



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



Syllabus

Year III, Quarter I

Age Group : 9 to 12

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

Every child has that spark of divinity within. Balagokulam 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

नमस्तुलसि कल्याणि नमो विष्णुप्रिये शुभे ।
नमो मोक्ष प्रदायिके देवी नमः सर्व सम्पत्प्रदायिके ॥

namastulasi kalyaaNi namo vishhnupriye shubhe |

namo moksha pradaayike devii namaH sarva sampatpradaayike ||

Meaning: I bow to auspicious Tulasi who is dear to Lord Vishnu, who brings good luck to devotees, who guides one to attain salvation, who showers all the wealth to the devotees.

Subhashitam (Words of wisdom)

नियतं कुरु कर्म त्वं कर्म ज्यायो ह्यकर्मणः ।
शरीरयात्रापि च ते न प्रसिद्धयेदकर्मणः ॥

niyataM kuru karma tvam karma jyAyo hyakarmaNaH |
sharIrayAtrApi cha te na prasiddhayedakarmaNaH ||

Meaning: Perform your duties in daily life. It is far better to act than to be inactive. By being inactive, you cannot even maintain the needs of your physical body.

Amrutvachan (Quotes)

“Hinduism.....gave itself no name, because it set itself no sectarian limits; it claimed no universal adhesion, asserted no sole infallible dogma, set up no single narrow path or gate of salvation; it was less a creed or cult than a continuously enlarging tradition of the God ward endeavor of the human spirit. An immense many-sided and many staged provision for a spiritual self-building and self-finding, it had some right to speak of itself by the only name it knew, the eternal religion, Sanatana Dharma....”

Sri Aurobindo

Sangathan kaa mahaamantra le

Sangathan kaa mahaamantra le, taruNaayii kaa jvaar uThaa
Yug se soye sputa hridayme, dharmabhakti kaa jvaar uThaa
Hindu hriday lalakaar uThaa ||

Ved Upanishad Ramayan kii, mukharit kar shaashvat vaaNii
Simhavaahinii durgaa jaagii, bhaaratmaataa kaLyaaNii
Jiivan bhar kartritva bhaav se, giitaa kaavyavahaar uThaa ||

Paramparaa hai rishi muniyon kii, santon kii shaashvat vaaNii
Viira suton ke svaabhimaan kii, kaalajayii amritavaaNii
Maan binduon kii rakshaa hita, phir bhiishaN hunkaar uThaa ||

Vishva vijay kaa svapna dhaarakar, kaTina parishram karanaa hai
Samataa mamataa samarasataa kaa, bhaav jagat me bharanaa hai
Man me driDha sankalp liye phir, amara putra lalakaar uThaa ||

sUryavansh kaa mahaatej le, shatru hriday dahalaayenge
brahma tej kaa tatvajnaan le, jnaanshikhaa laharaayenge
keshav-maadhav kii pukaar sun, soyaa hindu jag uThaa ||



Makara Samkranti

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

Celebrations

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



In villages, cows, bullocks and cattle are washed, decorated and worshipped. Birds are fed colorful pongal balls. Bullock cart races are held where the village people get together and participate. There is a tradition of special art called Rangoli, which is drawn during this festival season. This art is done in front of the house with the Rice flour and colors. As described in the beginning, though Makara Samkranti is being known by different names and celebrated in different ways, the message delivered by it is one and the same and for all. Despite the variety of rituals and customs, there is a unity and homogeneity in the basic concept of this festival.



Historical Importance

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

Social Aspect

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

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

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

Astrological Significance

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

Makara Samkranti as a Sangh Utsav

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

Highlights of the Makara Samkranti

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





AUM or OM (ॐ)

Of all the mantras, the most powerful and the significant one is the single-syllabled incantation called the Pranava. This is the OM. The available literature upon the significances of the Vedic mantra is almost voluminous. Nowhere in the world can we meet with a more sacred symbol that has got such a vast amount of significance.

Vedic (ancient Hindu) Om was represented as above.

From Vedic times until the present day the word 'OM' has been taken as a mystic symbol and as an aid to meditation by spiritual aspirants. It is accepted both as one with 'Brahman' and as the medium, the logos, connecting man and God. The entire history of the syllable is in the revelations of the Vedas and in the declarations of the Upanishads. Although this symbol is mentioned in all the Upanishads and in all Hindu scriptures, it is especially elaborated upon in the Taittiriya, Chandogya, and Mundaka Upanishads.

By its sound and form, OM symbolizes the infinite Brahman and the entire universe. It is made up of three Sanskrit letters, 'aa', 'au' and 'ma' which, when combined together, make the sound Aum or Om. It is believed to be the basic sound of the world and to contain all other sounds. It is a mantra or prayer in itself. If repeated with the correct intonation, it can resonate throughout the body so that the sound penetrates to the centre of one's being, the atman or soul

OM is also called the 'four-element syllable.' The letters A, U, and M are the three elements and the fourth element is the silence from which the sound of OM arises, and back into which it subsides.

The sound produced by the letter A signifies all that is observed and perceived in the wakeful state of an individual, thus representing both the subject and the object, and all the experiences in the physical world. Therefore, the letter A symbolizes all that is known and knowable.

The sound produced by the letter U represents the observer and the things observed in the dream state of an individual's consciousness, thus denoting the astral worlds and the worlds of heavens and hells. The sound produced by the letter M signifies all unknown in the state of deep sleep as well as that is unknown in the wakeful state. Thus OM symbolizes the phenomenal world that contributes to our experiences in the universe.

The silence, the fourth element of OM as stated above represents the

underlying Reality that pervades the waking, dream, and the deep sleep states of one's consciousness. Thus OM symbolizes the infinite Brahman, the essence of all existence.

The letters A, U and M symbolise respectively speech (vak), the mind (manas) and the breath of life (prana), while the entire symbol stands for the living spirit, which is but a portion of the divine spirit.

The three letters also represent the dimensions of length, breadth and depth, while the entire symbol stands for the perfect man (a sthita-prajna), one whose wisdom is firmly established in the divine.

They represent the three genders, masculine, feminine and neuter, while the entire symbol stands for the Creator, who transcends the limitations of time.

They stand for the three gunas or qualities of sattva, rajas and tamas, while the whole symbol represents a gunatita, one who has transcended and gone beyond the pull of the gunas.

The letters correspond to the three tenses - past, present and future - while the entire symbol stands for the Creator, who transcends the limitations of time.

They also stand for the teaching imparted by the mother, the father and the Guru respectively. The entire symbol represents Brahma Vidya, the knowledge of the Self, the teaching which is imperishable.

The A, U and M depict the three stages of yogic discipline, namely, asana, pranayama and pratyahara. The entire symbol represents samadhi, the goal for which the three stages are the steps.

They represent the triad of divinity, namely, Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva. The whole symbol is said to represent Brahman from which the universe emanates, has its growth and fruition and into which it merges in the end. It does not grow or change. Many change and pass, but Brahman is the one that ever remains unchanged.

The letters A, U and M also stand for the mantra 'Tat Twam Asi' ('That Thou Art'), the realisation of man's divinity within himself. The entire symbol stands for this realisation, which liberates the human spirit from the confines of his body, mind, intellect and ego.

Although Om symbolizes the most profound concepts of Hindu belief, it is in use daily. The Hindus begin their day or any work or a journey by uttering Om. The sacred symbol is often found at the head of letters, at the beginning of examination papers and so on. Many Hindus, as an expression of spiritual perfection, wear the sign of Om as a pendant. This symbol is enshrined in every Hindu temple premise or in some form or another on family shrines.





Char Dhaam

Hindus consider Bharat as a holy land. A land where Ram and Krishna came on earth as reincarnations of Vishnu for the destruction of evil. So through out Bharat there are places and sites which are considered holy and where famous temples and mutts are located. Many traditions which evolved from Hindu dharma such as Saiva, Vaishnava, Sikh, Saktha, Bauudha, Jain have their holy places in nook and corners of Bharat which makes Bharat a holy land.

Hindus travel thousands of miles to visit the holy places. This is how the tradition of pilgrimage started and continued since ancient time. Hindus from south travel to north to visit holy places such as Kashi, Amarnath. Similarly Hindus from North visit places in deep south such as Rameshwaram, Tirupati, Madurai. Also places in west Bharat such as Somnath to Parashuram kund in Arunachal Pradesh also are sites of high reverence by Hindus. All these holy places played an important role in binding Bharat culturally and have helped in bringing people closer and united.

Adi Shankaracharya, a saint, reformer, and philosopher of ninth century AD played a prominent role in reviving Hindu dharma in Bharat. He traveled from north to south, east to west rejuvenating our culture and thus became instrumental in national integration. He was born in a Brahmin family in a town called Kaladi in Kerala (a state in southern part of Bharat). He became a sanyasi at a very young age. It is believed that he was a reincarnation of Lord Shiva. He traveled, debated with several scholars and established the authority of Hindu Dharma.

Adi Shankaracharya established Char Dham (Four Centres) in Badrinath (North), Rameshwaram (South), Jagannath Puri (East) and Dwaraka (West) in four corners of Bharat thus setting a classic example of cultural and national unity of Bharat.

Badrinath is situated in Himalayas on the banks of Alaknanda river. The town lies between the Nar and Narayana mountain ranges and in the shadow of Nilkantha Peak. Badri refers to a berry that was said to grow abundantly in the area and nath refers to lord Vishnu. It is widely believed that Adi Shankaracharya discovered a black stone image of Lord Badrinarayan in Alaknanda river and he enshrined it in nearby tapt-kund (hot springs) which was later moved to the present temple by the King of Garhwal. One legend has it that when the goddess Ganga was requested to descend to earth to help suffering humanity, the earth was unable to withstand the force of her descent. Therefore the mighty Ganga was split into twelve holy channels. River Alaknanda is one of them. Badrinath later became the abode of Lord Vishnu or Badrinath. That is why it is also known as Bhu-Vaikunta or earthly abode of Lord Vishnu.

Rameshwaram is a town in Southern State of Tamil nadu. It is also considered as one of the

holiest places in Bharat. Here in Rameshwaram temple Lord Shiva is worshipped as Sri Ramanatha Swamy. Because here Shiva-ling was worshipped by Lord Shri Ram on his way to Sri Lanka and thus the name. Also Rameshwaram is considered as one amongst 12 Jyotir lingas of Bharat. Rameshwaram temple also stands as an example of marvellous Hindu architecture. Different rulers built the Ramanatha Swamy Temple over a period of time starting from the 12th century. The temple comprises forty wells where the taste of the water of each well is different from the other. Sethu Karai is a place 22 km before the island of Rameshwaram from where Lord Ram built a floating stone bridge "Ramasethu" till Rameshwaram that further continued from Dhanushkodi in Rameshwaram till Talaimannar in Sri Lanka as mentioned in the Ramayana. So Hindus all over the world consider Rameshwaram as a very prominent pilgrimage place that they have to visit during their life time.

Dwarka (western part of Bharat) is believed as one of the seven most ancient cities in Bharat. The legendary city of Dwaraka was the dwelling place of Lord Krishna. It is believed that, due to damage and destruction by the sea, Dwaraka has submerged six times and modern Dwarka is the 7th city to be built in the area. The city derives its name from word "Dwar" meaning door in Sanskrit. The temple has five storey tower which was built by Sambha, who is the grandson of Lord Shri Krishna. There are two gateways namely Swarga Dwar where pilgrims enter and Moksha Dwar where pilgrims exit. From the temple one can view river Gomati flowing towards the sea. Dwarka is also considered as one among 108 holy Vaishnava Tirthas of Bharat.

The Jagannath temple in Puri (eastern part of Bharat) is a famous Hindu temple dedicated to Jagannath (Krishna) located in the coastal town of Puri in the state of Orissa. The name Jagannath (Lord of the Universe) is a combination of the Sanskrit words Jagat (Universe) and Nath (Lord of). The temple is an important pilgrimage destination for many Hindu traditions, particularly worshippers of Krishna and Vishnu. The temple is famous for its annual Rath yatra, chariot festival where huge and elaborately decorated chariots are used for the procession of the three main temple deities. The huge temple complex covers an area of over 400,000 square feet, and is surrounded by a high fortified wall. It contains at least 120 temples and shrines. With its richness in sculpture and of the Orissan style of temple architecture, it is one of the most magnificent monuments of Bharat.

As of today Jagannath Puri temple's kitchen is considered as the largest kitchen in Bharat where "Maha Prasad" is fed to thousands of devotees on a daily basis. Around 500 cooks and 300 helping hands prepare 56 different offerings known as 'Mahaprasad' or 'Abhada' for Lord Jagannath, which are served to the deity six times a day. It is said that food for one lakh devotees can be prepared in the temple kitchen within an hour.

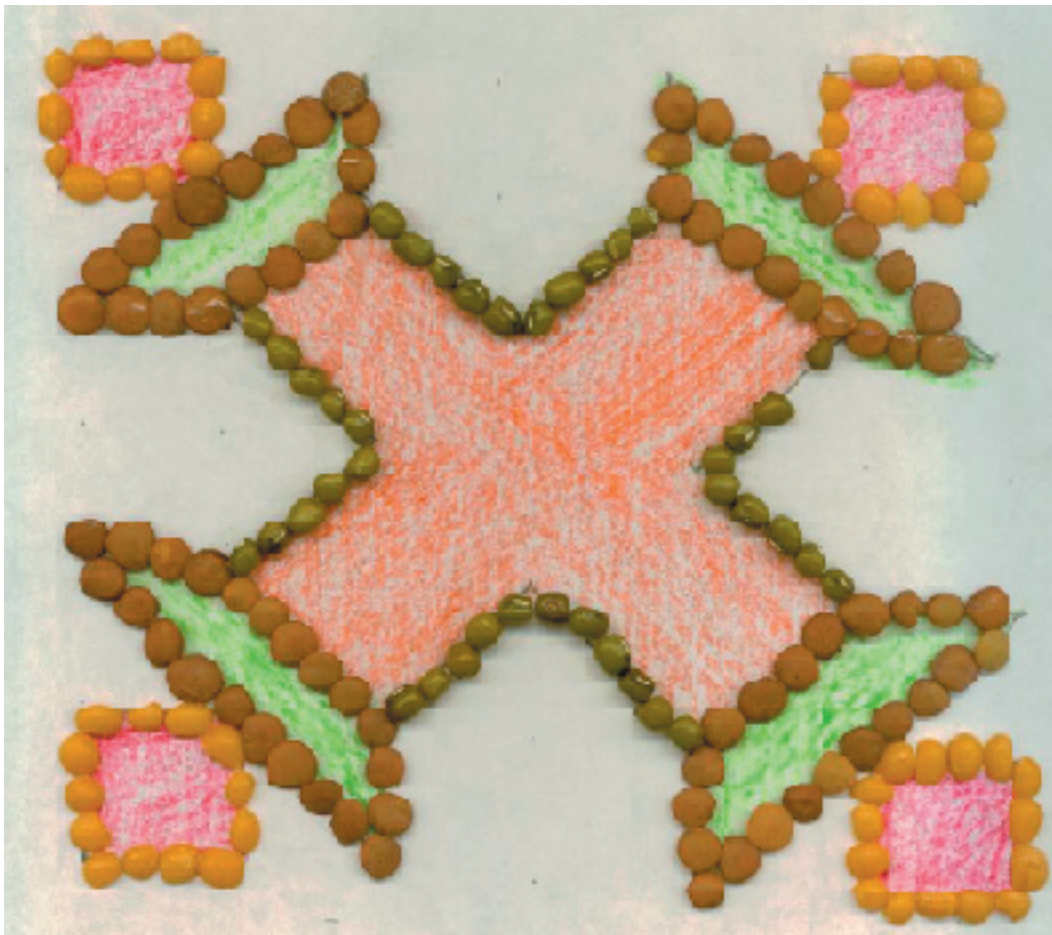
So these Char dhams located at four corners of Bharat stand today giving a message of national and cultural unity of Bharat and remind Hindus to stand united forgetting all the regional and language barriers.



RANGOLI

Rangoli is one of the arts of Bharat. It is a traditional way of decorating courtyards and walls of houses, places of worship and sometimes eating places as well. Traditionally the powder of white stone, lime, rice flour and other cheap paste is used to draw intricate. But if powder is not available, markers can also be used to draw different patterns of Rangoli. Let us try to learn here a simple design (pattern) of Rangoli.

- a) Draw a rangoli pattern with markers onto a construction paper (see below for one type of idea).
- b) Put the construction paper onto a cardboard (for better support when decorating).
- c) Decorate the patterns with different types of colored dals: moong dal, mag, tuar dal, whatever dried beans we have at home.



Shloka

ॐ त्रयम्बकं यजामहे सुगन्धिं पुष्टिवर्धनम् ।
उर्वारुकमिव बन्धनान् मृत्योर्मुक्षीय मामृतात् ॥

OM trayambakaM yajAmahe sugandhiM puSTivardhanam.

urvArukamiva bandhanAn mrutyormuxiiya mAmrutAt.

Meaning: We worship the three-eyed One (Lord Siva) Who is fragrant and who nourishes well all beings; may He liberate us from death for the sake of Immortality even as the cucumber is severed from its bondage (to the creeper).

Subhashitam (Words of wisdom)

यो मां पश्यति सर्वत्र सर्वं च मयि पश्यति ।
तस्याहं न प्रणश्यामि स च मे न प्रणश्यति ॥

yo mAM pashyati sarvatra sarvaM cha mayi pashyati |
tasyAhaM na praNashyAmi sa cha me na praNashyati ||

Meaning: He, who sees ME (the Universal self) present in all beings, and sees all things as existing in ME, I am never out of sight for him, nor he is out of sight of ME.

Amrutvachan (Quotes)

“From every sentence (of the Upanishads) deep, original and sublime thoughts arise, and the whole is pervaded by a high and holy and earnest spirit.... In the whole world there is no study so beneficial and so elevating as that of the Upanishads. They are destined sooner or later to become the faith of the people.”
“ It has been the solace of my life -- it will be the solace of my death.”

- Arthur Schopenhauer

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keshav-maadhav kii pukaar sun, soyaa hindu jag uThaa ||



Patanjali Yoga Sutra

Yoga is the ancient health keeping system developed by Hindu sages and seers thousands of years ago. It not only keeps the body healthy but also cultivates mind and spiritual awareness. It also helps to live a disciplined, yet enjoyable life. It is vaguely considered as an exercise. But it is more than just an exercise. A great sage Patanjali has codified his thoughts, the knowledge of yoga and its practices by encapsulating them in the form aphorisms. They are called as yoga-sutra. The main yoga-sutra are eight in numbers. They are also known as eight limbs of Patanjali or Ashtanga-yoga. Let us try to understand them.

Yama (eternal vows):

Yama is social behavior (moral principles) that describes how one should treat others. There are five yamas:

- Nonviolence (ahimsa). Do no harm to anybody in thought or deed.
- Truth and honesty (satya). Always be honest and speak truth.
- Nonstealing (asteya). Do not steal material objects (a car) or intangibles such as the center of attention or your child's chance to learn responsibility or independence by doing something on his own.
- Nonlust (brahmacharya). Avoid lust for anything and see divinity in all your deeds and thoughts.
- Nonpossessiveness (aparigraha). Free yourself from greed, hoarding, and collecting. Do not accumulate anything, and keep only things that are really necessary. Make your life as simple as possible.

Niyama (Observances)

Niyama is inner discipline and responsibility that describes how one should treat himself/herself. There are five niyamas:

- Purity (shaucha). It implies both external and internal purity. Achieve external purity by keeping yourself, your clothing, and surroundings clean. Eat fresh and healthy food. Treat your body like a temple. Achieve internal purity by acquiring true knowledge and austerity and truthfulness in mind.
- Contentment (santosha). Be satisfied with what you have. Seek happiness in every moment. Your state of mind should not be affected by external causes.
- Austerity (tapas). Show discipline in body, speech, and mind. The purpose of developing self-discipline is not to become ascetic, but to control and direct the mind and body for higher spiritual aims or purposes.
- Self-education (svadhyaya). Study sacred texts, which are whatever books are relevant to you and inspire and teach you. Education changes a person's outlook on life.
- Living with an awareness of the Divine (ishvara-pranidhana). Be devoted to God or whatever you consider divine.

Yogasana

Yogasana is a posture in harmony with one's inner consciousness. It helps in balancing and harmonizing the basic structure of the human body. Although nowadays yogasana are practiced as an exercise, they are really meant to prepare yourself for the meditation. For meditation, healthy and sound body and tensionless mind are required. Various postures of yogasana which include standing and sitting asanas help to keep body healthy and tension-free mind.

Pranayama (breath control exercise)

Pranayama is a breathing technique. Breathing is a basic of life. One is breathing means he/she is alive. Most of us breathe improperly.

It helps Prana is the life force or energy that exists everywhere and flows through each of us through the breath. Pranayama is the control of breath. The basic movements of pranayama are inhalation, retention of breath, and exhalation. The practice of pranayama purifies body and removes distractions from the mind making it easier to concentrate and meditate. It also balances nervous system and encourages creative thinking. Deep breathing makes sure the enough amount of oxygen to the brain which improves mental clarity, alertness and physical well being.

Pratyahara

Pratyahara involves rightly managing the senses and going beyond them instead of simply closing and suppressing them. It involves directing the concentration inward. With the withdrawal of the senses, one no longer feels itch or hear or smell anything around or feel hungry. Practice of pratyahara helps to forget everything around and concentrate on meditation.

Dharana (concentration)

Dharana involves developing our powers of concentration. Here the goal is to push away superfluous thoughts and fix your mind by concentrating on a particular object such as god's image.

Dhyana (meditation)

All the previous limbs that we learnt are the preparation of meditation. Dhyana means actual uninterrupted meditation. Concentration (dharana) leads to the state of meditation. The goal of meditation is to achieve heightened awareness and realize oneness with the universe.

Samadhi

The purpose of meditation is to achieve samadhi or absolute bliss. This is pure contemplation, superconsciousness, in which you and the universe are one. Those who have achieved samadhi are enlightened. In other words, samadhi means free yourself from the cycle of birth and death and merge yourself (your soul) with the almighty.

The eight limbs work together: The first five steps – yama, niyama asana, pranayama, and pratyahara – are the preliminaries of yoga and build the foundation for spiritual life. They are concerned with the body and the brain. The last three, which would not be possible without the previous steps, are concerned with reconditioning the mind. They help you to attain enlightenment or the full realization of oneness with spirit.

Perhaps, last four limbs (Pratyahara, Dharana, Dhyana and Samadhi) may be complicated and difficult to understand for us (kids), but the first four are easy to understand. They are also very easy to practice; all we need is determination. Let us start practicing the first four limbs of Patanjali Yoga to live a healthy, balanced and spiritual life.





Holy Cities of Bharat

The earth of Bharat is sacred, even more precious the cities that have a bond with the revered. From Takshashila to Mathura, the birthplace of Shri Krishna, these cities all have an important significance in the history of Bharat, whether they represented an international center of education or the very place where Shri Krishna gave guidance to the Pandavas to build a city. Each part of Bharat precious and respected and many are sites for holy pilgrimages, a place of serenity.

Mathura

Mathura is a city located in the state of Uttar Pradesh, northeaster part of Bharat. This city is a pilgrimage site, the birthplace of Shri Krishna. At the site of Shri Krishna's birthplace, there was a Keshav Dev Temple built in the underground prison. Mathura was the capital during the Surasena Kingdom, during the time of the Mahabharata. At the time, Kansa, Shri Krishna's maternal uncle, ruled Surasena Kingdom. Mathura was one of places that produced the images of Lord Buddha. This city was in a strategic location in ancient times, in the crossroads of different trade routes.

Maya (Haridwar)

Haridwar stands for "Gateway of Shri Hari." According to the Hindu scriptures, Haridwar is one of the four places where amrit (elixir of immortality) was spilled from a pitcher carried by Garuda (the vehicle of Lord Vishnu). The spot where the nectar fell is considered to be Har Ki Pauri (footsteps of Shri Hari), where Lord Vishnu left his footprint and the holy Ganga River touches it at all times. This spot is one of the most sacred spots, with thousands of devotees visiting the spot during the festival or to just take holy snan (holy dip). King Bhagirath is said to bring the river Ganga down from heaven to Earth in order to provide moksa (salvation) to his relatives.

The city lies on the banks of the holy river Ganga. Haridwar is one of the sites of the Kumbha Mela, which occurs every three years (the other three sites are Prayag, Ujjain, and Nashik.) Each twelve-year cycle includes one Maha Kumbha Mela at

Prayag, which is the largest gathering anywhere in the world. King Harshvardhan of Ujjain started it.

Takshashila

Takshashila was an important city because it was an important center of learning and university. The ancient city is now located in Pakistan. King Taksha, son of Bharat and Mandavi from the Ramayan, founded the city. Takshashila was also the place where King Parikshit (Kuru heir from Mahabharat) was enthroned. Chandragupta Maurya established the Maurya Empire and his advisor, Kautilya (Chanakya) was a teacher at Takshashila. Chanakya is greatly associated with Takshashila. He wrote his famous treatise Arthashastra (The Knowledge of Economics) there. Generally a student entered the university at age sixteen and learned the Vedas, and the eighteen arts, which included skills such as archery, hunting, and elephant lore. There was also a law school, medical school and school of military science. There is a museum at Takshashila where there are the remains of the Gandhara civilization.

Indraprastha (Delhi)

Indraprastha is an ancient city that was the capital of the Pandavas' kingdom. It is located on the banks of Yamuna River and very close to the modern national capital city of Delhi. When Yudhisthira, the eldest of the five Pandava brothers was given the kingdom of Khandavaprasth, a region northwest to the city of Hastinapur, the land cursed with barren and arid soils, diseased and dangerous forests and famine. However, Lord Krishna summons Indra, the king of the Devas to help Yudhisthira, who in turn summons the Deva architect Vishwakarma.

Performing sacred ceremonies to bless the land, Vishwakarma built a glorious new city (Indraprastha), which became the capital. Millions of people migrated to this new city, and soon prosperity and health spread across Khandavaprasth.

There are several other famous and spiritual ancient cities in Bharat such as Ayodhya, Tirupati, Dwaraka, Somnath, Ujjain, etc. They are not covered here due to lack of space. Try to get more information about them from other sources such as internet, books and parents.





Vedic Mathematics

When Raju was a kid, he was scared of two things - ghosts and Mathematics. Later he realised that ghosts do not exist and even if they do, God will save him from them. But what about Mathematics? Can anyone help? He wished God was listening to him! But then one of his teacher told him, "God only helps those who help themselves." Raju's vacations had just started and he had vowed not to loiter around but utilise his time.

Once, Raju was just walking down the lane with his mother when something caught his eyes. He saw a banner that caught his attention - *Does your mind wobble when confronted by a mathematical challenge more forbidding than two plus two? Do you dream of becoming the kind of person who can rattle off answers to the most complicated sums in the fraction of a second? If the answer is yes, you need Vedic mathematics. Try this for size. What's the square of 65? Simple: just multiply the first digit, 6, with its successor, 7. The answer is 42. Now find the square of the second digit, five, which is 25. Now bring the two together. Bingo, the answer is 4225!*

In the beginning, Raju didn't believe. But then he decided to take a chance as he knew that his life would change forever. He started taking lessons on Vedic Mathematics. And what a wonder!! Raju found it so simple that he became a master in it. Raju not only became expertise in Vedic Mathematics, but also he started teaching others. It changed his life!!! Let us try to get some information about such a wonderful Vedic Mathematics.

The ancient system of Vedic Mathematics was rediscovered from the sanskrit texts known as the Vedas, between 1911 and 1918 by Sri Bharati Krsna Tirthaji (1884-1960). At the beginning of the twentieth century, when there was a great interest about the Sanskrit texts in Europe, some scholars read about Vedic Mathematics and ridiculed it. They dismissed that as rubbish as they couldn't understand and translate it correctly. Bharati Krsna, who was himself a scholar of Sanskrit, Mathematics and Philosophy, studied these texts and after lengthy and careful investigation, he was able to reconstruct the mathematics of the Vedas. According to his research all of mathematics is based on sixteen Sutras, or word-formulae.

Bharati Krsna wrote sixteen volumes expounding the Vedic system but these were unaccountably lost and when the loss was confirmed in his final years he wrote a single book: Vedic Mathematics, currently available. It was published in 1965.

You must be wondering : Ok! Vedic Mathematics is simple, but how? Let us try to see some examples. Be noted that according to Vedic Mathematics, there are various methods

of calculations to find an answer. One method could be simple and convenient for some numbers, but may be inconvenient for other numbers. One has to determine the suitable method by looking at the numbers, apply that method and get the answer.

Multiplication of 88 by 98 -

It may be difficult with traditional method. But with VERTICALLY AND CROSSWISE (Vedic method), answer can be found quickly.

Both 88 and 98 are close to 100.

88 is 12 below 100 and 98 is 2 below 100.

You can imagine the sum set out like this:

As before the 86 comes from subtracting crosswise: $88 - 2 = 86$

(or $98 - 12 = 86$: you can subtract either way, you will always get the same answer).

And the 24 in the answer is just 12×2 : you multiply vertically.

So $88 \times 98 = 8624$

This is so easy it is just mental arithmetic.

Multiplying numbers just over 100.

- $103 \times 104 = 10712$

The answer is in two parts: 107 and 12,

107 is just $103 + 4$ (or $104 + 3$),

and 12 is just 3×4 .

- $77 \times 11 = 847$

This involves a carry figure because $7 + 7 = 14$

we get $77 \times 11 = 7147 = 847$.

- $234 \times 11 = 2574$

We put the 2 and the 4 at the ends.

We add the first pair $2 + 3 = 5$.

and we add the last pair: $3 + 4 = 7$.

The purpose of this lesson is not to teach Vedic Mathematics, but to give a glimpse of it. Vedic Mathematics is not only wonderful, but also a Hindu heritage. All of us (Hindus) should preserve it by learning and practicing it.





Make your own Shiva-linga

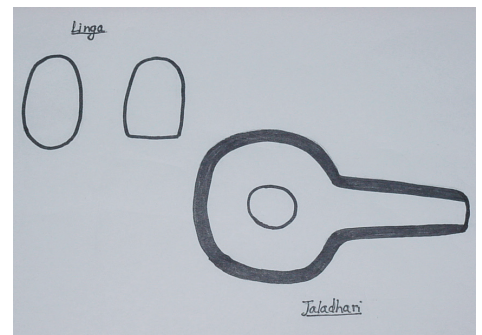
(This project may be little difficult. Take adult's help if needed. But this one becomes very strong once dried and is waterproof.)

Material Required:

White bread, Elmer's glue, black acrylic paint, small flowers, yellow color, etc for decoration.

Procedure:

Take off the crusts from 4 slices of bread and tear into very small pieces. Add 3 tsp of glue and 2 to 3 tsp of black paint and keep mixing until the dough has the consistency of chappati dough. Add a little more of glue or paint if required. Remove dough stuck to your hands and take little of oil to knead it (like in chappati dough). Do not take more than 2-3 tsp of oil. Once the dough is kneaded smooth wrap it up in plastic wrap and wash your hands clean.



Now take 2-3 drops of oil and smear on your hands. Take 1/3 rd of the dough and roll into an egg shape, flatten one end. This is the Linga. Take little more about 1 inch dough and keep aside. The rest flatten with rolling pin and cut the shape of the Jaladhari as seen in the picture.

With the leftovers from the cut knead and roll into a rope so as to make the border of the Jaladhari. Place the Linga in the centre of the Jaladhari with some glue and set it firm. The Shiva-linga is ready. After this dries draw the gandha (yellow) and place some decorative flowers and a leaf cut as a bilwapatra. This project dries hard and is waterproof. A good keepsake!



Shloka

शांताकारं भुजगशयनं पद्मनाभं सुरेशं । विश्वाधारं गगनसदृशं मेढ्रवर्णं शुभाङ्गं ।
 लक्ष्मीकांतं कमलनयनं योगिभिर्ध्यानगम्यं । वंदे विष्णुं भवभयहरं सर्वलोकैकनाथम् ।
 shaa.ntaakaaraM bhujagashayanaM padmanaabhaM sureshaM |
 vishvaadhaaraM gaganasadR^ishaM meghavarNaM shubhaaN^gaM |
 lakshmiikaa.ntaM kamalanayanaM yogibhidhyaarnagamyam |
 va.nde vishhNuM bhavabhayaharaM sarvalokaikanaatham ||

Meaning: I bow to Lord Vishnu who is the embodiment of peace, who reclines on Shesha (the serpent), whose navel is the source of the Lotus, who is the Lord of lords, who pervades the universe, whose complexion is as (blue as) the clouds, who embodies auspiciousness, who is the beloved of Goddess Lakshmi, whose eyes are like Lotus, who is meditated upon by the yogis, who is the remover of the fear of the cycle of birth and death, who is the only master of all the lokas (heaven, earth etc).

Subhashitam (Words of wisdom)

पिताहमस्य जगतो माता धाता पितामहः ।
 वेद्यं पवित्रमोकार ऋक्साम यजुरेव च ॥

pitAhamasya jagato mAtA dhAtA pitAmahaH |
 vedyam pavitramoMkara R^iksama yajureva cha ||

Meaning: I am the father of the universe; I am the mother, the sustainer, as well as grandfather. I am the goal of vedic knowledge, I am the sacred OM, and I am verily the Rik, the Yajur and the Saama (vedas).

Amrutvachan (Quotes)

“After a study of some forty years and more of the great religions of the world, I find none so perfect, none so scientific, none so philosophic, and none so spiritual as the great religion known by the name of Hinduism. The more you know it, the more you will love it; the more you try to understand it, the more deeply you will value it”

- Dr. Annie Besant

Sangathan kaa mahaamantra le

Sangathan kaa mahaamantra le, taruNaayii kaa jvaar uThaa
Yug se soye sputa hridayme, dharmabhakti kaa jvaar uThaa
Hindu hriday lalakaar uThaa ||

Ved Upanishad Ramayan kii, mukharit kar shaashvat vaaNii
Simhavaahinii durgaa jaagii, bhaaratmaataa kaLyaaNii
Jiivan bhar kartritva bhaav se, giitaa kaavyavahaar uThaa ||

Paramparaa hai rishi muniyon kii, santon kii shaashvat vaaNii
Viira suton ke svaabhimaan kii, kaalajayii amritavaaNii
Maan binduon kii rakshaa hita, phir bhiishaN hunkaar uThaa ||

Vishva vijay kaa svapna dhaarakar, kaTina parishram karanaa hai
Samataa mamataa samarasataa kaa, bhaav jagat me bharanaa hai
Man me driDha sankalp liye phir, amara putra lalakaar uThaa ||

sUryavansh kaa mahaatej le, shatru hriday dahalaayenge
brahma tej kaa tatvajnaan le, jnaanshikhaa laharaayenge
keshav-maadhav kii pukaar sun, soyaa hindu jag uThaa ||



Cultural Bharat

Everyone of us might have seen the map of Bharat. If a person from a far way place on earth views from the top it will be very easy for him to make out the country Bharat. It looks as if Bharat has a special grace of God which is protected by Himalayan ranges on the North and by Sindu Sagar (Arabian sea) on the West, Ganga Sagar (Bay of Bengal) on the East and Hindu Mahasagar (Indian Ocean) on the South. Her Hindu Civilization is one of the oldest civilizations. History indicates that when in the Western world (European and American countries), humans were still living in caves and wearing bark of trees to protect their body, a well civilized and organized life thrived in the land of Bharat.

Earth - The Mother

We (Hindus) considered earth as the mother and respected her as well. As a result of which there was no exploitation of natural resources because of this mother-son relationship. Our ancient scriptures conform to this belief. Bhoomi Sookta of Atharva veda says "*Mata bhoomihi, putroham prathivyah*" which means Earth is my mother and I am her son. We also might have seen the picture of Bharat mata riding on lion and holding Bhagwa Dhvaj in her hand. This concept and belief of Mother-Son relationship is evident in many of day to day activity that we do. When we start our day with the Shloka "*Samudra vasane devi.....*", we are asking for forgiveness for stepping our foot on to the mother earth. We also might have seen our elders advising us not to stamp our foot forcibly on the ground. "*Vande Mataram*" which was a war-slogan during freedom struggle in Bharat also means "*Mother I am bowing to you.*" Even while playing Kabbadi, when we go to another team passing the boundary, we just touch the ground and then to our forehead which again strengthens this fact. Also in Hindu tradition before the construction of any building a ritual of Bhoomi poojan is done which is nothing but doing pooja to mother earth. In our Sangh Prarthana too we begin with paying obeisance to mother Earth.

Cultural Boundaris of Bharat

As mentioned earlier, geographically it appears as if Bharat has a special blessing from God. Even when we think of rivers in the whole world, when we think of Russia, the name of Volga river comes to our mind, when we think of Egyptian Civilization the name of River Nile comes to our mind. Talking of Iraq Euphrates and Tigris rivers, and of Europe the name of Thames river. But when we think of Bharat the rivers are countless starting Ganga, Yamuna, Godavari, Narmada, Sindhu, Kaveri, Sarayu, Krishna and the list goes on.

If you see the map of present day Bharat, you can see 26 states starting from Jammu and Kashmir in the North to Tamilnadu in the South and Gujarat in the West to Arunachal Pradesh in the East. But this political map of present day Bharat doesn't give the whole picture of cultural Bharat. Culturally Bharat was extended till Afghanistan in the North Western boundary to present day Burma in the Eastern side. Before the invasion of British, countries like Srilanka, Nepal, Bhutan, Pakistan were also part of her. Hindu Civilization thrived in all these geographical regions. It also has left its deep imprints in South Eastern Asian countries such as Indonesia, Malaysia, Cambodia and others.

The present day Afghanistan in ancient time was known as *Upaganasthan* which means a land situated on a higher plateau which actually describes the geographical topography of the land. There is still a place in present day Afghanistan called Kandahar which was originally Gandhar and it is believed that the character Gandhari in Mahabharat was from that place. Similarly the present day Burma or Myanmar was known as *Brahma Desh*.

Bharat Shrunk

As time went by, Bharat came under attack from several foreign invaders starting from Alexander, Muslims, Mongols, Turks, French, Portuguese and British. Because of strong cultural roots, she survived all these attacks. Main reason of the invasions was an immense wealth and prosperity of Bharat. Another reason was these foreign invaders wanted to spread their religion and expand their territory. In this struggle which continued for thousands of years, although Bharatiya people gave a tough fight, they lost many bordering areas of their territory such as Burma, Afghanistan, Pakistan. There are thousands of incidents in the history which indicate that how Hindu temples and palaces which were full of wealth were looted and plundered by the invaders. For instance, Somnath temple in Gujarat was attacked 17 times and 18 crores worth of wealth was looted from the temple.

Recently, during freedom struggle, Bharat lost a big part of North-Western region (today's Pakistan). Hindus lost many holy places such as Hingulata Shakti peet, Sindu river, LavaPura (today's Lahore) and Purushapura (today's Peshavar) which are situated in present day Pakistan.

Inspite of all these turbulences, though we lost many of our lands, Bharat stands today as an ancient Hindu nation. We are part of this ancient Hindu Society which has survived many thunderous storms, turbulences in the history and still we are thriving as a vibrant Society in the world contributing in all spheres of life for the betterment of human kind. And we all should feel proud of this and work to make our Hindu Society stronger and United.





Chanakya - 1

An average looking guy was walking on the streets of the Pataliputra (today's Patna city in India) for routine work. In his hurried walk, he stumbled on a stump of a noxious grass and injured his foot. Grass was deeply rooted in the earth and it was not easy to uproot it out. Little upset he sat down right there in the burning sun. He poured a sugar-syrup on the grass and stood by as if he was waiting for something!! A passing by kid, named Chandragupta, was watching him curiously, but carefully. All of a sudden, from nowhere, several ants and other insects came and attracted towards sugar-syrup. They destroyed the grass completely. Chandragupta curiously asked him, "It was just a grass. Why did you do it?" Brahmin replied back, "It was poisonous (evil) and fatal. And all evil things should be destroyed completely eventhough they are small. This is everybody's duty. I would remove even a king if the king adopted adharmā." This average looking guy was not merely a common guy, but a very smart, clever and learned brahmin. His name was Vishnugupta.

Vishnugupta lived in the capital city Pataliputra of an empire Magadha during the period 350-275 BC. His father, Chanak, was a learned brahmin. Being a teacher himself, Chanak knew the importance of education. He started teaching his son Vishnugupta in his early age. He himself was learned, noble and self-esteemed brahmin. He would not tolerate any injustice or adharmik deeds. Naturally, the corrupt and arrogant Magadha King Dhanananda did not like him. Chanak's family was harrassed by the king on some false reasons. He was put in the prison where he died. Nobody raised a voice against the injustice caused with Chanak. Vishnuputa was a young boy at this time. He was extremely sad on his father's death and injustice happened with him. His life was also in danger. He left Pataliputra by taking an oath that he would come back and fight against injustice and a corrupt king Dhanananda.

Vishnugupta went to Takshashila, a world famous University for all kinds of education. There he studied Vedas and Uapanishadas. He was more interested in economics and politics. He gained proficiency in it. In politics, his acumen and shrewdness was visible right from childhood. Just like his father, he was disciplined, bold and fearless. He would debate with his fellow teachers on various subjects. Due to his intelligence and leadership qualities, he was dear to all including other students and teachers. After completing studies, he started teaching in the University. He was called by Acharya. Many kings and other aristocrats were his students. He not only taught various subjects, but also taught about values, attitude and

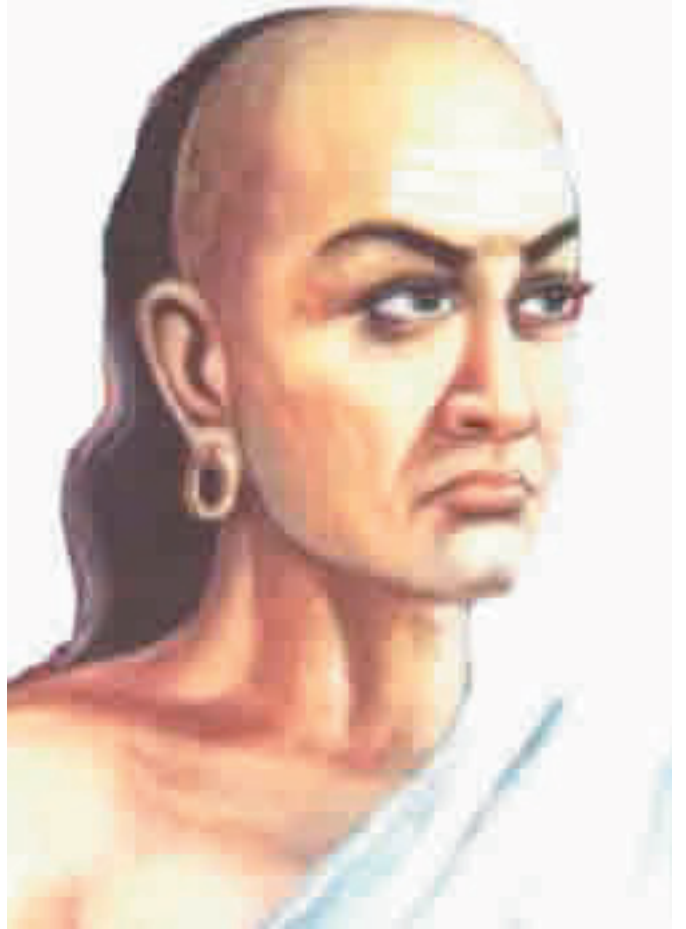
patriotism to his students to make them good and responsible citizens.

During that time, Bharat (India) was divided in various kingdoms. Only handful of them were big such as Magadha. All others were small and most of them were engaged in fighting against each other. Vishnugupta worried about this situation as it would invite invaders to attack Bharat. He wanted to change it. He saw a dream of united Bharat ruled under one administration and by one king. Eventhough his profession was teaching, he had detailed information about various kings in Bharat and surrounding areas, and happenings in their kingdoms. He had established a spy-network and he kept himself upto date through it.

During that time, a Greek king Alexandar was ruling in the country Greece in the middle-east. He had an ambition to win the entire world. He even won all the kingdoms in the middle-east and was ready to attack Bharat.

Alexandar's plan became clear to Vishnugupta. He also realized that Alexandar and his troops were brave and armed with arsenal and divided Bharat would not be able stand against his forces. He left the University to gather and unite all Bharatiya kings to be able to present a formidable defence to Alexandar. He travelled all the bordering kingdoms warning about the grave danger of invasion and tried to convince their kings for unity. He even sought help from king Dhanananda forgetting his personal enmity with him. But he was humiliated there. Few kings responded to his call though. In the beginning, Alexandar won few small kingdoms in the bordering areas with the help of self-indulgent Bharatiya king Ambhi who betrayed his own people and joined him. But Alexandar could not move further because of strong and dreadful retort from other Bharatiya kings. Finally, he had to return back to his country. This is how Bharat was saved from the alien Alexandar.

Such an intelligent Vishnugupta was smart enough in turning tables into his favour irrespective of circumstances. He was also popularly known by Chanakya and Kautilya (based on his Gotra). He did great things in his life. He threw away corrupt king Dhanananda and made his pupil Chandragupta a king and established a great and mighty empire Magadha.





Chanakya - 2

As learnt in earlier chapter, Chanakya (Vishnugupta) was a great teacher (shikshak), statesman, philosopher, thinker and a born patriot. Many great people including aristocrats and people from royal families were his students. There was no branch of knowledge, which he had not mastered. There seemed to be nothing, which he did not know. He was, in other words, a conglomeration of all things that make a genius. Although he was expertise in many subjects, his favourite subjects were politics and economics (artha-shastra). He was very much proud and confident about his profession of teaching. He used to say that – *the mother and a shikshak have the ability to bring about the revolution. If they desire, they can change the future of the current generations. They can play a bigger role in making the character based society that holds esteem values and principles. If they desire, they can even throw out the powerful kings.* And he proved it by defeating the arrogant king Dhanananda.

Although Chanakya was a teacher, he took lot of interest in politics. He had a strong spy-network and his spies kept him uptodate about what was going on in various kingdoms around Takshashila. He never budged to the pressure by the ruthless politicians. He was known for the meticulous planning to minute details including backup plans and it's perfect implementation. His calculations never went wrong. His brain was full of information, ideas and planning. But he would never disclose anything to anyone unless it was necessary. Nobody could make out what was going on in his mind. Because of his secretive and harsh nature, he could employ various methods carefully at the right time to destroy his enemies. He believed that everyone (kings) had their own weaknesses and they can be defeated by one way or another. Being known as a masterful political strategist, he discovered koot-yuddha (Guerilla Warfare).

Chanakya envisioned Bharat (India) as a united nation ruled under one administration. He knew that only united Bharat could protect herself and her culture from foreign invasions. His favourite student (pupil) was a brilliant and bright boy named Chandragupta. Since childhood Chandragupta was with him. For Chandragupta, he was not only a teacher but also a guardian. He carved Chandragupta's personality. A young boy Chandragupta turned into a patriot, brave and fearless warrior. Chanakya is not complete without Chandragupta and Chandragupta is not complete without Chanakya. Chandragupta was trustworthy. He would not even think about leaving or betraying or doing any harm to his guru Chanakya. Chanakya utilized him very well to fulfill his dream of uniting Bharat.

In those days, Magadha was the biggest empire in Bharat which was ruled by arrogant and ruthless king Dhanananda. As learnt in earlier chapter, Chanakya's father was tortured by the king and he himself was humiliated several times. Although he really didn't care about his personal enmity, he had taken an oath that he would teach Dhanananda a lesson for his arrogance and bad administration. He also felt that once the biggest empire Magadha comes under his control, he would easily bring the entire Bharat under one rule. At last, with excellent planning and Chandragupta's bravery, king Dhanananda was thrown out of the throne and killed later. After that, Chandraputa became a king of the mighty empire Magadha. Chandraputa became very popular because of his excellent administration and selfless love towards people of his kingdom.

After becoming Chandragupta a king of Maghadha, many small provinces and kingdoms happily agreed his leadership and joined him; thus already big Magadha kingdom grew further. Those who did not join technically, became friends of the Magadha because they were already influenced by Chanakya. Thus Chanakya fulfilled his dream of uniting Bharat. Chandragupta ruled Magadha for many years. Chanakya stayed with him in Magadha and became his prime-minister.

Chanakya continued teaching also. He also wrote many books on political ethics, nitishastra (thesis on the ideal way of life), and economics (kautiliya artha-shastra). His books are translated into many other languages including English, French and German. His literature was unique because of its rational approach and an unabashed advocacy of real politics. It shows his in depth study of the Bharatiya way of life. In his literature, he has touched many topics including the duties of king at length such as - how a king should keep an eye on the things that are going on in his kingdom, how to make sure that his associates and ministers are honest to him, what good governance means, how to make people give taxes without feeling any burden, how to keep vigil on borders, how a king should make sure about his people's character, how to make use of spies and so on.... He was already impressed by the big and famous University Takshashila and he felt necessary to have similar University in Magadha also. So he established another big University at Nalanda city. Later, like Takshashila, Nalanda also became a world famous University.

Such an intelligent and visionary Chanakya lived selfless and aesthetic life. His life was mysterious but blot-free. Just like lord Krishna, he would give up values and morals and do anything to uphold the Dharma. He had powers to turn over the kingdoms but he never thought of becoming a king. He would make impossible things possible. Indeed, Chanakya was an excellent personality. His life and teachings will continue to guide entire Hindu society.





OM Car Hanging

Material:

Index paper or any thick paper, glue, 8 popsicle sticks, small string to tie, flowers, glitter glue etc for decoration.

Procedure:

Trim the index card (if required) about 2 inches smaller than the popsicle stick on all the four sides. This depends on the size of the popsicle stick you choose.

Stick two popsicle sticks each on the top and bottom side of the cut index card holding it in between. Then put two sticks each on the sides.

Now tie string on the two top ends of the stick.

With the glitter pen write OM on the paper/index card. Decorate with flowers, glitter etc. Use your creativity here.

Your OM is ready to be hung in your car or in 'pooja ghar' or on the wall of your room.



