

धर्मसन्देश Dharma Sandesh

a quarterly newsletter of Bharatiya Mandir, Middletown, NY

आ नो भद्राः क्रतवो यन्तु विश्वतः। Let noble thoughts come to us from everywhere. RigVeda 1.89.1

नमस्ते Namaste

ॐ – OM. With the blessings and grace of the Supreme Spirit (परमात्मा), we present this issue of Bharatiya Mandir's quarterly newsletter "Dharma Sandesh".

Seasons continue to change. Summer is already past us and we have entered the Fall (Autumn) season. Hurricanes, floods and wildfires continue to wreak havoc throughout. We continue to pray to the Lord to maintain the balance of nature and save us. He will heed our prayers if we are genuine and pure in mind.

We are eagerly awaiting the arrival of the Navaratri and Diwali festivals. The music, the Garba and Dandiya dances, and the strings of lights and lamps promote a feeling of happiness and joy in everyone's minds as we join together to worship Maa Durga and Maa Lakshmi.

In this issue, we continue with the article on Dashaavatara, the ten primary Avatars of Lord Vishnu. This issue talks about Buddha and Kalki, the ninth and tenth incarnations of the Lord. Dr. Padma Sundaram continues to write on the "Consorts/Devotees of Lord MahaVishnu". In this issue, she tells us about Bhakta Sri Meerabai. I have started to write about Bhaja Govindam (भज गोविन्दम्), a great composition by Jagadguru Adi Shankaracharya. This will continue in the next issue as well.

We hope that readers will continue to enjoy reading these articles and gain some insight into our Sanatana Dharma. Let us all pray to the Paramaatma (परमात्मा) to shower His blessings upon all His children!!

Sincerely,
Your Editorial Board
Web: www.bharatiyamandir.org

सुभाषिता Subhaashitaa

In this section, we present a Sanskrit quotation and its interpretation/meaning.

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

ayam-nijah-paro-veti-ganana-laghu-cetasaam |
udaara-caritaanam-tu-vasudhaiva-kutumbakam ||

'This person is my own relative and that person is a stranger' – this is the calculation of the narrow-minded person; for the magnanimous and broad-minded, however, the entire earth is but one family.

This is an integral component of the Hindu philosophy. We consider everyone in the world as our own family. In the Vedas we always chant "sarve janaah sukhino bhavantu" – may everyone be happy. Let us herald the greatness of our faith by including and appreciating everyone around us.

Contributed by Dr. Narasim Banavara

साई प्रेरणा Baba's Teachings

In this section, we present a teaching of Sri Sai Baba.

Sri Satya Sai Baba spoke thus – "When faults are found in anyone, you will have to understand that there are deficiencies in their behavior; that is all. Do not conclude that there is no Divine *Atma* in them. As a result of the company they keep or the immorality of the society in which they grew up, flaws have developed in them. These are not native to their nature, which is *Atmic*. You will have to provide them with good company and beneficial surroundings and persuade them to take part in these. You should on no

account condemn such people as born incorrigibles, and keep them aloof.

- Sathya Sai Vahini, Chap 7, "Be Yourself".

Contributed by Dr. Vijaya Dasari

ज्ञानविहार JnanaVihara

In this section, we present articles on Hinduism, Vedas, Puranas, Upanishads, and related philosophy.

Dashaavataara – Part IV

दशावतार – ४

In the previous three issues of Dharma Sandesh, I presented descriptions of the first eight (out of ten) Avatars of Lord Vishnu, namely the Matsya, Kurma, Varaha, Narasimha, Vamana, Parashurama, Rama and Krishna Avatars. I continue with the descriptions of the other Avatars here – Buddha and Kalki.

Buddha represents the self-actualized or enlightened human, and Kalki is representative of the apocalyptic form yet to come. Once the apocalypse occurs, the evolution cycle starts all over again.

9. Buddha Avatara – in this Avatara, Lord Vishnu incarnated as Buddha (बुद्ध), the Enlightened One, to preach the path of Dharma (Dhamma in Pali (पालि) or Prakrit (प्राकृत) language).

Buddha was born as Prince Siddhartha in Lumbini in modern Nepal. He was born as the son of King Siddhodhana and Queen Mayadevi of Kapilavastu. During his birth celebrations, the invited Brahmins foretold that the child would grow up to become either a great king or a great Sanyasi (mendicant).

In order to shield him from becoming a Sanyasi, King Siddhodhana provided Siddhartha with an abundance of luxuries. He never let Siddhartha go out and meet common folk lest he learn about suffering or misery.

When Siddhartha turned sixteen, he was married to Princess Yashodhara. Soon they had a son named Rahula. Once, when he was 29 years old, Siddhartha went outside the palace to meet the citizens. Despite the king's arrangements, Siddhartha spotted an old

man. Upon questioning, his charioteer explained to him the process of life, from birth until death. On further trips outside the palace, Siddhartha encountered a diseased man, a decaying corpse and an ascetic. These sights depressed him, and he decided to overcome ageing, sickness and death by living the life of an ascetic.



Accompanied by his charioteer, Siddhartha quit his palace for the life of a mendicant. He initially went to Rajagaha (modern Rajgir in Bihar) and began his ascetic life by begging for alms on the street. King Bimbisara, the king of Rajagaha, recognized Siddhartha and offered him the throne after hearing of his quest. Siddhartha

rejected the offer, but promised Bimbisara to visit his kingdom of Magadha first, upon attaining enlightenment.

Siddhartha left Rajagaha and practiced under the tutelage of two hermit teachers. After mastering the teachings of the first teacher, Alara Kalama, he was asked by Kalama to succeed him. However, Siddhartha felt unsatisfied by the practice, and moved on to become a student of the next teacher Udaka Ramaputta. Siddhartha achieved high levels of meditative consciousness, and was again asked to succeed his teacher. But, once more, he was not satisfied, and again he moved on.

Siddhartha and a group of five companions then set out to take their austerities even further. They tried to find enlightenment through deprivation of worldly goods, including food, and by practicing self-mortification. After nearly starving himself to death by restricting his food intake to around a leaf or nut per day, Siddhartha collapsed in a river while bathing and almost drowned. He then began to reconsider his path. Then, he remembered a moment in childhood in which he had been watching his father start the season's plowing. He attained a concentrated and focused state that was blissful and refreshing, the "jhana" (Sanskrit jnana ज्ञान).

According to the early Buddhist texts, after realizing that meditative jhana was the right path to awakening, and that extreme asceticism didn't work, Gautama discovered what Buddhists call the Middle Way — a path of moderation away from the extremes of self-indulgence and self-mortification. In a famous incident, after becoming starved and weakened, he is said to have accepted milk and rice pudding from a village girl named Sujatha. Such was his emaciated appearance that the girl wrongly believed him to be a spirit that had granted her a wish.

Following this incident, Gautama was famously seated under a pipal (अश्वत्थ वृक्ष) tree – now known as the Bodhi tree – in Bodh Gaya, when he vowed never to arise until he had found the truth. Believing that he had abandoned his search and had become undisciplined, his companions left him. After a reputed 49 days of meditation, at the age of 35, Siddhartha is said to have attained enlightenment (ज्ञानोदय). According to some traditions, this occurred in approximately the fifth lunar month, while, according to others, it was in the twelfth month. From that time, Gautama was known to his followers as the *Buddha* or “Awakened One” (Buddha is also sometimes translated as “The Enlightened One”). He is often referred to in Buddhism as Shakyamuni Buddha, or “The Awakened One of the Shakya Clan.”

According to Buddhism, at the time of his awakening, Buddha realized complete insight into the cause of suffering, and the steps necessary to eliminate it.



These discoveries became known as the Four Noble Truths, which are at the heart of Buddhist teaching. Through mastery of these truths, a state of supreme liberation, or Nirvana (निर्वाण), is believed to be possible for any being. Buddha described Nirvana as the perfect peace of a mind

that is free from ignorance, greed, hatred and other afflictive states, or “defilements” (kleshas क्लेश).

Nirvana is also regarded as the “end of the world,” in that no personal identity or boundaries of the mind

remain. In such a state, a being is said to possess the ten characteristics, belonging to every Buddha.

Buddha then travelled to Sarnath (सारङ्गनाथ – Saranga Nath or Deer Park) near Varanasi (Benares) in northern India, where he set in motion what Buddhists call the “Wheel of Dharma” by delivering his first sermon to his first five companions. Together with him, they formed the first Sangha (सङ्घ) – the company of Buddhist monks.

For the remaining 45 years of his life, Buddha is said to have travelled in the Gangetic Plain, in what is now Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, and southern Nepal, teaching a diverse range of people, from nobles to outcaste street sweepers, murderers such as Angulimala, and cannibals such as Alavaka. Although Buddha's exact language remains unknown, it is likely that he taught in one or more of a variety of closely related dialects spoken in the region, of which Pali (or Prakrit प्राकृत) may be the standardization. Most of the words in Pali are a distortion (tadbhava तद्भव) of the words in Sanskrit, the main language of orthodox literature at the time.

The sangha traveled through the Indian subcontinent, expounding the Dharma (Dhamma). This continued throughout the year, except during the four months of the rainy season when ascetics of all religions rarely traveled. One reason was that it was more difficult to do so without causing harm to animal life. At this time of year, the sangha would retreat to monasteries, public parks or forests, where people would come to them.

Some of the fundamentals of the teachings attributed to Gautama Buddha are:

- The Four Noble Truths: that suffering is an ingrained part of existence; that the origin of suffering is craving for sensuality, acquisition of identity, and annihilation; that suffering can be ended; and that following the Noble Eightfold Path is the means to accomplish this.
- The Noble Eightfold Path: right understanding, right thought, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right concentration.
- Dependent Origination: the mind creates suffering as a natural product of a complex process.

- Rejection of the infallibility of accepted scripture: teachings should not be accepted unless they are borne out by our experience and are praised by the wise.
- Anicca (Sanskrit: *anitya* अनित्य): that all things that come to be have an end.
- Dukkha (Sanskrit: *duḥkha* दुःख): that nothing which comes to be is ultimately satisfying.
- Anatta (Sanskrit: *anātman* अनात्मन्): That nothing in the realm of experience can really be said to be "I" or "mine".
- Nibbana (Sanskrit: *Nirvāna* निर्वाण): It is possible for sentient beings to realize a dimension of awareness which is totally unconstructed and peaceful, and end all suffering due to the mind's interaction with the conditioned world.

According to tradition, the Buddha emphasized ethics and correct understanding. He questioned everyday notions of divinity and salvation. He stated that there is no intermediary between mankind and the divine; distant demi-gods are subjected to karma themselves in decaying heavens; and the Buddha is only a guide and teacher for beings who must tread the path of Nirvana themselves to attain the spiritual awakening called bodhi and understand reality. The Buddhist system of insight and meditation practice is not claimed to have been divinely revealed, but to spring from an understanding of the true nature of the mind, which must be discovered by treading the path guided by the Buddha's teachings.

10. Kalki Avatara – Kalki (कल्कि) is believed to be the tenth and final Avatara of Lord Vishnu. It is believed that the Lord will come to end the present age of darkness and destruction known as Kali Yuga (कलि युग). The name Kalki (कल्कि) is often a metaphor for eternity or time. Kalki denotes the "destroyer of foulness," "destroyer of confusion," "destroyer of darkness," or "annihilator of ignorance."



Several Puranas, including the Vishnu Purana, Agni Purana, Garuda Purana, Kalki Purana, and Srimad Bhagavatha Purana, all hail Kalki as the warrior who will arrive on his white horse Devadatta brandishing a sword to wipe out the Mlecchas (म्लेच्छ) or barbarians who have

been destroying this world and making it impure and unholy.

The Vishnu Purana explains that, "when the practices taught in the Vedas and institutes of law have nearly ceased, and the close of the Kali Yuga shall be nigh, a portion of that divine being who exists of His own spiritual nature, and who is the beginning and end, and who comprehends all things, shall descend upon earth. He will be born in the family of Vishnuyasha (विष्णुयश), an eminent Brahmin of Shambhala village, as Kalki, endowed with eight superhuman faculties. By His irresistible might he will destroy all the



mlecchas (barbarians) and thieves, and all whose minds are devoted to iniquity and immorality. He will reestablish Dharma (righteousness) upon earth, and the minds of those who live at the end of the Kali Yuga shall be awakened, and shall be as clear as crystal. The men who are thus changed by

virtue of that peculiar time shall be the seeds of human beings, and shall give birth to a race, which will follow the laws of the Krita Yuga or Satya Yuga, the age of purity. As it is said, "when the sun and moon, and the lunar asterism (nakshatra) Tishya (Pushya), and the planet Jupiter (Guru) are in one mansion, the Krita Yuga shall return."

The Kalki Purana states Parashurama (परशुराम), the sixth Avatara of Lord Vishnu and who is immortal, will be the martial guru of Sri Kalki. It is he who will instruct Kalki to perform a long penance to please Lord Shiva and obtain celestial weaponry to cleanse the world.

Let us pray to the Supreme Lord Vishnu to destroy the evil and demonic forces and establish Dharma (righteousness) in this holy world.

Sources: Sri Hari-Vamsha Puranam; Sri Bhagavatha Puranam; Sri Vishnu Puranam; www.wikipedia.org; and other sources.

Contributed by Dr. Narasim Banavara

BHAKTA MEERA BAI (भक्त श्री मीराबाई)

This is the last article on Lord Krishna's consorts and divine devotees. Material for this article has been gathered from various sources. There are some small differences in the various references.

Meera Bai was born in 1498 A.D. in the village of Kurki, in Merta near Ajmer in Rajasthan. She was the daughter of King Ratan Singh Rathore and the granddaughter of Rao Dadaji.



When Meera was about 6 years old she asked her mother who would be her bridegroom!! Her mother was taken aback and she uttered the words that came to her first. She said, "your bridegroom will be Lord Krishna, Giridhar Gopala." Meera had heard stories about how Lord Krishna lifted the Govardhana Mountain to

save his people from the wrath of Lord Indra when the whole village was flooded by rain (the people of Gokul had prayed to Govardhan Giri instead of Indra). Meera used to imagine that scene and compose songs at that tender age of six. Meera's mother had given her a figurine of Lord Krishna and Meera would sing to it, sleep with it, and imagine herself as the bride, and sing and dance with the figurine. All she could think of was her Krishna and her love for Him. As her family was very religious, they were happy that Meera had so much devotion to God. Meera would visit her grandfather often. There she was introduced to Vaishnavism and her devotion to Lord Krishna increased. Her grandfather encouraged her to compose songs and sing them in temples. She thus became immersed in Lord Krishna and his Bala-Leela (बाललीला).

Meera's father wanted Meera to get married into a good family with a lot of social clout. He arranged her marriage with Prince Bhoj Raj, the son of Rana Sanga of Chittor. Meera was very unhappy about this and refused to marry anyone but Lord Krishna. But she was forced into this arranged marriage.

Although she followed her husband after the marriage she could not perform her duties as a wife. She was so engrossed in her singing and praying to Lord Krishna that she neglected her social and regal responsibilities. Everyone in her husband's house was unhappy and started troubling her. But Meera would forget herself and her troubles by singing and spending time at the temple with other Sadhus. Unfortunately, her husband died suddenly and, as was the custom, she should have committed Sati (burning on the same pyre with the husband). But Meera refused to do that. So, she was sent to her father's house in shame. Her father was angry and he tried to poison her for bringing shame to the family. When Meera drank the cup of poison it turned to nectar. One time she was sent a big cobra but it turned into a beautiful flower garland!!!!

Meera's father died during a war with Afghanistan. After that, Meera went to Dwaraka and immersed herself in singing devotional and love songs for Krishna. One day, when she was singing, the temple doors opened and Lord Krishna emerged. He embraced her. There was a bright light and Meera became one with the Lord.

Another version mentioned in the reference articles states that when Meera was sent away from her husband's house she travelled to Mathura, Brindavan and finally to Dwaraka. There she is said to have composed over 200 songs and spent her time at the Krishna temple. One day she was supposed to have entered the temple singing in ecstasy and embraced Lord Krishna's statue which was the culmination of her union with the Lord.

Meera Bai has left behind many soulful songs which have been translated into Hindi and other languages and sung even today all over India. She is widely regarded as a saint who showed Bhakti as a path to salvation. She is the foremost exponent of Prema Bhakti (प्रेमभक्ति). She revealed the secret of true happiness. True happiness does not lie in palaces of kings but in the hearts of the Lord's true devotees.

References: Bhakta Meera Bai by Jethalal Narayan Trivedi, 1976; Bhakta Meera – Talk by Vasanthi Mataji, 2002; Wikipedia; Research article by Narmada Sundar 9-18-2009.

Contributed by Dr. Padma Sundaram.

Bhaja Govindam (Moha Mudgarah)

भज गोविन्दम् (मोह मुद्गरः)

Bhaja Govindam is one of the compositions of the great spiritual Master, Jagadguru Adi Shankaracharya (जगद्गुरु आदि शङ्कराचार्य) (788 C.E. to 820 C.E.), the primary proponent of the Advaita (अद्वैत) philosophy.

Though sung as a Bhajan, it contains the essence of Vedanta (वेदान्त) and implores man to think, “Why am I here in this life? Why am I amassing all this wealth but have no peace? What is the Truth? What is the purpose of life?” It is hoped that the person reading or hearing this composition wakes up from the deep slumber of delusion and ignorance and sets on a path to realize God and himself. Hence, this composition is also called Moha Mudgarah (मोह मुद्गरः) – the hammer to shatter delusion (or the remover of delusion). This work is generally considered to be a summary of Adi Shankara’s Advaita Vedanta philosophy.

C. Rajagopalachari (Rajaji) wrote, “Sri Adi Shankaracharya wrote a number of Vedantic works for imparting knowledge of the Self (Atma आत्मा) and the Universal Spirit (Paramaatma परमात्मा). He also composed a number of hymns to foster Bhakti (भक्ति) in the hearts of men. One of these hymns is the famous Bhaja Govindam. The way of devotion is not different from the way of knowledge or Jnana (ज्ञान). When intelligence matures and lodges securely in the mind, it becomes wisdom. When wisdom is integrated with life, and issues out in action, it becomes Bhakti. Knowledge, when it becomes fully mature, is Bhakti. If it does not get transformed into Bhakti, such knowledge is useless tinsel. To believe that Jnana and Bhakti, knowledge and devotion, are different from each other is ignorance.”

The story of this composition goes as follows: once, Adi Shankara was walking on the streets of Kashi (Varanasi) along with his disciples. There he noticed a very old man studying the rules of Sanskrit grammar by Panini. Shankara was overcome with pity at seeing the plight of the old man spending his last years at a mere intellectual accomplishment instead of praying to God (Govinda) and attempting to control his mind. Shankara understood that the majority of the world was also engaged in mere intellectual and/or sensual pleasures and not in divine contemplation. Seeing this, he burst forth with the verses of Bhaja Govindam.

Though it is written in the style of a Bhajan, Bhaja Govindam is much more. It is a philosophical treatise. Here the subject is our own Self. The ironies of life, the vanity of life, the transient nature of life’s pleasures and pursuits form the subject of this unique gem among songs. In a very compact form, Sri Sankara presents a practical guide on how to live, how to get rid of lust and greed, and how to attain God realization. In 31 verses, Sri Shankara explains our fallacies, our wrong outlook for life, and dispels our ignorance and delusions.

Of the 31 verses, Sri Shankaracharya is said to have composed the first twelve and the last five. The intermediate fourteen verses are said to have been composed by his fourteen disciples.

Shankara's words in this composition seem to be quite harsh and piercing. They seem to lack the softness and tenderness often found in his other texts. Perhaps this composition is a rude wake-up call to the person sleeping in the slumber of ignorance and delusion. Only direct and harsh words will do the job. Kind and soft words are often lost upon such people. Some people compare Shankara’s words to the scalpel of a surgeon. The scalpel digs into a person’s body and removes the tumor causing him or her pain, but removing the tumor ultimately restores good health in the patient. So are Shankara's words, which pierce and point out our ignorance. It is a knife into the heart of worldliness, and by removing this tumor of ignorance we can attain everlasting bliss with the grace of the Lord Govinda.

I will provide brief explanations to each of the verses of this composition. Devotees can provide their own interpretations based on their outlook and experiences, similar to how one would read and interpret the Srimad Bhagavad Gita.

Bhaja Govindam (भज गोविन्दम्)

भज गोविन्दं भज गोविन्दं गोविन्दं भज मूढमते ।
संप्राप्ते सन्निहिते काले नहि नहि रक्षति दुक्ञ्करणे ॥१॥

bhaja-govindam-bhaja-govindam-govindam-bhaja-mudhamate |
samprapte-sannihite-kale-nahi-nahi-rakshati-dukr~n-karane ॥1॥

Worship Govinda. Sing the praises of Govinda. O fool, worship the Lord Govinda. When the destined

hour of your death approaches, these rules of grammar will not protect and save you.

Sri Adi Shankara is not asking people to abandon knowledge. He firmly states that the knowledge of God is above and beyond all other types of knowledge. God-realization and spirituality transcend everything else. Other forms of material knowledge are good and useful during our lives. But when death is imminent, that knowledge will not save or protect us. Only knowledge that helps us realize God will save us at that moment when we draw our last breath.

मूढ जहीहि धनागमत्पूर्णां कुरु सद्बुद्धिं मनसि वितृष्णाम् ।
यल्लभसे निजकर्मोपात्तं वित्तं तेन विनोदय चित्तम् ॥२॥
mudha-jahihi-dhanaagamatrshnaam-kuru sadbuddhim-manasi-
vitrshnaam |
yallabhase-nija-karmopaattam-vittam-tena-vinodaya-cittam ||2||

O fool, give up your greed to amass wealth. Get rid of your desires and fill your mind with good thoughts. Be content with what you earn by fair means (Dharma) and what you get as a result of your actions from your past.

Sri Shankara admonishes the person who is greedy and thirsts for excessive money and other material wealth. He does not say that earning money is bad. He says that whatever one earns by fair means (Dharma) is good and one should be content by it. But the relentless thirst for more and more wealth and other property makes a person do unethical and illegal activities. There is no end to greed and the actions it motivates a person to do, if he lets it go unchecked.

नारीस्तनभरनाभीदेशं दृष्ट्वा मागा मोहावेशम् ।
एतन्मांसावसादि विकारं मनसि विचिन्तय वारं वारम् ॥३॥
naari-stanabhara-naabhidesham-drshtvaa-maaga-mohavesham |
etan-maamsavasadi-vikaram-manasi-viceintaya-varam-varam ||3||

Do not be deluded with passion and obsession when you see a woman's breasts and navel area. They are just flesh, a modification of fat and flesh, nothing more. Fail not!! Remember this again and again.

Sri Adi Shankara does not condemn sex or sexual urges in humans. Like Dharma and Artha (wealth), Kama (gratification) is also a Purushartha (pursuit of life) and is a natural instinct. He warns us, though, of the obsession and delusion created by the constant

infatuation with the human body and sex. Lust detracts a person away from his or her duties (Dharma) and lands the person in difficulties. This applies equally to both men and women.

नलिनीदलगत जलमतितरलं तद्वज्जीवितमतिशयचपलम् ।
विद्धि व्याध्यभिमानग्रस्तं लोकं शोकहतं च समस्तम् ॥४॥
nalinidala-gata-jalamati-taralam-tadvajjivitamatishaya-capalam |
viddhi-vyaadhyabhimaanagrastam-lokam-shokahatam- ca-
samastam ||4||

Life is uncertain and unstable just like a drop of water on a lotus petal. Know that the entire world easily falls prey to grief and is gripped by diseases and ego.

Sri Adi Shankara is telling us that human life is not permanent. It is as unstable and as uncertain as a drop of water trembling on a lotus petal. The slightest wisp of wind can cause the drop of water to fall. Similarly, death can overcome man anytime. Here, egoism is put on par with disease. It is a malady. Knowledge cannot reside where egoism does. One should understand this transient nature of life and turn to God for solace, peace and liberation from this world.

यावद्वित्तोपार्जनं सकस्तावन्निज परिवारो रक्तः ।
पश्चाज्जीवति जर्जर देहे वार्ता कोऽपि न पृच्छति गेहे ॥५॥
yaavadvittoparjana-saktah-taavannija-parivaaro-raktah |
pashcaajjivati-jarjaradehe-vaartaam-kopi-na-prchati-gehe || 5 ||

As long as the man has the strength and capability to earn a living, he gets the love and affection of his family members. Later in life, when he is infirm due to old age and cannot do much, no one in the house even enquires about his welfare.

People are always racing and rushing to amass wealth, power and position, either by fair or unfair means. Their excuse is that they do all this for their families. That is fine, but at what cost? When a person becomes old and sick, and his/her body becomes tottered, the same family members who once adored him/her now despise him/her and, sometimes, even abandon him/her. This is the truth. This is the way of the world. If a person turns to God throughout his or her life, then God will definitely be with that person even in his/her weakest and neediest times.

To be continued.

Sources: several.

Contributed by Dr. Narasim Banavara

मन्दिर समाचार Temple News

This year the **2011 Graduates Special Puja** was



performed on Sunday, July 3, 2011. The celebration was sponsored by the parents of the graduates. One graduate was

absent as he joined the medical school early, and his parents performed the Puja on his behalf.

On the same day the **Annual General Body Meeting** of the India Temple Foundation was held. The activities of the Foundation for the year 2010-11 were presented by Joint Secretary Mrs. Reeta Mahendroo. The audited statement of accounts was presented by Mrs. Chitra Chauhan, the Treasurer. The financial health of the Foundation seems sound. This year two Directors, Dr. Inder Jit Kumar and Dr. Satish Rohatgi, retired, and they were replaced by Dr. Prasanna Desai and Mr. Nanubhai Patel. Dr. Kumar and Dr. Rohatgi are the founding trustees of the Temple and have served the community for a long time. The Board of Directors thanks them for their dedication. Also we welcome once again Prasanna Bhai, a well-known community member, a founding President of India Association of Catskill Region (IACR), past president and Treasurer of India Temple Foundation. Nanubhai has shown his interest in Temple activities within the short period he has been in our community. We welcome him and his family.

Recognition of Volunteers: The Foundation is run by many volunteers and that is the secret of its success. But, there are many volunteers who have been working year after year to ensure the smooth running of the activities. This year, on the recommendation of the President, the Board of Directors recognized the following volunteers for their many years of service - **Mr. Mayur Amin**, for helping and auditing the accounts, **Mr. Teek & Mr. Vee Persaud** for the maintenance and upkeep of the building, and **Dr. Narasim Banavara** for helping in the performance of Pujas and celebrations.

On August 21, 2011 we celebrated **Sri Krishna Janmashtami** with devotion. As tradition, everyone present enjoyed Lord Sri Krishna's birth at midnight.

Children's Activities – due to lack of interest, the children's Sunday school classes were discontinued. We

do want to start once again if enough children participate. This is an open invitation to the parents of children 6 years and older to sign up. This year the Children's Summer-Day Camp was cancelled due to scheduling problems. We are looking for the volunteer to start a Drama/Skit group. Some children and parents have expressed their interest.

Temple Membership – the Temple has three kinds of **Life Memberships**: (1) **Trustees: \$ 10,001** or more tax deductible donation (lump-sum or in installments), (2) **Benefactors: \$ 5001** or more donations in cash or kind in three consecutive years, and (3) **Patrons: any person/family dedicating \$ 1501** or more in a year. The **General Membership** constitutes a donation of **\$101.00** or more. At this time we request all the devotees to give their membership **donations**, if they have not done so. Your Mandir is operating on your help and donations.

New Entrants on the Editorial Board – at the last meeting of the Board of Directors two new members were added to the Dharma Sandesh Editorial Board: **Dr. K.N. Sundaram** and **Dr. Padma Sundaram**.

Contributed by Om Arora

Some Upcoming Special Mandir Events

Navaratri (Sri Devi Puja) everyday 6-7 pm	Wednesday, Sep 28 to Thursday, Oct 6
Navaratri Raas Garba	Friday, Sep 30
Mata Ki Chowki	Friday, Oct 1
Nav Chandi Yajna	Tuesday, Oct 4
Vijaya Dashami (Dussehra)	Thursday, Oct 6
Karva Chowth	Saturday, Oct 15
Deepavali (Sri MahaLakshmi Puja)	Wednesday, Oct 26
Hindu New Year	Thursday, Oct 27
Annakut (Chhappan Bhog)	Sunday, Oct 30
Tulsi Vivah	Sunday, Nov 6

Mr. Raj Pathani has generously sponsored the printing of copies of this issue of Dharma Sandesh. Devotees may note that all the writing of the content and the editing of the newsletter are strictly voluntary.

Our quarterly newsletter is called "Dharma Sandesh" (धर्मसन्देश). "Dharma", in simple terms, refers to righteousness, conduct, a sense of duty, virtue, and the ultimate truth. "Sandesh" means a message or news. So, Dharma Sandesh refers to a message of Dharma.

Dharma Sandesh Newsletter Editorial Board:

Mr. Om Arora **Dr. Narasim Banavara**
Dr. K.N.Sundaram **Dr. Padma Sundaram**