



Syllabus

Year III, Quarter II

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 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

बुद्धिर्बलं यशो धैर्यं निर्भयत्वमरोगता ।
अजाड्यं वाक्पटुत्वं च हनूमत्स्मरणाद्भवेत् ॥

buddhirbalaṁ yaśo dhairyaṁ nirbhayatvamarogatā ।
ajāḍyaṁ vākpaṭutvaṁ ca hanūmatsmaraṇādbhavet ॥

Meaning: When we pray to bhagawan hanuman, we will be blessed with intellect, strength, fame, courage, fearlessness, freedom from all ailments, wisdom and diplomacy of speech.

Subhashitam (Words of wisdom)

नरस्याभरणं रूपं रूपस्याभरणं गुणः ।
गुणस्याभरणं ज्ञानं ज्ञानस्याभरणं क्षमा ॥

narasyAbharaNaM rupaM rupasyAbharaNaM guNaH ।
guNasyAbharaNaM GYaanaM GYaanasyAbharaNaM xamA ॥

Meaning: Handsomeness is the ornament of men; quality is the ornament of handsomeness; knowledge is the ornament of quality; (and) forgiveness is the ornament of knowledge.

Amrutvachan (Quotes)

We are what our thoughts have made us; so take care about what you think.
Words are secondary. Thoughts live; they travel far.

- Swami Vivekananda



This land is my land

This land is your land This land is my land
 From Himalayas to Kanyakumari
 From Mumbai Gate way to East Meghalaya
 This land is made for you and me

It's rich in culture and rich in heritage
 With great poets and greater scriptures
 With great dancers and amazing singers
 This art is made for you and me

In various forms with many values
 Gods like Krishna and ideal Rama
 Devi Saraswati and strong Hanuman
 All gods to bless you and me

All the festival fun with family
 Like yugadi - holi and dasera
 Celebrating rakhi for universal brotherhood
 festivals to enrich you and me

With Thirty five states with unique languages
 Different foods and different vestments
 Looks like diversity but still is unity
 this land unites you and me

Its our dharma believe in giving
 Its now our turn to give back something
 Its our duty to preserve everything
 Which was given to you and me





Yugadi (Varsha Pratipada)

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

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

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

The day of Yugadi is also a beginning of a new year according to the Hindu Panchang. You may puzzle and ask, "What is Hindu Panchang?" Hindu Panchang is a Hindu Calendar. Just like English Calendar, Hindus also have their own calendar. They use it for the religious customs and ceremonies. Since it is a start of new year, people launch many new projects, start new ventures, open new offices. They purchase jewelry, and gold on this auspicious day.

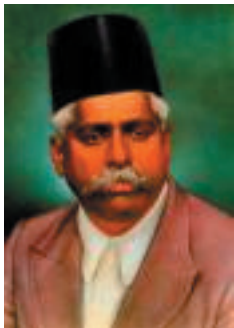
Hindus celebrate this festival in various ways. Preparations for the festival

begin a week ahead. Houses are given a thorough wash. Shopping for new clothes and buying other items that go with the requirements of the festival are done with a lot of excitement. People wake up before the break of dawn, apply coconut oil on their skin and take a bath after which they decorate the entrance of their houses with fresh mango leaves and intricate rangoli designs reflecting the brightness of the spring. Wearing new clothes, they offer Pooja for the God. They pray for their health, wealth and prosperity and success in business too. As the day starts, they eat the paste of bitter-sweet leaves of Neem tree, tamarind and jaggery. The neem paste is believed to purify blood and build up immunity in the body against diseases. Some people celebrate this festival by hoisting a gudi - a bamboo pole with a rich and gorgeous cloth of saffron color and a small branch of neem tree and garland. It symbolizes Shree Rama's triumphant entry into Ayodhya and is erected in homes as a mark of triumph of good over evil.



It is believed that, on this day, the Universe was created by Lord Brahma. This is the day when Lord Vishnu incarnated himself as Matsya (the Fish Incarnation). On this day, Shri Rama killed Vali. Historically, the day recalls the inspiring occasion when the kings Shalivahana and Vikramaditya defeated the barbaric forces of Shakas who came from Central Asia and invaded Bharat (India) during the 1st century A.D. The founding of new Eras in the names of Vikrama and Shalivahana signifies the supreme importance accorded to them in the Hindu history.

And what a happy coincidence!! A great patriot and revolutionary, Dr. Keshav Baliram Hedgewar was also born on this day of Yugadi.



Affectionately, people used to call him as "Doctorji". In those days, Bharat (India) was under the rule of British. Everyone, including Doctorji, was fighting for the independence in their own way. Doctorji wanted to make Bharat a free, strong and a glorious country. Soon he concluded that an organization of disciplined, dedicated people was the supreme need of the hour. As a result, he founded an organization - Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) - popularly known as "Sangh". Doctorji passed away in the year of

1940. Even after his death, Sangh is growing by leaps and bounds. It has vowed to destroy the various evils corroding our social life. Our balagokulam too started taking the inspiration from Sangh.





Story of Arundhati

Arundhati, the wife of the great sage Vashishta, is one of the highly renowned women of India. Along with many of the goddesses, Arundhati also graced the court of Brahma, and worshipped him. Together with Sage Vashishta, she observed penance and austerity at the bank of the Lake Ujjanaka in order to please Lord Shiva, receiving the blessings of success and peace by God's grace.

The goddess Swaha wanted to get her way by assuming the form of the wives of the Seven Sages. She succeeded in the forms of the six of the ladies, but failed to assume Arundhati's form by virtue of the latter's penance and devotion to her husband. When the Seven Sages came to know that their wives had a relationship with Surya (the sun god), they became very angry and left their wives. But they could not leave Arundhati who was free of any sin. Even the Seven Sages bowed their heads to Arundhati.

According to the Shalya Parva of the Mahabharat, Arundhati observed the most difficult austerity to please Lord Shiva. Lord Shiva tested her resolve. When Arundhati passed the test, Lord Shiva narrated the story of her great character to the Seven Sages. He said that no one could equal Arundhati in the observance of austerities. She was indeed a great sage, observing austerities for twelve years without any food or drink. The sages were astonished, too, seeing that Arundhati's face bore no sign of fatigue, nor her limbs had lost any agility even after enduring hunger and thirst for twelve years. Lord Shiva imparted all manners of boons and blessings to Arundhati and departed for his abode.



Preaching to the gods, Arundhati presented a discourse on hospitality toward guests, the great significance of pilgrimages, and the great role of the cow; and gained their highest appreciation. Lord Brahma also granted a boon to Arundhati, saying, 'Tapaste vardhtansada' May your tapasya (austerity) always find greater heights.

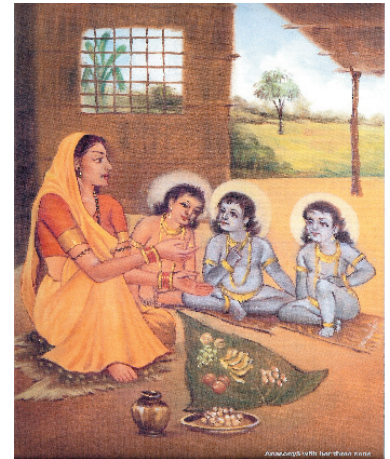




Story of Anusuya

Anusuya was Sage Atri's wife. She was a great and illustrious woman of India. Her fame as a woman steadfastly devoted to her husband permeated not only the Earth but also the Heaven. Once Sage Mandasya cursed a Brahman named Kaushik that he would die at the sunrise the next morning. When Kaushik's wife Kaushiki heard about the curse, she declared, "From now on, the sun shall never rise." When the sun did not rise for many days under the influence of Kaushiki's honor, lamentations filled all the three worlds (Earth, Heaven, the Hinterland). Brahma encouraged the gods to go in the shelter of Anusuya saying that she alone could help them. The gods then prayed Anusaya that she bring about sunrise using the force of her austerity and moral power. Anusuya then inspired Kaushiki to permit the sunrise to take place. Kaushiki did permit the sunrise to occur, but her husband Kaushik expired instantly on account of the curse. However, Anusuya brought him back to life by the force of her austerity and devotion to her husband.

Because of the stoppage of the sunrise, the whole creation was about to be destroyed. The creation was saved when the sunrise took place again. All the gods were very pleased with Anusuya and for this, they asked her to ask any boon her heart desired. Anusuya asked for the boon that she should have sons who were reincarnations of Brahma, Vishnu, and Mahesh. By virtue of this boon, Brahma reincarnated as her son Soma (the Moon), Vishnu as Dattatreya, and Mahesh as a Durvas.



When Shree Ram arrived at Sage Atri's ashram during his exile to the forest, then Sage Atri, introducing his wife Anusuya to him and said, "She is a great lady following the path of austerity and deserves your worship. She is completely free of anger." Anusuya was a shining model among women devoted to their husbands, bearing a heavenly glow.

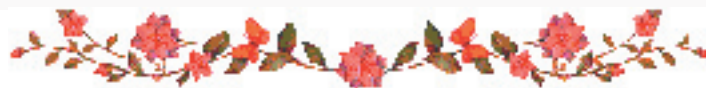
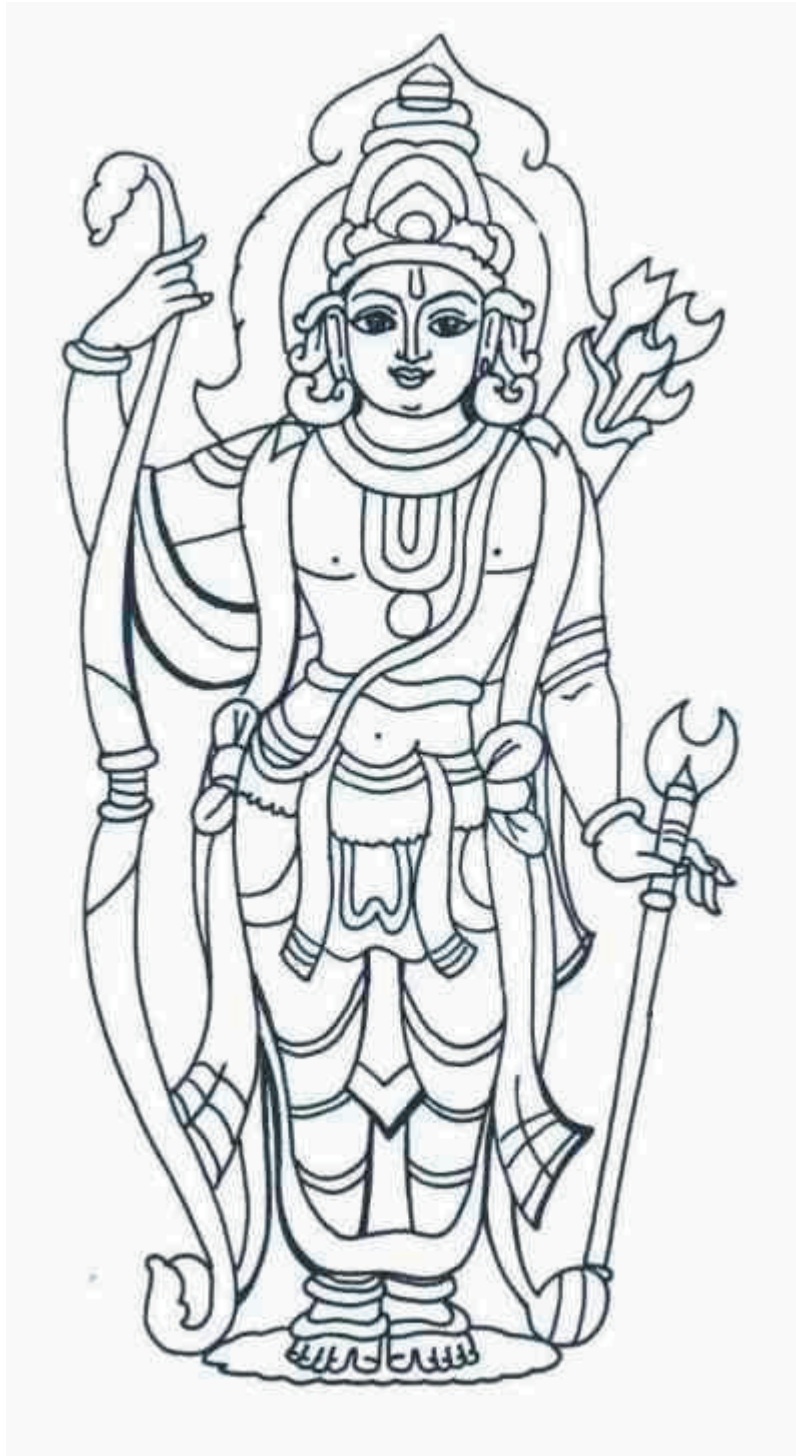
The word 'Anusuya' means 'One free from all vices and shortcomings'. Sita also saluted Anusuya at her ripe old age. Anusuya told Sita, "A husband is like a highest god to her wife. You should continue serving your husband Shree Ramachandra as you have been doing. Always follow your Sati-Dharma (being engaged in devotion and duty to husband). This would satisfy your Dharma (duty) and also give you fame as well."

The prestige of Indian womanhood has been established in the world through the glorious character and illustrious personality of such women. The Indian culture has gained a high level of splendor from the aura of such great women.





Color this picture of Shri Ram



-: Exercise :-

Fill up the blanks

- 1) Festival Yugadi falls in the Hindu month of _____.
a) Chaitra b) Vaishakha c) Shravana d) None of these
- 2) _____ is one of the six Sangh utsavs.
a) Deepavali b) Mahashivratri c) Yugadi d) None of these
- 3) Yugadi is a birth day of _____.
a) Doctorji b) Guruji c) Madhav d) None of these
- 4) Arundhati was a wife of sage _____.
a) Durvasa b) Valmiki c) Vasishtha d) None of these
- 5) Anusuya was a wife of sage _____.
a) Valmiki b) Atri c) Vasishtha d) None of these

Questions:

- 1) What is Panchang?

- 2) What is the meaning of Anusua?

- 3) Name the two Eras.

- 4) What did Anusuya tell Sita?

Shloka

श्रीराम राम रामेति रमे रामे मनोरमे ।

सहस्रनाम तत्तुल्यम रामनाम वरानने ॥

shrIrAma rAma rAmeti rame rAme manorame |

sahasranAma tattulyama rAmanAma varAnane ||

Meaning: Chanting the name of Shriram constantly enjoys me. The holy name of Shriram is equal to one thousand holy names of Shri Vishnu. (Lord Shiva uttered above lines to Goddess Parvati in praise of Shri Ram)

Subhashitam (Words of wisdom)

उद्यमः साहसं धैर्यं बुद्धिः शक्तिः पराक्रमः ।

षडेते यत्र वर्तन्ते तत्र देवः सहायकृत् ॥ ॥

udyamaH sAhasaM dhairyaM buddhiH shaktiH parAkramaH |

ShaDete yatra vartante tatra devaH sahAyakRut ||

Meaning: Diligence, enterprise, fortitude, intelligence, power, bravery; where these six exist, the destiny becomes helpful.

Amrutvachan (Quotes)

“The earth is enjoyed by heroes”—this is the unfailing truth. Be a hero. Always say, “I have no fear.”

- Swami Vivekananda



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 This land is made for you and me

It's rich in culture and rich in heritage
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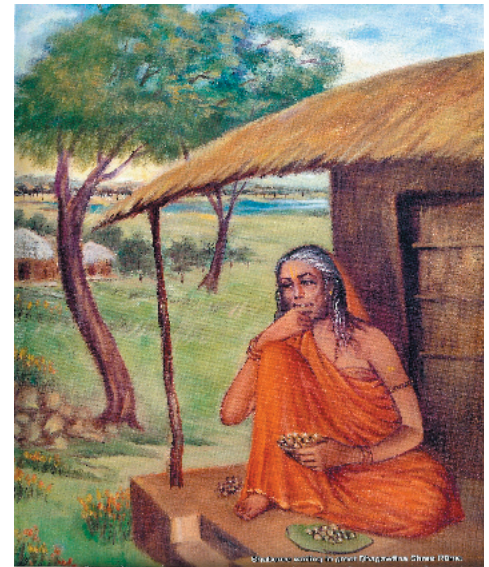
Story of Shabari

In the forest called Panchavati, there lived a Bheelani named Shramani in the ashram of Sage Matanga, and she also used to be absorbed in devotional activities. As she belonged to the Shabara community, she was also known by another name - Shabari. She remained busy serving the sages who came to the ashram. Sage Matanga had blessed Shabari that Lord Ram would appear before her in that very ashram. Her waiting was long and patience enduring.

Shree Ram, with his brother Lakshman, was wondering in the forest Panchavati in search of his wife Sita. He was going places asking about Sita. He also went to Sage Matanga's ashram. When Shabari came to know that Lord Ram was due to come there, she went to the forest and started gathering sweet fruits so that she could welcome Shree Ram.

When Shree Ram came to that ashram, she welcomed Ram and Lakshman with utmost love. Her voice became choked due to her intense emotion. She washed the feet of both the brothers, and had them sit on the cushions. Then she offered fruits to Shree Ram. Shabari, all ecstatic, would taste the berries, give sweet berries to the Lord, and throw away other ones. After all, how could she determine which berry is sweet and which one sour unless she tasted those herself!!!!

On account of her deep love, great reverence and intense devotion to the Lord, shabari did not even realize that she was feeding him tasted, and therefore defiled berries. Lord Ram too, recognizing the honest, pious and pure heart of Shabari and her feeling of devotion, ate those defiled berries with great relish. God cares for only true feelings.



Lord Ram was very pleased with Shabari's reverence and devotion. Upon Shabari's request, the Lord preached to her about the Nawadha (Nine Branched) Devotion. It was Shabari who suggested to Ram to go to the Pampa Lake and to cultivate friendship with Sugreev, and told him that he would be successful in the search of Sita with the help of Sugreev. Thereafter Shabari, enveloped in Ram's devotion, breathed her last, offering herself in the sacrificial fire. As soon as she entered the fire, her body became radiant with a divine light. She became immersed in the Lord forever.





Story of Sati

Sati was the daughter of Prajapati Daksha, the son of Brahma; and she was the consort of Lord Shiva. Once upon a time when Lord Shiva and Sati were strolling in the woods, he had a vision of Ram and Lakshman in search of Sita; and he bowed his head in salutation to Lord Ram. Sati became surprised to observe this act of Shiva, and asked him to explain the mystery behind it. Even after Shiva explained everything, however, Sati was not convinced and she resolved to test Lord Ram. She assumed the appearance of Sita and started to walk slowly in the same where Ram and Lakshman were moving around. Shree Ram became aware of what the matter was. He paid homage to Sati and asked, "What is the matter: you are roaming around alone, without Lord Shiva?" Sati became embarrassed on hearing Ram's words. Recognizing the power of Shree Ram, Sati came back to Lord Shiva.

Upon Sati's return, Lord Shiva face a dilemma, since Sati had assumed the appearance of Sita. Shiva regarded Sita as his mother and now accepting Sati would go against Shiva's feelings of devotion toward Sita. How could he now regard Sati as his consort? Shiva resolved in his mind, "In this life, there can not be any meeting with Sati in this body." After some time, Prajapati Daksha, Sati's father, arranged to hold a yajna in his capital. In this yajna, many kings, emperors and gods were invited, but Daksha didn't invite Shiva. Sati expressed her wish to go to her father's house. Shiva tried hard to make her understand that it was not a good idea to go anywhere uninvited as one may be insulted. But Sati stubbornly held her ground. She went to her father's house to participate in the yajna even though she was not invited.



Having gone there, she found that her husband, Lord Shiva, was being insulted. She couldn't bear her husband's insult, and jumped into the fire of the yajna, turning her body into ashes. Everyone became grief-stricken. When Shiva came to know about this, he send Veerabhadra there and had the yajna celebration all disrupted.

Lord Shiva bore the ash-smearred body of Sati on his shoulders, and started roaming upon the earth like a deranged person. All the limbs of Sati's body dropped one after another. Wherever any limb of Sati's body fell down, the spot became a 'Sidhapeetha'.

Sati reincarnated in the following life as the daughter of the Himalaya mountain, hence she became known by the name of Parvati. Parvati observed great austerity and won Lord Shiva again as her husband. Kartikeya and Ganesh are both sons of Lord Shiva and Parvati.





Story of Ahalya

Ahalya was the wife of Sage Gautam. Of the five glorious women who are regarded as worthy of being remembered every morning, the name of Ahalya comes first. The other four jewels of women are Sita, Draupadi, Tara and Mandodari.

Brahma caused the origin of a beautiful baby girl who was called 'Ahalya' for being free of 'Hala' (sin). Brahma kept this girl with Sage Gautam as a caretaker. After some time, when Ahalya grew to be a beautiful young woman, Gautam went to Brahma to return her to him. Brahma, pleased with the sense of pious duty and self-control on part of Gautam, got Ahalya married with him. They had a son named Shatanand, who became the royal priest of King Janak.



One episode that is famous is as follows. Indra, the king of gods, in cooperation with the Moon god, assumed the form of Sage Gautam and committed a sin with Ahalya. Ahalya, though she was devoted to her husband, could not recognize Indra. On learning about this incident, Gautam became incensed with anger and cursed Indra to become 'Sahasrabhang' and Ahalya to turn into a stone. Later, becoming pleased with Ahalya's entreaty, he said to Ahalya that she would resume her original human form when, in the Treta-Yug, Lord Ram would touch her with his feet. Due to the curse, Ahalya continued lying in the form of a stone. When the time came, Shree Ram, traveling to Janakpuri with his guru Sage Vishwamitra, emancipated Ahalya, bringing her to resume human form.

The reason for Indra's transgression was the fear the gods had of Sage Gautam and his severe austerities, which made him capable of setting the whole earth ablaze. The gods wanted to disrupt Gautam's tapasya (austerities), which was possible only by raising fumes of rage in his mind. To disrupt Sage Gautam's tapasya and to set his mind on extreme rage, Indra committed this sin under permission from the Devatas. The enraged sage uttered the curse, and this damaged the effect of his penance and austerities.

Devoted to her husband, always absorbed in serving him, Ahalya became a stone due to her husband's curse; and Lord Ram himself brought her back to human life. Ahalya is most certainly one of the greatest women of India.



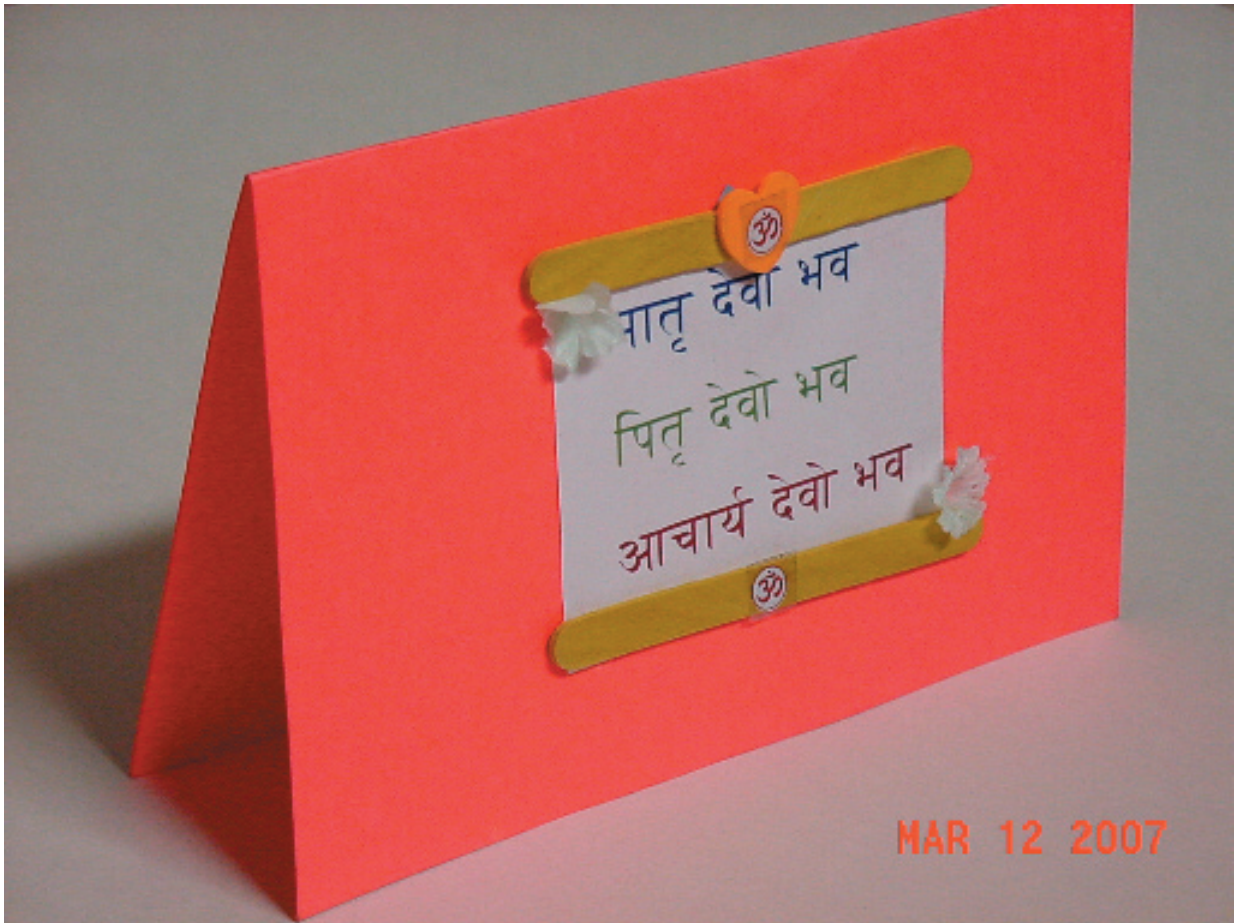


Greeting Card for Mothers Day

॥ मातृ देवो भव ॥	Matru Devo Bhava	Mother is God
॥ पितृ देवो भव ॥	Pitru Devo Bhava	Father is God
॥ आचार्य देवो भव ॥	Aacharya Devo Bhava	Teacher is God

Material: Greeting card paper (or index card), 2 popsicle sticks, glue and silk flowers etc for decoration.

Procedure: 1) Fold the card paper into half. Write the above message on a plain paper. Cut the message and glue it on the centre of the greeting card. 2) Stick popsicle sticks on the top and bottom of the message. 3) Decorate it with plastic flowers or any other decorative material. User your creativity here. 4) Your greeting card is done. Give it your mother on mother's day. This is good enough for Father's day too! **Note:** Adjust the message size according to the greeting card or the popsicle sticks for hanging.



-: Exercise :-

Fill up the blanks

- 1) Sati was the consort of Lord _____.
 a) Vishnu b) Shiva c) Brahma d) None of these
- 2) _____ was a great devotee of Lord Ram.
 a) Shabari b) Sati c) Mandodari d) None of these
- 3) _____ and _____ are sons of Shiva-Parvati.
 a) Kartikeya b) Ganesh c) Shravana d) None of these
- 4) Ahalya was a wife of sage _____.
 a) Gautam b) Valmiki c) Durvasa d) None of these

Identify True or False

- 1) Sati was the daughter of Prajapati Daksha.
- 2) Sati took birth as a daughter of Himalaya; namely Parvati.
- 3) Shabari used to live in the Ashram of Sage Gautam.
- 4) Indra is the king of Gods.

Questions:

- 1) What sin Ahalya committed by mistake?

2) Who brought Ahalya back to human life after being cursed by Gautam?

3) What did Shri Ram teach Shabari?



Shloka

कायेन वाचा मनसेन्द्रियैर्वा । बुद्धयात्मना वा प्रतिस्वभावात् ।
करोमि यद्यत् सकलं परस्मै । नारायणायेति समर्पयामि ॥

kAyena vAchA manasendriyairvA | buddhayAtmanA vA pratisvabhAvAt |
karOmi yadyat sakalaM parasmal nArAyaᅇAyeti samarpayAmi ||

Meaning: Whatever I perform with my body, speech, mind, senses, intellect or my inner self either intentionally or unintentionally, I dedicate it all to that Supreme Bhagawan Narayana.

Subhashitam (Words of wisdom)

पदे पदे च रत्नानि योजने रसकुपिकाः ।

भाग्यहीना न पश्यन्ति बहुरत्ना वसुंधरा ॥

pade pade cha ratnAni yojane rasakupikAH |
bhAgyahInA na pashyanti bahuratnA vasuMdhara ||

Meaning: There are gems from step to step (every step); there are cups of juice at every yojan (mile); but the unfortunate ones do not realize them. The earth has numerous gems.

Amrutvachan (Quotes)

All power is within you. You can do anything and everything. Believe in that. Do not believe that you are weak; do not believe that you are half-crazy lunatics, as most of us do nowadays. Stand up and express the divinity within you.

- Swami Vivekananda



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This land is your land This land is my land
 From Himalayas to Kanyakumari
 From Mumbai Gate way to East Meghalaya
 This land is made for you and me

It's rich in culture and rich in heritage
 With great poets and greater scriptures
 With great dancers and amazing singers
 This art is made for you and me

In various forms with many values
 Gods like Krishna and ideal Rama
 Devi Saraswati and strong Hanuman
 All gods to bless you and me

All the festival fun with family
 Like yugadi - holi and dasera
 Celebrating rakhi for universal brotherhood
 festivals to enrich you and me

With Thirty five states with unique languages
 Different foods and different vestments
 Looks like diversity but still is unity
 this land unites you and me

Its our dharma believe in giving
 Its now our turn to give back something
 Its our duty to preserve everything
 Which was given to you and me



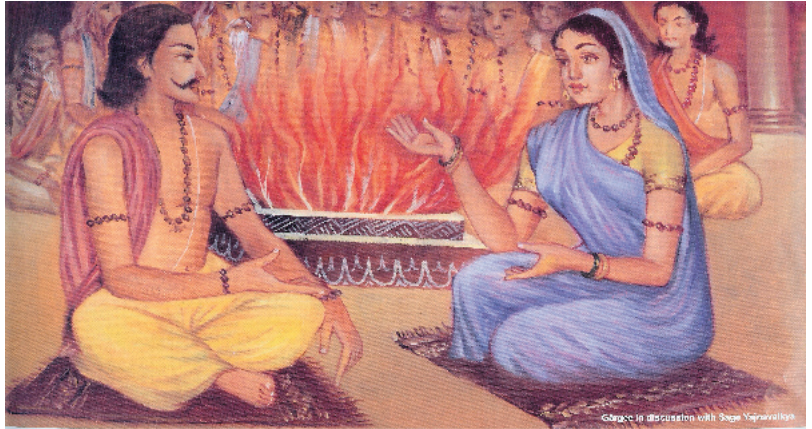


Story of Gargi

Gargi is very renowned in the Vedic literature. Her father's name was 'Vachaknu', and so she came to be known as 'Vachaknavi'. Because of being born in the Garga Gotra (community), she was also called Gargi, a name that became well known. Nowhere one finds mention of her real name - Vachaknavi. From the questions she asked Sage Yajnavalkya, as mentioned in the Vrihadaranyak- Upanishad, it is apparent that she was extremely thoughtful and a woman highly learned in the spiritual sciences.

Once a debate was organized to discuss spiritual scriptures in the court of King Janak. He wanted to know who was the best knower of Brahman in the world at the time. King Janak arranged to present one thousand cows; their horns covered with gold, and announced in the court,

"Whosoever is the knower of Brahman amongst you, can take these cows." None of the brahmans (scholars) dared to take the cows, since everyone knew that he would have to prove his knowledge in the debate to establish himself as the best among the lot.



Then the great sage Yajnavalkya asked his disciple,

"You shepherd all these cows and take them away from here for me." This opened the debate. Many scholars asked many questions to Yajnavalkya, who patiently answered all their questions, allaying their concerns and doubts. Now it was Gargi's turn. She asked many difficult and complex questions to Yajnavalkya on the science of Brahman, cosmology, elements of immortality, language, etc. From these questions asked by Gargi, it was obvious that she was a great-learned lady and exponent of Brahman. Upon hearing from Yajnavalkya the answers of her last two questions, regarding Brahman, the Absolute Soul, Gargi also bowed her head to the great sage Yajnavalkya. In that assembly of the learned, Gargi pronounced the verdict, "There is no knower of Brahman superior to Sage Yajnavalkya; no one can defeat him." Gargi was not only herself very studious and profoundly learned in the scriptures; but she also respected others who were learned. She had no bias to prove herself about others. That's why Gargi generously praised Yajnavalkya. Gargi was an ascetic lady and a learned one of the highest order a luminous jewel among the women of India.

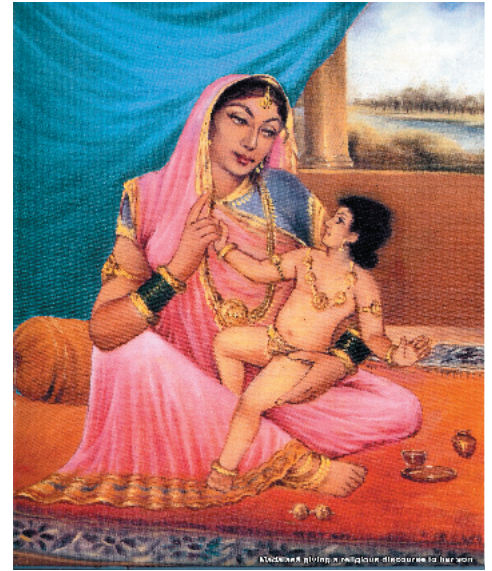




Story of Madalasa

Madalasa was the daughter of Vishwasu, the king of the Gandharv. She was married to Ritdhwaj, the son of a prominent and powerful king, Shatrujit. After Shatrujit died, Ritdhwaj became the king and became engaged in royal duties.

After some time, Madalasa gave birth to a son. He was named Vikrant. Whenever little Vikrant cried, his learned mother used to sing a lullaby in order to keep him from crying, "Son, you are a pure soul. You bear no name. You have been just given a fictitious name lately. This body of yours is made of five elements earth, water, air, fire and space. Neither is this body yours nor are you of this body. Then why do you cry?" In this manner, Madalasa used to enlighten her son with spiritual knowledge through the medium of lullaby. Due to the preaching and spiritual impressions of his mother, Vikrant grew up to be an ascetic, detached from worldly subjects and kingly activities, and he finally went off to the forest to observe penance.



In a similar vein, her second son Subahu and the third son Shatrumardan also became influenced by her spiritual preaching and left home to follow the path of asceticism. Madalasa also preached to her husband, Ritdhwaj, regarding the mortality of the body and the immortality of the soul. Ritdhwaj said to Madalasa, however, that she should not teach the same lesson to their fourth son, Alark, so that at least one prince could become interested in the ways of the world and look after the kingdom. To comply with Ritdhwaj's request, Madalasa sang a different lullaby to Alark, "Son. You are going to be a great king who would rule over the earth and make it prosperous, free of enemies. You would enjoy the bounty of life and join the ranks of the immortals." Thus Madalasa educated her fourth son Alark about the duties of a king.

Noble women such as Madalasa are capable of imparting noble thoughts and samskars and render their lives meaningful and successful. Knowledgeable in both spiritual and political realms, Madalasa is an inspiring embodiment of the greatness of Indian women.





Bala (Young) Shivaji

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

Don't you wish to know who this young prince was? He was none other than Shivaji. At the time of this incident he was just fourteen. In another incident..... in Nachani village of Pune province, a ferocious and huge cheetah was creating nuisance. He used to attack villagers suddenly and run away into the jungle. Scared villagers ran to Shivaji for help. They cried, "Save us from this wild animal. He has killed so many children. He attacks us especially in the night when everyone is sleeping". After



patiently listening to the villagers, he said, 'don't worry!! Calm down. I am here to help you". Shivaji, along with his chieftain Yesaji and few soldiers, went to the jungle. As soon as the cheetah appeared, Shivaji's soldiers frightened and backed off. But Shivaji and Yesaji bravely confronted the Cheetah and killed him in no time. Villagers rejoiced and hailed, "Jay Shivaji!!"

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

You may ask: how did Shivaji acquire all these noble virtues - courage, heroism, love of the motherland and love of Dharma? Even when he was a little child, his mother Jijabai used to tell him stories of heroes, of saints and sages who appear in the Ramayana, and the Mahabharatha. She taught him all about Hindu Samskars and patriotism. As Shivaji listened to these tales of heroism and Dharmik deeds, he grew more and more eager to be like Rama or Krishna, Bheema or Arjuna. His teacher and guide, Dadoji Kondadev was a great man. He not only taught Shivaji about all kinds of warfare tactics but also about politics and good administration. Both, Dadoji Kondadev and Jijabai, carved his personality.

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

As Shivaji grew old, he fought many wars and defeated several lieutenants and commanders of foreign rulers. While fighting with the enemies, he put himself in a grave danger very often.



He not only established his independent sovereign against all odds but also undertook reforms to make his people happy. He inspired and united the common man to fight against the tyranny of foreign rulers such as Aurangjeb, by inculcating a sense of pride and nationality in them. Isn't it great about Shivaji? Sant (sage) Ramadas was his spiritual guru (teacher). He sang in praise of Shivaji: "The land and its Dharma have been uplifted. A kingdom of bliss has arisen."

After reading the thrilling and inspiring tale of Shivaji, don't we feel that we too should follow the example of Shivaji? Why is this so? It is because Shivaji underwent all hardships for the sake of his country, for the sake of its Dharma. He did not care for his own life and quite often entered the very jaws of death. Till his last breath, he lived for his country and for the Dharma of the Hindus. It is nearly three hundred years since he died but the memory of this great man lights up the torch of inspiration.





Skit: Shivaji and Ramdas Swami

Characters: Moderator, Shivaji, Yesaji, Tanaji, Gate-keepers, Sant Ramdas, Jijabai)

(**Moderator:** Shivaji with his commanders discussing politics. Shivaji's mother Jijabai is also with them. Suddenly they hear Ramdas Swami's voice.)

Ramdas Swami: (standing outside Shivaji's premises) Jay Jay Raghuveer Samarth!!!

(Gate-keeper comes in and informs Shivaji about the arrival of Ramdas Swami).

Gate-keeper to Shivaji: Maharaj!! Pujya Ramdas Swami wants to see you and stay couple of days with you.

Shivaji (surprisingly): Ramdas Swami is here!!! He wants to meet me.

Jijabai (happily): Aho Bhagyam!! Shivaba, "Go outside and bring him in respectfully"

(Shivaji goes out and brings Ramdas Swami in and extends all kinds of hospitality).

Shivaji to Ramdas: (with a great respect) Swami ji, I am at your service. It is a great honor for me. Please let me know what can I do for you.

Ramdas to Shivaji: (smilingly) Rajee! I have heard your name and fame. I came here because I wanted to meet you and see your kingdom by my own eyes.

Shivaji to Ramdas: Swami ji, please stay here as long as you want.

(Shivaji then notifies his sevaks to extend Ramdas Swami all kinds of facilities. But Ramdas Swami does not accept anything. Instead he prefers to manage his

meal by asking people for alms. Shivaji realizes that. He thought his hospitality is not enough. So he writes a note saying that he is giving all his kingdom to Ramdas Swami and give it to him. But Ramdas Swami declines everything)

Shivaji to Ramdas: (puzzled) Swamiji, "I beg your pardon. I have provided you all kinds of facilities. I even gave you all my kingdom. Then why do you go out for alms?"

Ramdas to Shivaji: Rajel! I am a Sadhu. I did not come here to enjoy your hospitality. Neither do I want your kingdom. And how can you give me this kingdom? It is not even yours. It is people's kingdom. You are merely a trustee of this kingdom.

(Moderator: Shivaji realizes his mistake. He apologises.)

Shivaji to Ramdas: (apologitic) Swamiji, Pardon me!! I didn't mean to hurt you.

Ramdas to Shivaji: I know, Rajel! You are a very good king. People are happy and contented in your kingdom. I have never seen a king like you. Keep it up!!!! I am extremely happy with you. But never think that this is your kingdom. Try to be a humble sevak of your praja (people).

Shivaji to Ramdas: Ji Swamiji. I realized my mistake. You have removed my ego. I am merely a sevak of my praja (people) and I will keep that in my mind all the time.

(Everyone then praises Ramdas Swami and Shivaji).

Everyone: Jay Jay Raghuv eer Samartha!!!! Ramdas Swami ki Jay!!! Jay Shivaji Jay Bhavani!!!! Shivaji Maharaj Ki Jay!!!!



-: Exercise :-

Fill up the blanks

- 1) _____ was Shivaji's father.
a) Shahaji b) Konddev c) Sambhaji d) None of these
- 2) _____ and _____ carved the personality of Shivaji.
a) Kondev b) Jijabai c) Shahaji d) None of these
- 3) _____ was well versed with Vedic literature.
a) Madalasa b) Gargi c) Jijabai d) None of these
- 4) Sant (sage) _____ was Shivaji's spiritual Guru.
a) Ramdas b) Konddev c) Jijabai d) None of these

Questions:

- 1) Write at least 4 lines about Bala Shivaji.

- 3) Write down the last stanza of the song.
