



Syllabus

Year II, Quarter IV

Age Group : 5 to 8

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).

Visit <http://www.balagokulam.org>

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Shloka

रामवन्दना (raama vandana)

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|--------------------------------|--|
| श्रीराम राम रघु नन्दन राम राम | Sri raama raama raghu-nandana raama raama |
| श्रीराम राम भरताग्रज राम राम । | Sri raama raama bharataa-graja raama raama |
| श्रीराम राम रणकर्कश राम राम | Sri raama raama rana-karkasha raama raama |
| श्रीराम राम शरणं भव राम राम ॥ | Sri raama raama sharanan bhava raama raama |

Meaning:

O raghunandan Raama, elder brother of Bharata Raam, Stable in any game, I surrender to you.

मंत्र (Mantra for chanting)

There are 13 mantras which are different names of Sun God. We should chant a mantra before each Surya Namaskar. Following are the first and second mantra.

ॐ मित्राय नमः ।

AUM mitrAya namaH ।

ॐ रवये नमः ।

AUM ravaye namaH ।

Subhashitam (Words of wisdom)

महाजनो येन गतः स पन्थाः ।

mahAjano yena gataH sa panthAH |

Meaning: Follow the path of great people.

Geet

**Hamko man ki shakti dena
(O God, Give strength of mind)**

Hamko man ki shakti dena, man vijay kare
Dusaron ke jayase pehele, khudhko jaya kare

Bhed bhav apne dilse saf karsake
Doston se bhul ho to maf karsake
Jhuth se bache rahe sach ka dam bhare
Dusaron ke jayase pehele, khudhko jaya kare

Mushkile padee to hampe, itna karma kar
Sath de to dharma ka, chale to dharma kar
Khud pe housla rahe, bade se na dare
Dusaron ke jayase pehele, khudhko jaya kare

Meaning

O God, give us strength to overcome our mind (ourselves)
before attempting to conquer others, conquer oneself

Let us cleanse our mind of discrimination (of persons)
Let us try to forgive the mistakes of friends.
Let us discard falsehood and follow the path of truth

Whatever the difficulties in the path, we will continue to work.
We will tread the path of righteousness with the blessings of Dharma.
We will possess self confidence to fight evil



Vijayadashami

Vijayadashami is one of the most important festivals of Hindus. The way Deepavali is festival of lights, Vijayadashami is a festival of victory. In Samskritam, 'Vijaya' means victory and 'Dashami' means 10th day. Thus 'Vijaya Dashami' means victory on the 10th day. It is one of the most auspicious days for the Hindus. It falls in the Hindu month of Ashwin (September-October). It comes as the finale of the nine-day festival of Navaratri.

Navaratri festival is celebrated for 9 days. On the 9th day, Saraswati pooja is celebrated. Special pujas are offered to Goddess Saraswati - the divine source of wisdom, knowledge and enlightenment and Goddess Durga - Goddess of Strength and power. The 10th day is "Vijayadashami". This festival of victory is preceded by worship of Goddess Saraswati and Goddess Durga.

Vijayadashami - a festival of victory

Vijayadashami is a festival of victory because it is resplendent with many an inspiring episode reflecting the victorious culmination of deeds of valour of our ancestors. This day is marked by significant victories in Ramayan and Mahabharat.

It is said in Ramayana that on this day Shri Rama killed the demon Ravana and achieved a triumphant victory over the demons. Shri Rama worshipped Goddess Durga just before the battle with the demon Ravana started. Shri Rama worshipped Shami tree on this day just before proceeding to Ayodhya.

In Mahabharata, Pandavas spent thirteen years in exile. During the last year of Ajnaat-vaas (living incognito), they had hidden their arms in the Shami tree. This is the day, their ajnat-vaas was over and they had taken out their arms from the Shami tree and revealed their identity. That marked their preparation for the victorious war of Kurukshetra. Invoking these inspiring memories, the

Shami tree is worshipped on this day.

The story of how the demon Mahishasura was killed is also striking. Demon Mahishasura performed severe penance and became immortal and ruler of all three worlds; heaven, earth and the nether-world. Gods became powerless. As per Lord Vishnu's advice, they parted with a portion of their divine powers to form into a new physical form - Goddess Mahishasura Mardini. Literally "Mahishasura Mardini" means destroyer of Mahishasura. Thus Goddess Mahishasura Mardini took a physical form as the combined might of all Gods. She killed the demon Mahishasura after a ceaseless fight of nine days and nights.

Celebrations

Grand processions of all Gods and goddesses are taken out in every town and village on this day, signifying the victory of the forces of righteousness over those of wickedness. It marks a new and prosperous beginning. New ventures started on this day are believed to flourish and bring prosperity. Children being tutored on this day - to have a head start in their education. In the medieval period, the Hindu Kings and Emperors used to start their mission on this day.

In old days, each individual used to carry a weapon. They used to worship their weapons on this day. It is called "Aayudha (weapons) Pooja". The same tradition is continued with some modifications. Now-a-days Hindu people worship different types of things which are modes of their earning and progress. For example, students worship books, businessmen worship their factories and machines, musicians worship their instruments and technical workers worship their tools. Even vehicles are also washed, decorated and worshipped.



To celebrate Shri Rama's victory, Rama-leela is observed by the people with great enthusiasm and éclat. Ram-Leela is a stage enactment of Ramayana. On this

day, people arrange a street play based on the Rama-Ravana war. They create dummies (effigies) of Rama, Seeta, Lakshmana and Ravana. Rama-Lakshmana aim at Ravana's dummy with burning arrows and burn dummy Ravana. After that, people welcome Rama, Seeta and Lakshmana as if they are welcoming the real ones.

The lesson of this legend is so beautifully clear. Even the good and the righteous can succeed against the evil forces only when they come together in an organized endeavour. Could there be a more telling message to the present-day?

Vijayadashami as a HSS Balagokulam Utsav

Vijayadashami is celebrated as one of the six utsavs of HSS. For HSS, Vijayadashami is more special than just a festival. It is because this day is the birth day of an organization - Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) - which has been the source of inspiration for HSS. On this very day, a great Hindu leader, Dr. Hedgewar, founded RSS in Bharat in 1925 for the rejuvenation and reorganization of the age-old Hindu Dharma.

Truely it has been said that Sanghe Shaktih Kalau Yuge - Organization holds the key to strength in Kaliyuga (today's world). Dr. Hedgewar realized that though Hindu people are immensely superior in culture, wealth and armies, they were defeated by foreign aggressors because they were disorganized. Though having all qualities of "Universal Dharma", Hindu Dharma has not been able to achieve that status because of disorganized Hindu people. Doctorji started RSS in Bharat on this day to organize Hindu people in Bharat. Keeping the tradition of Vijayadashami, RSS has been marching from success to success in all sectors of life.

Organizing Hindu society outside Bharat is also necessary which is one of the objectives of HSS. Vijayadashami being a festival of victory and a birth day of RSS, HSS too has given it a place in its six utsavs.





Story of King Ambarish

Renowned King Ambarish was a great devotee of Lord Vishnu. He made a penance and performed a fast to get the blessings of Lord Vishnu. At its conclusion, he was about to take meal. Suddenly sage Durvasa arrived there and said, "Hey Rajan (king), Let me take a bath and we shall have meal together." King Ambarish respected sage Durvasa's wish and waited for him.

However, sage Durvasa took longer time than expected to return back. The auspicious time to take a meal was approaching fast. King Ambarish neither wanted to miss it nor disregard the sage Durvasa's wish. So, king Ambarish ate just a mint leaf as a token of breaking his fast.

Sage Durvasa returned back from the river. He came to know that king Ambarish broke the fast. Sage Durvasa became very very angry. In his anger, he summoned a demoness to kill king Ambarish.



The demoness was about to kill king Ambarish. But suddenly, a sharp rotating disc appeared from nowhere and punished her, thus protected a king. It was Lord Vishnu's Sudarshan Chakra. Now Sudarshan Chakra followed sage Durvasa. In spite of hard attempts by sage Durvasa, The Sudarshan Chakra could not be halted. Sage Durvasa ran away to Lord Shiva and pleaded to save him. However, Lord Shiva pointed him towards Lord Vishnu. Sage Durvasa, then, went to Lord Vishnu. Lord Vishnu advised him to go back to king Ambarish and beg his forgiveness.

Sage Durvasa, then, hurriedly went back to king Ambarish and asked for his forgiveness. King Ambarish was kind enough to forgive him. The Sudarshan Chakra, then, became calm and disappeared.





Story of King Rantideva

Those were the glorious days in ancient India (Bharat) when men were honest and truthful and kings were ever engaged in striving for the welfare of their people. In such times there once lived a king whose name was Rantideva. He had a large and generous heart and every being came within his embrace of love for he saw Lord Vishnu in every living creature.

King Rantideva was always making gifts to the poor and the needy. He was famous in the world for his warm hospitality which he extended to rich and poor alike. Thus passed many years of prosperity and people basked in the generous love of their king.

But then a time came when the country was hit by famine. The crops failed, the cattle died and men, women and children starved in large numbers. They flocked to the gates of the king's palace. Rantideva would sit and pray, "O Lord, give me the strength to remove their suffering." Then he would go out and distribute to his people what little he had left. And yet the famine continued. In fact it grew worse from day to day.

And there was a time when he did not have enough to eat for himself. He could not even feed his family. None of his family members ate unless the masses had been fed. Sometimes there would be food for his family members, but he himself would have to go hungry. Nevertheless, he was happy, because his mind was satisfied when his people were fed.

As the conditions grew worse, the king did not have anything left to give to the hungry and the starving people. No help came to him. And yet his faith in Lord Vishnu only increased. Day after day, the king and his dependents starved and the famine persisted.

When the king had thus fasted for forty-eight days, someone brought him a bowl of porridge made of flour, milk and ghee. By this time the king was in no position to even move, so weak had he become due to continuous starvation. Overcome by hunger and thirst, Rantideva and his family were indeed glad to see an unexpected meal before them. They were about to eat when there came to the door, a wrinkled old Brahmin,

much in need of food. The king received him respectfully and gave him some of the porridge to eat. As they were about to eat again, a beggar came to the door. His face appeared pinched with hunger, so Rantideva gave him too, some of the meal to eat. Then there came a sweeper and he brought with him his dogs. He looked at the king pitifully and said, "Maharaj! My dogs and I have not had any food for many days now. We are starving for want of food. Now we have come to you, for if you will not help us, who will?" So the king gave him the remaining porridge.

Now the king and his family had again no food to eat. There was just a little drink left. Just then, came a Chandala, his throat parched with thirst, his eyes heavy with exhaustion. He begged the King to moisten his dry lips with a little bit of water. Rantideva held the cup to his cracked lips. He prayed to the Lord and said, "Please, Lord! I do not care for the rewards of this earth. Nor do I care for powers of any kind. My only prayer is - give me the capacity to feel the pain of others and the power to serve them. Let me not ever be indifferent to their sorrows and their sufferings. Make me the instrument to give them relief, to make them happy."

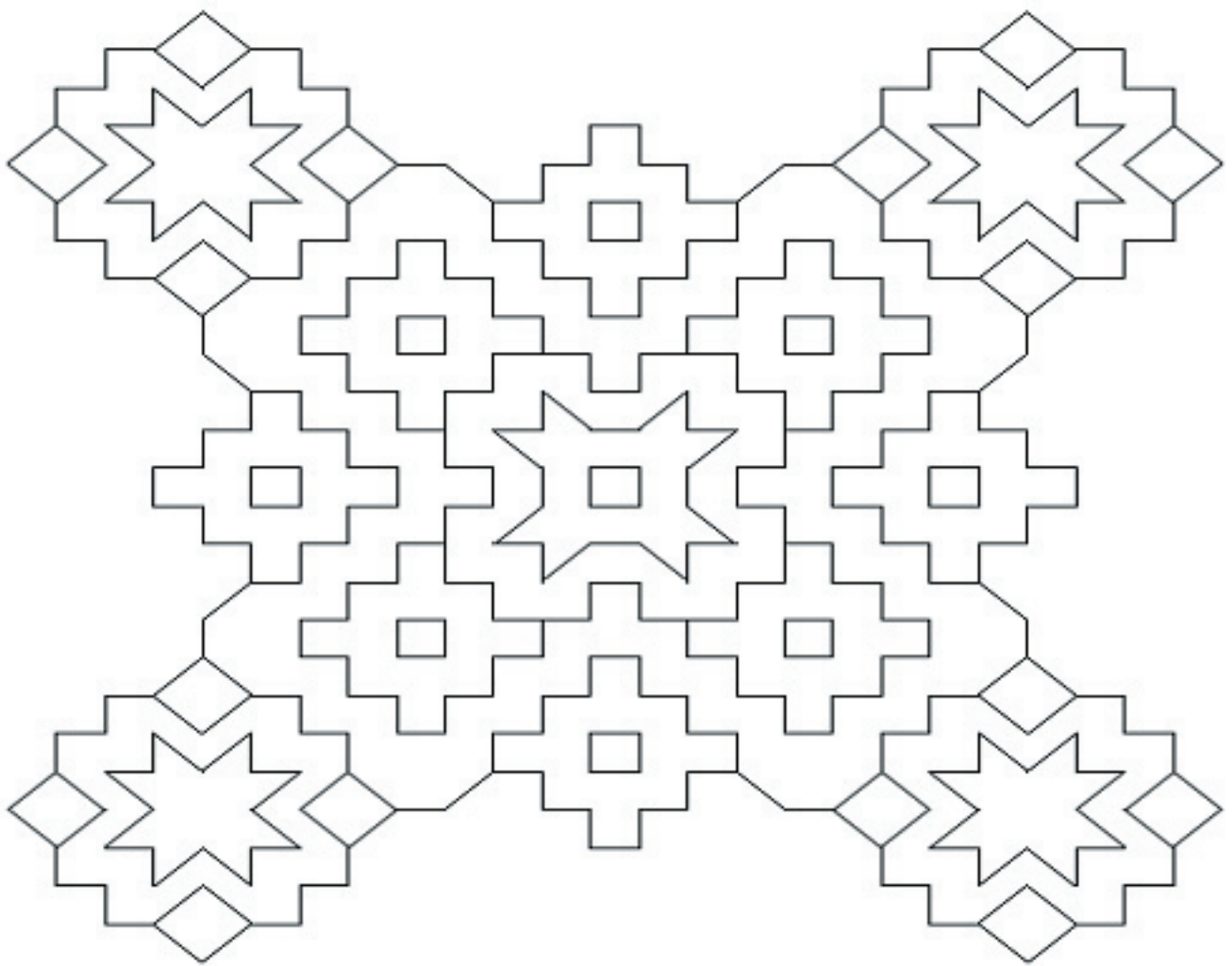
The man drank the water. The life came back into his eyes. And what a surprise!! the king felt his own hunger, thirst and fatigue dropping away from him. He and his family members felt refreshed and fulfilled. Suddenly, the Maya, the consort of Lord Vishnu, appeared before him. She smiled at him and said, "O King, I am indeed pleased to see your devotion and your extraordinary love for your people. You have suffered much. If you worship me now, I can remove all your wants for all time to come. I can give you the riches and the entire wealth of the world."

Rantideva showed Maya due respect, but asked her for nothing. He said to her, "I have no use for all the riches you have to offer me. I have no wish to live any longer than I have to. I do not hanker for the enjoyments of the world, because my mind does not run after them." Maya, then, vanished like a dream does when a person awakes.

Then Rantideva was blessed by the presence of the Lord Himself. He worshipped Him and prayed that he might never be separated from Him. In time, Rantideva became one of the greatest yogis of the land. He merged himself in meditation. By his wonderful service to his people and his love for all living creatures whom he worshipped as Lord Vishnu, he attained the blissful Being of Lord Narayana.



Color this Rangoli



-: Exercise :-

Fill up the blanks

- 1) Vijayadashami is a festival of _____.
a) lights b) victory c) kites d) None of these
- 2) Shri Rama achieved a triumphant victory over the demons on the day of _____.
a) Deepavali b) Sankranti c) Navaratri d) Vijayadashami
- 3) Sudarshan Chakra (rotating disc) is a weapon of Lord _____.
a) Brahma b) Vishnu c) Shiva d) None of these
- 4) Vijayadashami festival falls in the Hindu month of _____.
a) Kartik b) Ashwin c) Shravan d) None of these
- 5) _____ holds the key to strength in Kaliyuga (today's world).
a) Honesty b) Bravery c) Organization d) None of these
- 6) Sage _____ was angry with the King Ambarish because he broke the fast.
a) Durvasa b) Valmiki c) Vasishtha d) None of these
- 7) King Rantideva was famous for his _____ towards his people.
a) generosity b) honesty c) cruelty d) None of these
- 8) King Ambarish and King Rantideva were devotees of Lord _____.
a) Vishnu b) Shiva c) Brahma d) Dronacharya
- 9) Upon blessed by Maya (consort of Lord Vishnu), King Rantideva asked _____ for himself.
a) wealth b) kingdom c) nothing d) heaven

Questions:

1) What is the moral of the story of King Ambarish?

2) Why was Sage Durvasa angry with the king Ambarish?

3) Who saved king Ambarish from sage Durvasa's anger?

4) On what day the "Ayudha (weapons) pooja" is performed?

5) Mention at least one event that happened on the day of Vijayadashami.

6) Subhashitam: mahAjano yena gataH sa panthAH |

What is the meaning of above subhashitam?

Identify true or false:

- 1) Ashwin is a name of the Hindu month.
- 2) 'Vijaya' means victory and 'dashami' means 10th day.
- 3) Vijayadashami is one of the six utsavs (festivals) of HSS.
- 4) Navaratri is one of the six utsavs (festivals) of HSS.
- 5) Hindu Dharma is Universal Dharma.

Unscramble the words:

dantireva

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mabharis

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survada

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dpanava

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Shloka

लक्ष्मि वन्दना (Lakshmi Vandana)

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| नमस्ते गरुडारुढे | Namaste garudaa-rudhe |
| कोलासुरभयङ्करि । | kolaasura bhayankari। |
| सर्व पाप हरे देवि | Sarva papa hare devi |
| महालक्ष्मि नमोऽस्तु ते ॥ | mahaa-lakshmi namo-a-stute।। |

Meaning:

O Goddess, who rides on Garuda, and creates fear in Kola monster, who removes all sins, I bow to you.

मंत्र (mantra - for repetition /chanting)

There are 13 mantras which are different names of Sun God. We should chant a mantra before each Surya Namaskar. Following are the third and fourth mantra.

ॐ सुर्याय नमः । AUM suryAya namaH ।

ॐ भानवे नमः । AUM bhAnave namaH ।

Subhashitam (Words of wisdom)

बहुजनहिताय बहुजनसुखाय ।

bahujanahitAya bahujanasukhAya |

Meaning: For the good of many, for the happiness of many (majority of people)

Geet

**Hamko man ki shakti dena
(O God, Give strength of mind)**

Hamko man ki shakti dena, man vijay kare
Dusaron ke jayase pehele, khudhko jaya kare

Bhed bhav apne dilse saf karsake
Doston se bhul ho to maf karsake
Jhuth se bache rahe sach ka dam bhare
Dusaron ke jayase pehele, khudhko jaya kare

Mushkile padee to hampe, itna karma kar
Sath de to dharma ka, chale to dharma kar
Khud pe housla rahe, bade se na dare
Dusaron ke jayase pehele, khudhko jaya kare

Meaning

O God, give us strength to overcome our mind (ourselves)
before attempting to conquer others, conquer oneself

Let us cleanse our mind of discrimination (of persons)
Let us try to forgive the mistakes of friends.
Let us discard falsehood and follow the path of truth

Whatever the difficulties in the path, we will continue to work.
We will tread the path of righteousness with the blessings of Dharma.
We will possess self confidence to fight evil



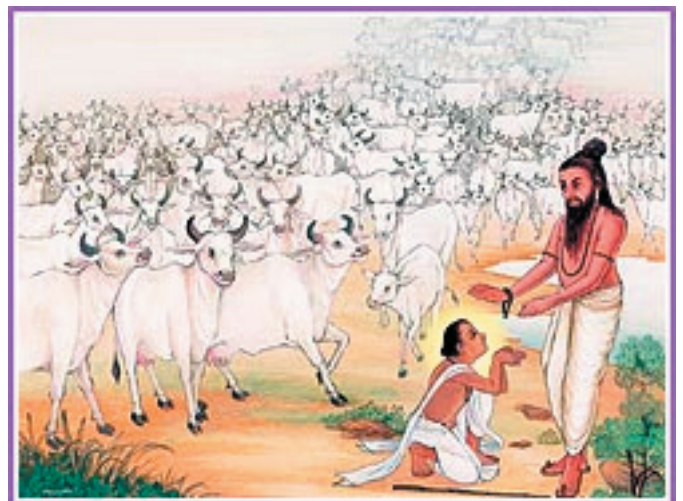
Story of Satyakam

Satyakam was the son of a woman named Jabal. He had a strong wish to study and so he left home in search of a guru. He went to the ashram of sage Gautam and requested him to make him his pupil. Gautam questioned him, "Before I make you my pupil, I need to know about your family." This puzzled Satyakam, as he had no idea about his family except his mother. But to join the ashram he would not lie. He told the sage that he would ask his mother. So he went to Jabal.

His mother told him, "Go to the sage and tell him 'I am the son of Jabal and my name is Satyakam Jabali'." Satyakam went to Gautam and told him what he knew. The sage was pleased with his love for truth, honesty and accepted him as his pupil.

Sage Gautam wanted to test Satyakam's patience and his desire to learn. One day he told Satyakam, "Satyakam! take the herd of 400 weak and ill cows of the ashram, nurture them well and return back when they grew to 1000. Upon your return, I shall start your education." Satyakam knew that sage Gautam was testing his patience. Without uttering a single word he left with the cows. He took them to the forest and looked after them with loving care.

Satyakam built an ashram for himself in the forest and nurtured cows with full dedication. He also followed all the rules and duties of brahmachari. Years went by. The number of cows increased to 1000. Each and every cow was strong and healthy. Satyakam had fulfilled sage Gautam's wish. It was a time for Satyakam to return back to ashram and start education.



All the gods and deities were happy with Satyakam's obedience and dedication to his guru. On his way back to Ashram, Satyakam stopped at one place to take a night-halt and lighted a fire to warm himself. During that night, he was blessed with the sacred knowledge of Vedas and Shastras by Agni (fire). On the following evening, Satyakam stayed near a lake alongwith cows where he was blessed and enlightened by a swan. Similarly, he was also enlightened by a bull and a waterfowl.

Now enlightened Satyakam returned back to the sage Gautam's ashram with all 1000 cows. Sage Gautam saw the glow of enlightenment on his face. He was surprised. He was also very happy that Satyakam had looked after the cows very well. He asked Satyakam, "Child! your face shines like a scholar. Who taught you?" Satyakam told him about his four teachers and what they taught him.

After settling down, Satyakam respectfully requested sage Gautam, "Teacher! According to your wish, I have come back with 1000 cows. Now, please teach me." Gautam replied, "Child! I have nothing to teach what you don't know. You are already enlightened by your four teachers. In fact, now you are more knowledgeable than me. I bless you!!"





Story of Ajamil

There lived a Brahmin named Ajamil. He was an exponent of the Shastras. He was always found in the company of people with saintly nature and good conduct.

However, with the passage of time, Ajamil started making friends with people having bad habits. As a result of bad influence, Ajamil started stealing money from his house besides indulging in gambling.

Ajamil underwent a big change in a very short period of time. He resorted to telling lies, stealing, eating meat and not to mention, he became an alcoholic too.

Thus, many years passed by. He had a little son. His name was Narayan. He was the apple of Ajamil's eyes. Ajamil had not become an old man. He became so weak that he was unable to get up from his bed. He was awaiting his death desperately.



During this phase of his life, his son Narayan, did not fade from his memory. He kept on saying "Narayan Narayan" repeatedly. Thus he would utter 'Narayan' the name of Lord Vishnu, very frequently throughout the day.



Ajamil, as a result of frequently calling out Narayan, gradually underwent a change. He started recollecting his devotion and prayers to Lord Vishnu during his prime. He repented for all his wrong deeds and vices.

Ajamil who had come so close to death, now started recovering from his illness. He spent the rest of his life in the service of God. When he was on his deathbed, God himself came to take him and thus Ajamil was purified of all the sins that he had once committed.





Story of Sage Valmiki

A long time ago, the robber, named Ratnakar, used to live in the forest. He robbed and sometimes even killed those who passed through that forest. In fact, Ratnakar was a person from a respectable and good family. His parents lived in a small hut nearby in the forest. However, Ratnakar had total apathy towards education. He also fell into bad company. This led him to commit thefts and murder for which he did not even feel guilty. Ratnakar's parents, shocked at his behaviour, soon died in despair.

In course of time, Ratnakar got married and had children. Thereafter he realized that it was difficult to feed them. He began robbing the travellers and even killed those who resisted him. To keep count of how many people he killed, he dropped a small pebble in a big drum for each victim. He spent years in robbing people, killing them and satisfying the needs of his family.

One day Ratnakar hid behind a tree and waiting for a victim. All of a sudden he heard melodious tune of the veena (a musical instrument). The traveller was playing the veena and also chanting - 'Narayan, Narayan' - in a sweet voice. The traveller was nobody, but Narad Muni (sage). The next moment Narad Muni appeared before him.

"Hey, Narayan! Or whoever you are! Where are you going? No one can go further. I am going to kill you," said Ratnakar. Narad Muni asked calmly, "Kill me? But why?"

Ratnakar replied, "I earn my livelihood by robbing and killing travellers. Have a look at this drum. I have killed as many people as there are stones in it."

"How terrible! You have committed terrible sins by killing the innocent."

"Sin? What sin? I do this to bring up my children, to support my family" Ratnakar retorted.

"How can you say so? You must do as I say; go home and ask them as to who from your family, is ready to share your sin of killing the innocent."

"There is no need to ask them. I am sure they will say 'yes, we are with you.'"

"You are under a wrong impression. Go and ask them."

"Oh! So you imagine you are going to escape from here while I am away?"

"No, no, not at all. I swear by the name of Narayan, whom I worship, that I shall not budge from here till you return."

Ratnakar somehow believed Narad Muni's words and reached home.

"Father, what have you brought for us today?" asked his wife and children eagerly.

"Be patient. Answer my question first. So far I have killed many people and looted the dead, to satisfy your needs.

Though these were sinful acts, I committed them entirely for you. Therefore, are you ready to share my sins?" Ratnakar was talking to them seriously.

"What nonsense! We never asked you to kill people. It is your duty to support us. You could have done it in any other way. You did not commit sins on our advice. So the question of sharing them does not arise at all."

Ratnakar was completely shattered on knowing that none in his family was going to share his sins. He returned back to Narad Muni.

"O great Rishi! You have taught me a lesson. All are with us in times of prosperity but none in adverse circumstances.

I really repent for killing innocent people. Now you must be my redeemer and save my soul," Ratnakar pleaded with him, grieving all the while.

Narad Muni assured him in an affectionate manner.

"Don't be so disheartened, Ratna. Your repentance has already started lessening your sins. A person certainly changes for better if his heart is filled with remorse. Now do one thing. Chant 'Ram, Ram' non-stop. You will be free from all your earlier sins."

Ratnakar vowed to do accordingly.

"O great sage! I will obey your order. I will stop robbing people from this very instant. Now I shall do nothing but chant Shree Ram's name. I am grateful to you for showing me the right path."

Ratnakar's mind and approach towards life was completely changed.

Afterwards chanting 'Narayan, Narayan,' Narad Muni proceeded on his way.





Make your own Deepavali Greeting Card

Items required: A construction paper of size 4"x5" (half of the regular letter size paper), small picture of baby Krishna (or your favourite God)

Procedure:

- 1) Take a plain construction paper of size 4"x5"
- 2) With you own imagination, decorate the outline (4 borders) from both sides of the paper.
- 3) Draw a baby Krishna's picture on inner-right side of the paper. You can also cut and paste a readymade picture on the paper.
- 4) Write your own Greeting-message on the inner-left side of the paper.
- 5) Fold the paper vertically from the middle so that text and picture will come inside.



Your sweet and simple greeting card is ready. You can create many greeting cards and give them to your friends on Deepavali.



-: Exercise :-

Fill up the blanks

- 1) Sage _____ was a Guru (teacher) of Satyakam.
a) Shravan b) Dhruv c) Bhageerath d) None of these
- 2) Brahmin Ajamil transformed completely by taking a name of _____.
a) Shiva b) Narayana c) Agni d) None of these
- 3) _____ was Sage Valmiki's previous name.
a) Narad b) Ratnakar c) Satyakam d) None of these
- 4) Upon sage _____'s advice, Ratnakar gave up all wrong doings.
a) Valmiki b) Vasishtha c) Narad d) None of these
- 5) Ratnkar's _____ refused to share his sins.
a) friends b) enemies c) family d) None of these
- 6) _____ is another name of Lord Vishnu.
a) Narad b) Narayana c) Ratnakar d) None of these
- 7) _____ is another name for a sage.
a) Muni b) demon c) man d) None of these

Match the pairs:

- | | |
|----------------|-------------------------------|
| 1) Satyakam | 1) Sage Valmiki |
| 2) Ratnakar | 2) Lord Vishnu |
| 3) Narayana | 3) Son of a woman Jabal |
| 4) Sage Gautam | 4) A musical instrument |
| 5) Veena | 5) Guru (teacher) of Satyakam |

Identify true or false:

- 1) Satyakam gained knowledge from only sage Gautam.
- 2) Brahmin Ajamil developed bad habits because of company of bad people.
- 3) Brahmin Ajamil underwent a change by chanting the name of Narayana.
- 4) Ratnkar was purified from all his sins by chanting the name of Shri Ram.
- 5) Ratnakar's family happily agreed to share his sins.

Unscramble following words

ynaraan

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kratnaar

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ugatam

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ksatyaam

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rnaad

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veean

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gani

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Shloka

लक्ष्मि वन्दना (Lakshmi Vandana)

| | |
|--------------------------|------------------------------|
| सर्वज्ञे सर्ववरदे | Sarvagye sarva-varade |
| सर्वदुष्टभङ्करि । | sarva-dushta-bhayankari |
| सर्वदुःखहरे देवि | Sarva duh-kh hare devi |
| महालक्ष्मि नमोऽस्तु ते ॥ | mahaa-lakshmi namo-a-stute ॥ |

Meaning:

You know every thing. You give all kinds of boon to all. All demons fear of you. You destroy all kinds of unhappiness. O MahaaLakshmi, I bow to you.

मंत्र (mantra - for repetition /chanting)

There are 13 mantras which are different names of Sun God. We should chant a mantra before each Surya Namaskar. Following are the fifth and sixth mantra.

ॐ खगाय नमः । AUM khagAya namaH ।

ॐ पूष्णे नमः । AUM pUShNe namaH ।

Subhashitam (Words of wisdom)

सत्यं कण्ठस्य भूषणम् ।

satyaM kaNThasya bhUShaNam |

Meaning: Truth of is the ornament of throat (Always speak truth)

Geet

**Hamko man ki shakti dena
(O God, Give strength of mind)**

Hamko man ki shakti dena, man vijay kare
Dusaron ke jayase pehele, khudhko jaya kare

Bhed bhav apne dilse saf karsake
Doston se bhul ho to maf karsake
Jhuth se bache rahe sach ka dam bhare
Dusaron ke jayase pehele, khudhko jaya kare

Mushkile padee to hampe, itna karma kar
Sath de to dharma ka, chale to dharma kar
Khud pe housla rahe, bade se na dare
Dusaron ke jayase pehele, khudhko jaya kare

Meaning

O God, give us strength to overcome our mind (ourselves)
before attempting to conquer others, conquer oneself

Let us cleanse our mind of discrimination (of persons)
Let us try to forgive the mistakes of friends.
Let us discard falsehood and follow the path of truth

Whatever the difficulties in the path, we will continue to work.
We will tread the path of righteousness with the blessings of Dharma.
We will possess self confidence to fight evil



Story of King Bharat

India is our forefather's land. It is also our spiritual land where our Dharma, Hindu Dharma, flourished. India's true and ancient name is Bharat. Do you know how our spiritual land was named as "Bharat"?

Well!!! There lived a great and brave king namely Bharat. Our spiritual land was named after him. There is a wonderful story about the birth of King Bharat.

Bharat was the son of a king Dushyant and Shakuntala. Dushyant was the king of Hastinapur; and ancestors of kaurava and pandavas. Once, hunting in the forest, he saw a beautiful lady Shakuntala. He married to her as both liked each other. Then, King Dushyant had to leave for his kingdom. He promised Shakuntala that he would come later and take her to his kingdom Hastinapur.

Then, somehow, King Dushyant completely forgot Shakuntala. He did not even recognise Shakuntala when she went to Hastinapur to see him. Thereafter, sad and disheartened Shakuntala started living with sage Marich in his ashram. Here, unknown to King Dushyant, She gave birth to a son named Bharat. He was a very brave child. He was not afraid of anyone or anything. Bharat played with lion cubs everyday.



Dushyant had forgotten his wife Shakuntala and had no idea that he had a son. Once, Dushyant happened to pass by the ashram. He watched a little boy playing with a lion cub. The boy opened the lion's jaws by his hands and said, "O king of the jungle ! Open your mouth wide, so I can count your teeth." Dushyant was very astonished by the child's bravery.

Later Shakuntala came there and Dushyant realised that Bharat was his son. He was overjoyed at this and hugged Bharat lovingly. Dushyant took Shakuntala and Bharat along with him to Hastinapur. Later Bharat grew into a great king. Our country's true name is Bharat (pronounced Bhaarat), named after him. Bharat is remembered by all for his bravery.





Story of Vrikasura and Lord Vishnu

The wicked asura (demon) Vrika, once happened to meet Sage Narada on the way and enquired "O! Maharishi! Which of the trinity (Lord Shiva, Lord Vishnu and Lord Brahma) is most easily pleased? Smart Narada knew his motive. He quickly replied, "Lord Shiva is very kind and easy to please. Once he is pleased, he grants any boon."

Highly pleased Vrikasura immediately rushed off to distant Kedara mountain (Lord Shiva's place), lit a holy fire, cut off a little flesh from his body and offered it as sacrifice to Shiva. He went on repeating this until on the seventh day, when no more flesh was left. At last, he was about to cut off his head to be thrown in the fire, Lord Shiva appeared and held his hand "Why all this gruesome sacrifice my friend? I would have been pleased even by a handful of water offered with devotion. Ask what you want". With folded hands and apparent modesty Vrikasura said, "Lord! Let any one whom I touch on the head, fall down dead." Lord Shiva was aghast at this terrible request but a word once given must be honoured; so rather unwillingly Lord Shiva said "Be it so!"

With the boon of Lord Shiva, Vrikasura became strong and invincible. He started killing his enemies by just touching their head. Evil Vrikasura now wanted to attack Lord Shiva too. Knowing his motive, Lord Shiva went to Lord Vishnu and requested him to punish Vrikasura.

Lord Vishnu took the form of a brahmin. When HE came across the Vrikasura, HE asked him, "Hey! Vrikasura! Where are you going? What is the matter?". Vrikasura expressed his desires of destroying Lord Shiva. The brahmin was incredulous "Haven't you heard that Lord Shiva, as a result of Daksha's curse, has lost his powers? His boon given to you is also not effective now!!". Surprised Vrikasura said, "Hey Vishnu! I dont believe you. You are fooling me!" Lord Vishnu replied, "Why don't you then test it by trying it on yourself?" This was said in such a plausible disarming manner that the foolish Vrikasura immediately put his hand on his own head which split in two. And he fell down dead split in two halves.

This is how Lord Vishnu fooled Vrikasura and saved the world from his shackles. Lord Vishnu and other Gods showered flowers and praised him for punishing Vrikasura.





Story of Gajendra and Lord Vishnu

Once upon a time, a king named Indradyumn ruled the southern part of Bharat (India). He was a great worshipper of Lord Vishnu. He decided to retire from his duties and spend full time in worshipping God. He convened a meeting with his ministers and told them, "I have decided to retire to the forest and devote all my time to the worship of the Lord. I am sure you are capable of running the kingdom in my absence." Hearing this news, the ministers were shocked but could not change the king's mind.

Soon the king Indradyumn handed over all his responsibilities to the ministers and headed to the Malaya Parvat (mountain). He built a cottage there and started meditating.

One day Sage Agastya came that way with his disciples. The sage saw that the king was engaged in prayers silently, on the contrary he should have been fulfilling his responsibilities of his kingdom. So the sage felt that the king was not following his duties. Hence, he got angry and cursed the king: "This king has not received proper preaching from his teachers. He is selfish and has taken up whimsical actions. He has a mind as dull as an elephant. So may he turn in to an elephant."

Thus, cursing the king, Sage Agastya left. King Indradyumn became an elephant. He joined a herd of elephants. Soon other elephants accepted him as a king. he became the king of elephants because of his virtues. All elephants proclaimed loudly, "We salute you O King Gajendra!!"

One day, the king Indradyumna (now an elephant) said to the other elephants, "lets go to the Trikut Mountains. It is a better place to live." Other Elephants, "we will follow you anywhere O King."

Soon they reached the Trikut mountain. There, they saw a lake. Before entering the lake, the elephants quenched their thirst and then took bath in it. Then taking a lot of water in his trunk, Gajendra began to sprinkle it over his fellow elephants.

Unfortunately there was a crocodile sleeping at the bottom of the lake. He woke up angrily, "Who dared to disturb my sleep? I am going to teach them a lesson so that they will remember next time." The furious crocodile saw the elephants and began to swim towards them.

The elephants saw the crocodile coming towards them. They quickly came out of the water but the Gajendra could not. The crocodile caught the Gajendra's leg. The Gajendra cried panickly, "ouch! What's that? I can't move my leg. Please somebody help me." He saw that it was a crocodile who grabbed his leg. The Gajendra tried his best to shrug off the crocodile but in vain.

Hearing their King all other elephants hurriedly came to help him. "Don't worry O Gajendra we will release you in a minute. It is only a crocodile."

But, inspite of all their efforts, they could not set Gajendra free. They too tired and gave up. The crocodile continued to grow stronger. Finally the Gajendra dedicated himself to the Lord Vishnu and began to pray: O omnipresent Lord, I salute you. You are the protector of all the beings, kindly protect me. O Almighty, as the sea is the ultimate refuge of all the waters, you are the ultimate refuge for all the creatures. Every creature takes shelter under your Kripa (kindness). O sea of kindness, you make no delay in the welfare of your devotees. I salute you. I am in your refuge. O Lord, protect me".



The Lord Vishnu appeared there at once. Gajendra saw Lord Vishnu. Though being in trouble and pain, he forgot his pain for a moment and picked up a beautiful lotus in his trunk and said to Lord Vishnu: "O Lord, kindly accept my greetings". Looking at Gajendra's devotion, Lord Vishnu smiled. Along with Gajendra, He pulled the crocodile out of the lake and punished it by His Sudarshan chakra, and thus freed Gajendra.

Happy Gajendra touched Lord Vishnu's feet and said, "Hey Lord! I became elephant because of sage Agastya's curse. Please free me from his curse." Lord Vishnu blessed, "So be it!!"

Thus, with the blessing of Lord Vishnu, Gajendra again became the King Indradyumn and returned back to his kingdom. He continued fulfilling his responsibilities towards his kingdom and people and also continued worshipping Lord Vishnu.





Charcha - Diversity and Unity in Diversity

Try to discuss Diversity in Hindu Dharma. Some points are given below for a quick start. Discuss them and Explore more.....

What is Diversity? Is it good?

- > Diversity means variety, multiformity
- > Variety in life is always good. For example, when you see one color, you are happy. But when you see more colors, you are more happy.
- > It means you have a choice. For example, if you are hungry and you have only pizza to eat, then you have no choice. But if you have pizza as well as samosa, then you have choice to eat.
- > No rigidness. Nothing like "You must follow this and that"

Our Hindu culture is diverse. How?

- > Many Languages
- > Many customs
- > Many faiths and believes. Many Gods
- > Different food habits. Different attire
- > Freedom of thoughts

What keeps diverse Hindu culture united?

- > We learn that diversity is outwardly or superficial. From inside, it is one and same
- ..

Advantages of Diversity

- > We learn to respect others' thoughts
- > We learn to respect others' beliefs though we do not believe.
- > We learn that there could be various ways to achieve the same goal.
- > Diversity makes Hindu Dharma a universal Dharma

What is our responsibility?

- > Be proud and keep it up.
- > Explain others what makes Hindus tolerant





-: Exercise :-

Fill up the blanks

- 1) _____ was the son of king Dushyant and Shakuntala.
a) Indra b) Shibi c) Bharat d) None of these
- 2) _____ is another name for a Sage.
a) Friend b) Maharshi c) Demon d) None of these
- 3) King _____ became elephant because he forgot his duties.
a) Dushyant b) Indradyumn c) Indra d) None of these
- 4) Gajendra means a leader (or king) _____.
a) Lions b) Elephants c) Tigers d) None of these
- 5) Lord _____ punished crocodile and saved Gajendra.
a) Indra b) Yama c) Vishnu d) None of these
- 6) Lord _____ fooled and punished the demon Vrikasura.
a) Indra b) Vishnu c) Yama d) None of these

Identify true or false:

- 1) Sage Agastya cursed the king Indradyumn.
- 2) Trikut and Malaya are the names of mountains in Bharat.
- 3) Yama is a God of Death.
- 4) Sudarshan Chakra is a weapon of Lord Vishnu.

