <i>Kamal (Lakshmibai)</i> |
| 6) <i>Smritis</i> | 6) <i>Shivaji's Mother</i> |
| 7) <i>Gita</i> | 7) <i>what is remembered</i> |

Fill up the blanks

- 1) _____ started shakhas for girls.
a) Doctorji b) Lakshmibai c) Tilak d) None of these.
- 2) _____ coronated himself as a King.
a) Shivaji b) Rana Pratap c) Shahaji d) None of these
- 3) Shivaji punished _____ for dishonoring a woman.
a) Yesaji b) Shahaji c) Patil d) None of these
- 4) _____ to the cows and the _____ to the milk.
a) Gita b) Upanishads c) Vedas d) None of these
- 5) The oldest scripture is _____.
a) Vedas b) Gita c) Upanishads d) None of these
- 6) Two great epics are _____ and _____.
a) Gita b) Vedas c) Ramayana d) Mahabharata
- 7) Known Hindu Scriptures are _____.
a) Two b) Three c) Four d) More than Four

Questions

1) What is the meaning of Subhashitam?

2) Write last two lines of the Shloka.

3) Write first stanza of the Geet

4) What is meant by “Vedas”? How many are they?

5) What is meant by “Shrutis” and “Smriti”?

6) Describe Shivaji’s Warfare Strategies.

Skit

Characters:

Shivaji Raje - a King

Yesaji - Commander of Shivaji Raje

Jijabai - Shivaji's Mother

Patil - Chief of a village Ranze

Farmers - 2 or 3 Farmers

Soldiers - 2 or 3 Soldiers

(Frequently Shivaji Raje along with his men used to go around in his province. People used to shout excitedly "SHIVAJI RAJE!!!" as they see their king. Whenever Shivaji Raje visits any province, he inquires about the problems of villagers.)

Scene 1

(In this event, Shivaji Raje is affectionately inquiring about people's problems.)

Farmers to Shivaji - Raje ! we are facing a severe problem of water scarcity. It is been too hot this year. Our crops are getting dried. We are really worried about our crops.

Shivaji - Yes, I am aware of this problem and I have talked to yesaji about it.

Shivaji to Yesaji - Yesaji ! Make the arrangements and give them some help.

Farmers - (together raising their hands) Shivaji Raje Ki Jay ! (Farmers turn back and go away)

Shivaji - (Murmuring!!) I am really worried, monsoon should be good or else we are going to face many serious problems. This is the second consecutive year of water scarcity.

Yesaji - Don't worry, Raje. It is not as worse as last year.

Shivaji - let's turn back, MaSaheb is waiting for us.

(Shivaji and his soldiers are about to leave. Suddenly a man comes in their way. He is disgusted and frustrated)

Man - (in a shrill voice) Raje !! Please help me. I am doomed. Give me justice.

Shivaji - What happened? Why are you so agitated and worried?

Man - (crying, in a sad tone) Raje !! my daughter was dishonoured.

Shivaji - (shocked!!) What? How could this happen in my kingdom? Are you telling truth? Who did that?

Man - (scared !!!) I am scared of him ! I can not take his name.

Shivaji - (consoling, convincing) Don't be scared! I will protect you. Tell me his name.

Man - (still scared, in... voice) Raje ! he is no other, but Patil of my village.

Shivaji to Yesaji - (turns to Yesaji) Yesaji !!! Ask patil to see me at once. If he refuses, arrest him.

(Yesaji goes away to Patil's village)

Scene 2

Yesaji to Patil - (orders...) Patil ! Come with me at once. Raje wants to see you.

Patil - (arrongtly !!) Who Raje? What Raje? I do not recognize any Raje.

Yesaji - Patil ! This is my last warning!! If you do not come, I will have to arrest you.

Patil - Go to hell!!! I am not going with you.

(Yesaji with the help of soldiers forcefully grabs him and cuffs him. Patil is shouting and trying to escape)

Scene 3

(Shivaji is sitting on his throne, discussing politics with his ministers and his mother Jijabai. Yesaji comes in)

Yesaji - Raje! I have brought Patil with me. I had to forcefully arrest him.

Shivaji - Bring him in front of me.

(Yesaji brings Patil in. Patil hand-cuffed, tired, angry and agitated)

Shivaji - (high pitch) Patil ! What am I hearing? Is it true? Did you dishonour farmer's daughter?

Patil - (arrongtly !! shameless!!) So what? I am Patil. I can and I will do anything I like.

Shivaji - This is my kingdom. I can not tolerate this. You must be punished.

Shivaji to Yesaji - (Orders) Yesaji !! Take this man away. Cut both his hands and legs. That is what his punishment. Do... it ! right away....

Yesaji - Ji Raje !!

Patil - (now scared!!, starts crying) Raje ! Please forgive me this time. I won't do it again. Do not punish me so hard.

(Patil is crying continuously. Yesaji drags him away and cut his hands and legs. Patil shouting.. AH.AH...). (Ministers and Jijabai are shaken by this incident. They disagree with Shivaji's decision. They think punishment was too harsh.)

Jijabai to Shivaji - Shivaba !! Don't you think this was too harsh punishment for him? You should have spared him giving mild punishment?

Shivaji - (respectfully) No..... No MaSaheb !! I did the right thing. In my kingdom, women are most respected. I can not tolerate anyone hurting them. Otherwise ...what will be the difference between my reign and Muslims reign?? Now no one will dare to do such a thing.

(Jijabai and other ministers are convinced and happy).

Jijabai - Shabbas, Shivaba !! I am so proud of you.

Other Ministers - (hails Shivaji) Shivaji Raje Ki Jay !! Hara Hara Mahedev !!! Jay Bhavani, Jay Shivaji !!