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President's Message

Dear Friends and Supporters of Hindu Centre,

Trust, you enjoyed reading the National Day edition of the Patrika. Please let us have your feedback so we can improve our news service. Do tell us which article or section you liked the most. You may write to patrika@hinducentre.org.sg

The month of August is filled equally with some exciting updates. Hindu Centre is growing and has added two new staff. In this month's Patrika you can get to know them better and how they will help support your interactions with the Hindu Centre and with more new events.

Yuva Shakti (Youth Power) is a new idea that we are currently working on. We hope to draw our youth on knowing Hinduism better as volunteers while they also design and execute programs that speak to the younger generations who will eventually lead our community in the years to come. We will provide more updates as we finalise these initiatives. Do join us in this journey if you have any ideas or if you wish to support the events.

Our annual Volunteer Appreciation dinner is scheduled for Sept 17th. We are pleased to be holding this after a hiatus of 3 years. This is a special occasion for us as our volunteers are the lifeline of the Hindu Centre. We are indebted to them for their efforts in promoting our activities in the community.

Our Hanuman Chalisa event was attended by a full house of participants. The Garland making class also saw full attendance. Both these events give us the confidence that our community is fully energised now and able to return to the Hindu Centre to pursue their individual spiritual journeys.

May I wish Iswara's blessings upon all of you, dear friends, with good health, happiness and more Jnana, Bhakti and Seva.

Dr N Varaprasad
President

Sanskrit – Our Heritage: Learn a Mantra

This is a Guru Stotram. Typically, Guru Mantras are chanted at the beginning of any congregation in praise of the Guru, or simply the Teacher. These prayers are chanted to seek the blessings of the Supreme Lord or the Brhman.

गुरु ब्रह्मा गुरु विष्णु गुरु देवो महेश्वरः ।
गुरु एव परं ब्रह्म तस्मै श्री गुरवे नमः ॥

Transliteration

Guru-Brahmaa Guru-Vissnnu-Guru devo Maheshvarah |
Gurur eva Param Brahma Tasmai Shrii-Gurave Namah ||

Word-by-word-meaning

- गुरु = The Guru; ब्रह्मा = Brahma; गुरु = The Guru; विष्णु = Vishnu
- गुरु = The Guru; देव = Divine, God; महा = Great; ईश्वर = God
- गुरु = The Guru; इव = Indeed, Verily; परं: Supreme; ब्रह्म: Brahman, the Absolute Consciousness
- तस्मै: To Him; श्री = Honorific prefix indicating Holy, Sacred; गुरु = The Guru; ए = Addressing the Guru; नमः: Salutations, Obeisance

Meaning

- 1: The Guru is Brahma, the Guru is Vishnu, the Guru Deva is Maheswara (Shiva),
- 2: The Guru is Verily the Para-Brahman (Supreme Brahman); Salutations to that Guru.



Note: This verse is attributed to Sri Adi Shankara. This and other such verses are found in Gurustotram or Verses to the Guru.

Learn 5 Sanskrit words

1. **Akasha** [आकाश] : Sky
2. **Vayu** [वायुः] : Air
3. **Apah** [आपः] : Water
4. **Agni** [अग्नि] : Fire
5. **Prithvi** [पृथ्वीः] : Earth

Advaita Corner

Why does the true Self need to be without desires according to Advaita Vedanta?

According to Advaita Vedanta, achieving “moksha” or liberation means understanding our true Self, also known as Brhman. The essential nature of this true Self is that it shouldn’t have desires. Let’s explore why.

Understanding Desires:

Desire is a strong feeling that makes a person want to get something they don’t have. When they get what they desire, it makes them happy.

When we think about this, we realize that the thing we desire is separate from us. We can’t just create the thing we desire ourselves. If we could, we wouldn’t desire it anymore because we’d already have it.

Why Should Our True Self Be Without Desires?

Now, let’s think about the relationship between Brhman (our true Self) and the world. Brhman is all pervasive and the world arises as a manifestation from Brhman. This means that the things in the world are like a “creation” of Brhman.

Since the world is manifested from Brhman, it’s already a part of Brhman in a way. This means that wanting to possess something that’s already a part of you doesn’t make sense. So, the true Self, or Brhman, doesn’t have desires.

To sum up, according to Advaita Vedanta, the true Self needs to be without desires because it’s already connected to everything in the world. Therefore, there’s no need for it to desire things it already has.

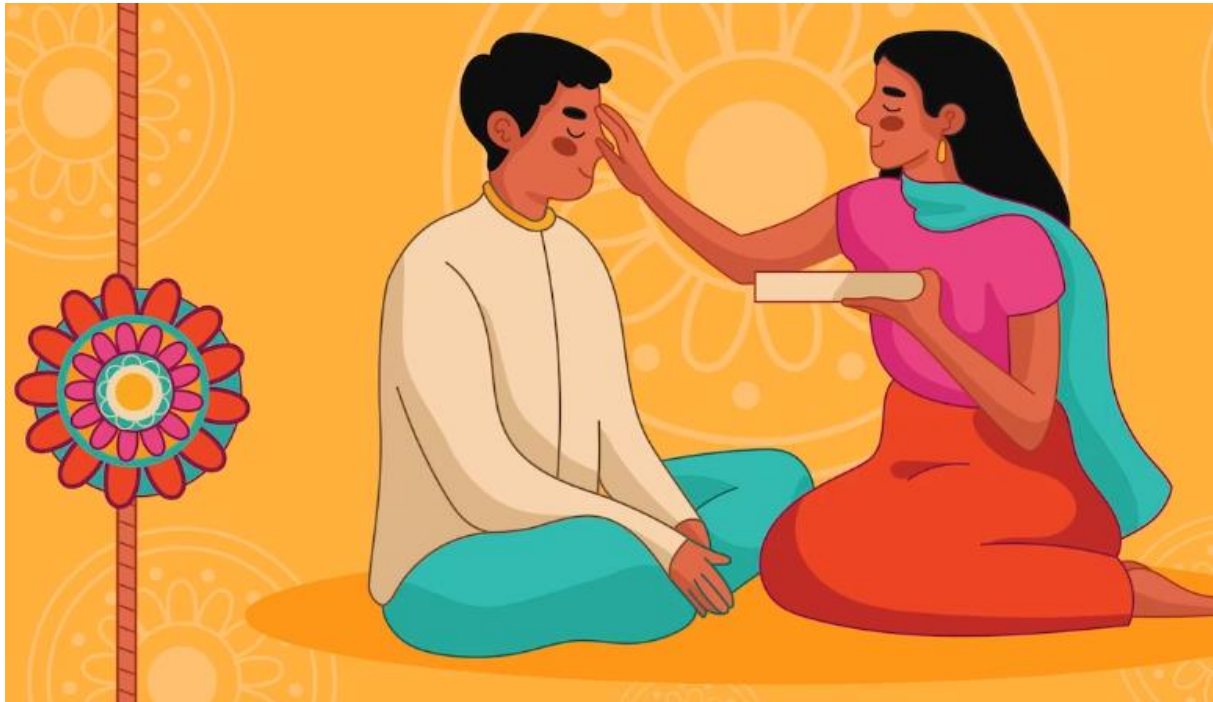
Note: The original article has been re-written with the help of ChatGPT. Hindu Centre leverages technology where it can for the benefit of Hinduism.

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Raksha Bandhan

-By Priya Nagarajan



Source: Free Pic

Raksha Bandhan is a Hindu festival dedicated to brothers and sisters and celebrates the bond between siblings. The term "Raksha Bandhan" literally means "the bond of protection." It is observed on the full moon day of the Hindu month of Shravana. Raksha Bandhan is on the same day as Balarama Jayanti. Lord Balarama is the elder brother of Lord Krishna and is worshipped as an avatar of Lord Vishnu.

On the actual day, sisters customarily perform an arati by lighting a small oil lamp and offering it to the family deity. Praying for the well-being of the brother, she applies a tilak on his forehead. After tying the Rakhi on his wrist, she places a sweet in his mouth. The brother reciprocates and gives his sister a gift. Raksha Bandhan is not limited to biological siblings. It can also be celebrated between cousins and close friends.

Raksha Bandhan history

The festival has deep-rooted historical and mythological significance. It is believed that in ancient times, queens and noblewomen would send a Rakhi to neighbouring kings as a symbol of their alliance and protection.

Krishna and Draupadi: Lord Krishna, during a battle (in the Mahabharata), accidentally cut his finger on the Sudarshan Chakra. Draupadi, tore a piece of her saree and tied it around Krishna's finger to stop the bleeding. Touched by her gesture, Krishna promised to protect Draupadi when she needed him. Draupadi's husband and Krishna were second cousins.

Yama and Yamuna: Yamuna, the river goddess, tied a Rakhi to her brother Yama, the god of death. Touched, Yama granted her a boon that any brother who receives a Rakhi from his sister and promises to protect her will be blessed with immortality.

King Bali and Goddess Lakshmi: King Bali was a great worshipper of Lord Vishnu. As a result Lord Vishnu agreed to come to his palace and protect him all the time. Goddess Lakshmi, Vishnu's wife, was not happy about this arrangement. She disguised herself as a Brahmin woman and tied a sacred thread (Rakhi) on his wrist, thus becoming his sister. King Bali was touched by her concern for her husband and her family and happily asked Lord Vishnu to leave. Probably, for this reason the festival is sometimes also known as 'Baleva'.

Rani Karnavati & Humayun, the Mughal King: Rajputs were fighting against the Muslim invasion and Karnavati was Mewar's regent. At that time, Mewar was attacked by Bahadur Shah of Gujarat.

Karnavati then sought help from Humayun and sent him a rakhi. Even though Humayun was in the middle of another war, he returned to Mewar because he was touched by the gesture of Karnavati. However, Humayun and his troops couldn't reach on time. However, eventually Mewar was restored to Karnavati's son, Vikramjit.

Raksha Bandhan's importance among other religions in India

Over the years, due to widespread availability of information as well as the evolving modernity of Indian communities, many religious practices have been adopted by practitioners of other Indic religions. It is not uncommon these days to see Sikhs, Buddhists and many others embrace this practice, especially in India.

Source: India times, Hindu Blog

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Onam Greetings!



Hindu Centre
Jnana • Bhakti • Seva

*Hindu Centre wishes you a very Happy Onam.
May the spirit of Onam festival guide you and light your way !*



www.hinducentre.org.sg
<https://www.sfh.sg/hcfriend>

Temples in SG – A walk with our ancestors

-By Nitya Menon

(Siddh Peeth) Shree Lakshminaryan Temple is Singapore's first dedicated place of worship for North Indian Hindus. Conveniently located at the edge of Little India, along Chander Road, the iconic Temple was built in the 1960s. The Temple was built with the support of the North Indian community in Singapore who trace their origins to Uttar Pradesh and Bihar in India. They had settled along the Rochor River at the beginning of the 20th century and many were ardent devotees of Krishna.

The Temple is easy to navigate, and all its exquisite marble idols are found within a single room. Vishnu and Lakshmi, the Temple's main deities, are centerplace with Radha-Krishna, Shiva-Parvati and Sri Rama, Lakshmana and Sita occupying the other sanctums. The Temple also hosts separate idols of Hanuman, Saraswati, Durga, Lakshmi, Ganesha, and Kartikeya. In addition, there are two Shiva Lingams, on the interior and exterior of the main hall. The bright yellow dome atop the building symbolises the Hindu Sanatan Dharma. It is also a conserved building with its distinctive red and white hues on its frontage.

Visitors can receive blessings and prasad from the Temple's Hindi-speaking priests and have the red kalava or Raksha Dhaga tied on their wrist for protection. Devotees are also able to do their own abhishekam, with provided water, to the external Shiva Lingam.

The Temple hosts Hanuman Chalisa chanting every Tuesday and Saturday, as well as several other special rituals and talks. These are advertised on the Temple's website, as well as on its Facebook page.



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Source: SPSLNT website

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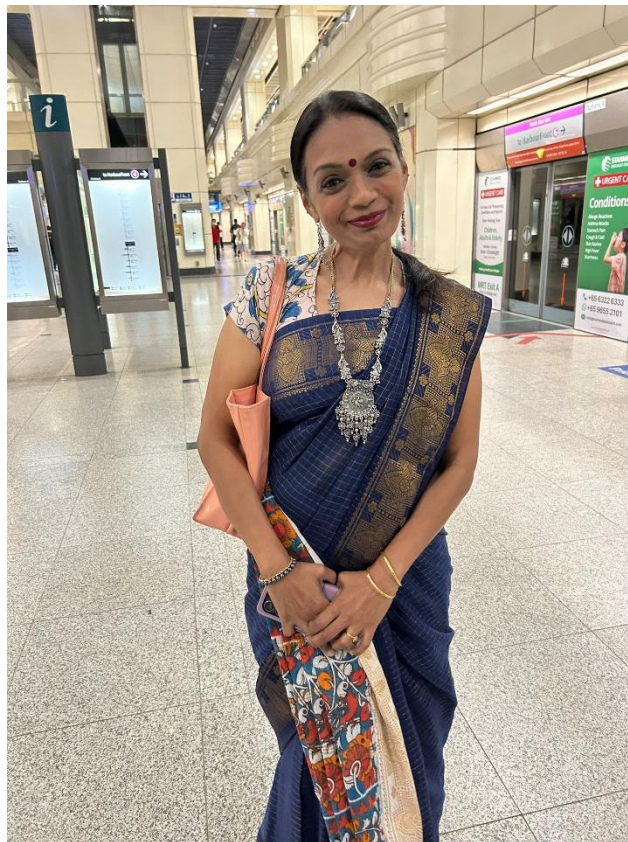
Introducing: New staff at Hindu Centre

- By Priya Nagarajan & Deepika Sharma

Renugah Ji

Renugah ji has joined the Hindu Centre as Administrative Incharge, in a multifaceted role that involves providing support across the core pillars of Bhakti and Seva. Prior to this role she was working in the education field with a specialisation in Hospitality Management.

She feels very strongly about bringing forth the profound teachings and rich cultural heritage of Hinduism to the youth and others eager to explore its depths. Not only is she an adept administrator, but she also possesses a passion for music, particularly bhajans and is learned in various forms of dance styles including Indian classical, Bharatnatyam, Malay and Chinese styles. In addition, she also enjoys doing yoga dance, aqua yoga and zumba.



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Komala Ji

Komala ji, is no stranger to the Hindu Centre as she has previously volunteered as well. She now joins the joining Hindu Center as an event coordinator and supporting the event execution including logistics. Prior to this role, she has had rich experience having worked in corporates in different administrative role. Her journey with Hindu Centre began in 2008 when she joined as a volunteer with the Bhakti Group and played an integral part in the successful execution of numerous Bhakti Group programs. What started as a volunteering endeavour has organically evolved into the position she now holds with its high impact.

Talking about her journey as a volunteer, she reflects, "I have seen myself grow as a person on this journey of seeking Jnana".

Beyond her spiritual pursuits, she likes doing aerobics, has a keen interest in Zumba and enjoys dancing. Additionally, she calls flower threading as her de-stress therapy.



We warmly welcome both our newest members to our family at Hindu Centre and extend our heartfelt wishes for their success in their roles.

Recent Events at Hindu Centre

Hanuman Chalisa at the Hindu Centre

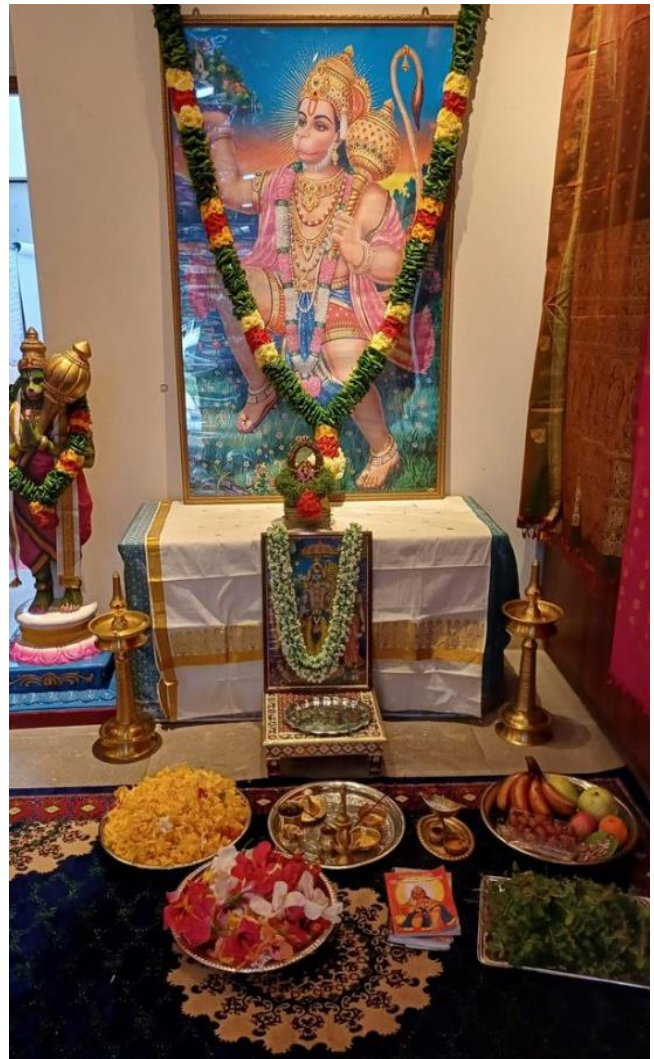
- By Sriram Hrishikesh

Hanumanji at the centre of Heartful Bhakti, beautiful chanting, lovely flowers and prasadam. Such was the atmosphere at the Hindu Centre on Sunday, August 13th in the morning, as the Hanuman Chalisa was being chanted for several hours.

In his welcome speech, our president Dr Varaprasad talked about how the event provided us a chance to leave behind the noise and bustle that defines life in modern day Singapore. This allows us to take a chance to reflect on the qualities of Sri Anjaneya - so that we may gain the qualities, the bhakti, the courage, the strength that Vayuputra represents. He also expressed his immense joy that after several years of hiatus due to the pandemic, we were now able to return to the schedule of regular annual chanting.

After we started with our 16-step puja and with some stotras - the chanting of the Chalisa took place full of fervour. Commencing with the Bhakti wing, which led with the first 9 rounds, we managed almost 51 rounds packed into the 4 hours by the grace of Hanumanji. In that time, the entire atmosphere became so filled with devotion in a way that's difficult to see in Singapore, especially outside of a major festival like Thaipusam.

Afterwards, an arati took place, with a line stretching all the way to the entrance of the Hindu Centre building, taking more than an hour to complete so that all devotees had the time to fully express their bhakti to Hanumanji.



Then came the prasadam. As the word suggests, the food itself, through the blessings of Hanumanji became a medium of his divine grace.

Such sonorous chanting of the Hanuman Chalisa, in this author's humble opinion, would make Tulsidas himself smile. Thanks to the Bhakti Wing for their efforts in organising the event.

Do re-live the joy of this divine fervour by listening YouTube video streaming and the video shorts as well as Facebook posts.

Jai Sri Ram! Jai Hanuman!

Garland – Offerings for the Gods

Yet another exciting event at the centre! Our garland making class this time attracted more than 30 students. That was the maximum we could accommodate this time and this is just our first class in this category. As they say, watch this space and do keep a look out for more! Singing, dancing, saree draping maybe?

We have many interesting cultural and art forms that form part of our Hindu religious practice – the riot of colours and the spirit of devotion was a divine blend.

Stringing pretty flowers into garlands is a fulfilling task, especially when we use them to adorn our Ishta Devata.

As many students remarked, it was 'fulfilling' 'never tried before' 'therapeutic' and many other such superlatives. At the end, every one left with a sense of happiness and with their own little garland in hand!

Our teacher Srividya Mahadevan patiently shared her skill with us. A big thank you to her!

The spirit of volunteering was amply there as our army of HC volunteers rallied around to help with running this large class. We are grateful for such enthusiasm by our volunteers.

Lastly, to all our students – thank you for supporting our events in large numbers and especially for the feedback. The feedback helps tailor more such events to the needs of the community that Hindu Centre serves. We are humbled by your support!

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GARLANDS

OFFERING FOR THE GODS

Wouldn't it be great to make garlands with your own hands and offer them to your Ishta Devatas?

Join us to learn to make

Different types of garlands

With beautiful flowers

Our teacher, Mahadevan Srividhya, is an experienced, MOE certified, cultural trainer.



We will provide flowers and thread for our students. But only for those who have paid up the fees at least one day before the class

Please register and pay early
Fees: SGD 15



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Sita Devi: The Unknown Dimensions

-By S. Lakshminarayanan

Our dharma and its scriptures have held and portrayed women in high esteem; in fact, it regards women at a higher intellectual and spiritual level than men. Examples galore in the Vedas, Upanishads, Puranas and Ithihasas.

Mother Sita is often regarded as a symbol of the power of chastity, patience and sacrifice. Little else is presented about her other dimensions and this is what made the talk by Sri V. Prabhakar Rao at our Centre on 21st July 2023 very informative and stimulating. His deep knowledge of Valmiki's original kavya as well as the other later narrations of Ramayana such as Kamba Ramayanam enthralled the packed audience. Sri Rao entered a state of flow as he brought out the complete personality of Mother Sita using various instances from the epic.

Sri Rao noted that, interestingly, even though Lord Rama is regarded as Maryada Purushottam and his multiple virtues are extolled by Maharishi Valmiki in The Ramayana, Maharishi Valmiki had strongly considered naming it as "Sitayas Charitham" before deciding on the name "Ramayana". From then on, Sri Rao focused on how Sita displayed qualities such as Compassion, Conviction, Courage, Dharma, Diplomacy, Gratitude, Intelligence and Logic at various junctures using instances from Ayodhya, Aranya, Sundara and Yuddha Kandas.

Sri Rao noted that in Ayodhya Kanda we get a glimpse of Sita's ability to hold her ground through intelligence-laden persuasive arguments that were rooted in Dharma and logic. She prevailed upon Lord Rama to let her accompany him and Lakshmana to the forest even as Lord Rama highlighted the dangers in the forest and the fact that the 14 year banishment was only for him and not for his wife.


Choosing elements from Aranya Kanda, Sri Rao explained Sita's notion of Dharma. Very diplomatically, she questions the wisdom of Rama's promise to eliminate the demons in Dhandaka forest, without any provocation from the demons, at the request of some sages. She opines that it may not be dharmic to kill the demons without prior direct enmity. She is even able to foretell that killing of the demons without a cause may end up in something tragic between her and Lord Rama.

Sita's dimension as a loving wife and a courageous royal in the episode in Janasthana after Rama single-handedly demolished the 14,000 strong army of demons led by Khara and Dushana. Sita's delight at Rama's valor led her to embrace him and she became rapturous unmindful of the presence of Lakshmana and other great sages.

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He elaborated an incident that happened at the end of the war about Sita's compassion. Hanuman sought Sita's permission to punish the female-demons who taunted her during her sojourn at Asokavana. In response, Sita says that a noble person should show kindness to every person - be it a virtuous person or sinner or even to a person who deserves death - for, there is none who never commits a wrong ("na kashchinnAparAdhyati").


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Sita Devi

Hinduism Alive series

**The Unknown dimensions**

The speaker Sri V. Prabhakar Rao has a great passion for Hindu scriptures, has delivered lectures and classes and is the author of many articles and books including 'Ramayana 108', a Hindu Centre publication.



In common parlance, Ramayana's Sita Devi is seen as a docile woman dedicatedly following her husband, Sri Rama.

But she was so much more too!
With her clarity of thought, Intelligence, courage, independent opinions...
She is a role model for us even now!

Venue: The Hindu Centre,

Sita also comes across as a courageous and bold personality. Sri Rao highlighted the disdain with which Sita treated Ravana who asked her to submit to him. She addressed the mighty Ravana by looking at a straw that she threw on the ground between her and Ravana. When at the end of the war, Lord Rama asked her to take the test of fire, she courageously said "Chitaam kuru Saumitre" meaning "Lakshmana! Create a pile of fire".

The talk concluded with a short Q&A session and informal chat with Sri V. Prabhakar Rao that further explored Sita's multi-dimensional personality.

Ayurveda Bytes – Feeling low?

-By Dr. Poorna Menon

Your mood can be adversely affected by an imbalance of any of the three doshas i.e. Kapha (Earth/Water), Vata (Air) or Pita (Fire).

While allopathy has been quick to treat mental health concerns with medication, there are several natural approaches that can be considered. Kesar (saffron), for example, has active ingredients (crocin, safranal) with proven antidepressant effects and has been used in Ayurveda for centuries. It is especially potent for Kapha depression associated with lethargy, increased sleep, poor motivation, and despondency.

More recent research has also indicated that certain herbs used in other medical traditions - like ginseng, schisandra berry, and rosemary - can benefit mental health through their interaction with the gut microbiome.

If you're looking for a way to incorporate these herbs into your diet, consider a post-dinner drink such as a warm glass of milk with a few strands of saffron.



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Upcoming events at Hindu Centre in September

SEPTEMBER	
Sep 2	Yoga for Young People - Supporting partner Vyasa Yoga Every Saturday for 3 months, Free Trial on the first day
Sep 8	Dakshinamurti - Divine Teacher - Hinduism Alive - Free Includes a special prayer to help to obtain his grace
Sep 9	Kids Funfest - 4th run of our popular holiday program Traditional dance, yoga, diet tips from Ayurveda advisor
Sep 9	Caste is not Hindu - Singapore Book Launch At Arya Samaj Hall
Sep 17	A party for all our wonderful volunteers An evening full of fun
Sep 19	Ganesha Chaturthi prayers at Hindu Centre Book sale
Sep 23, 30 Oct 7, 14	Book Sales - our biggest in the year - for adults and kids At Srinivasa Perumal Temple, Serangoon Road
Sep 24	Kolu - How to setup the dolls on the steps for Navaratri Sale of dolls at discounted prices

Subscribe to the Hindu Centre Google Calendar calendar at <http://sfh.sg/hcevents>

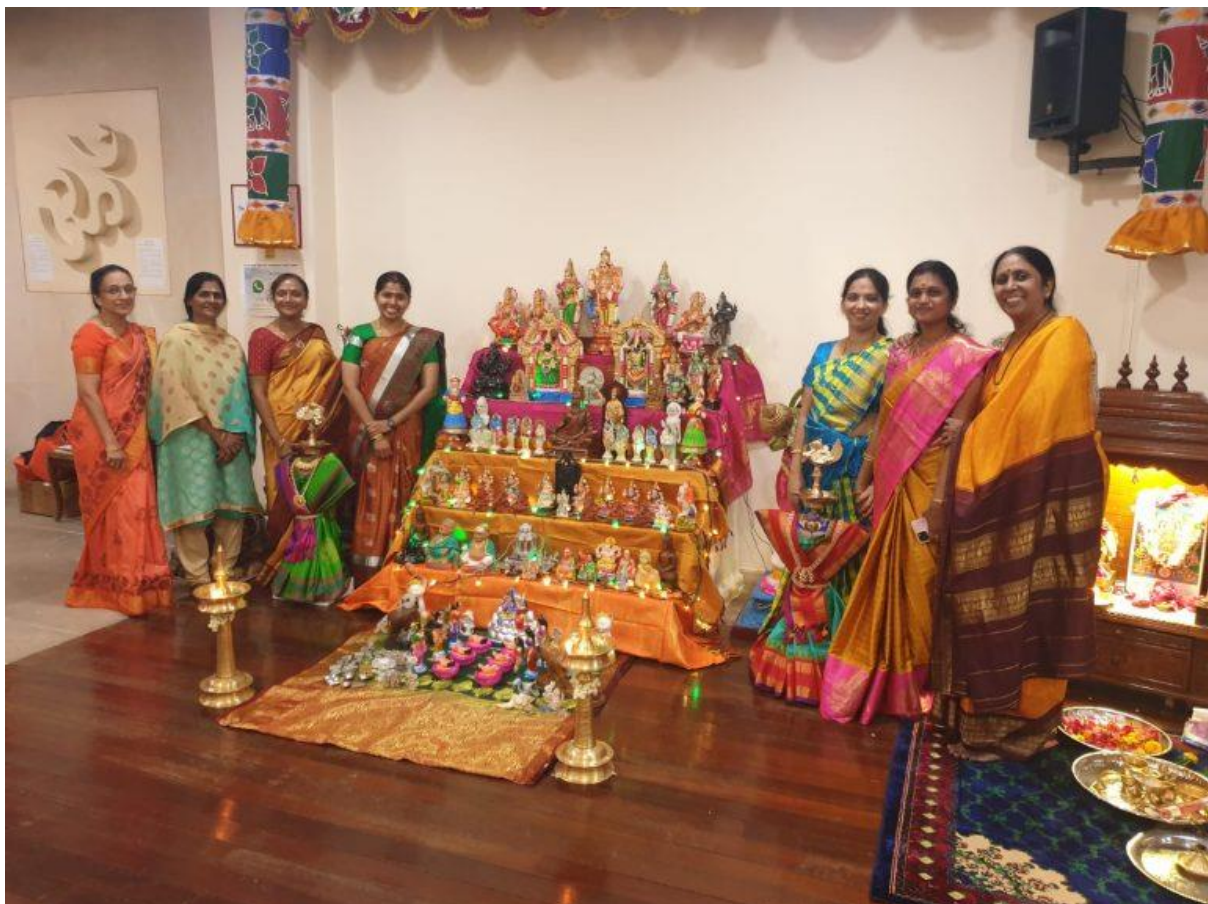
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Request for Volunteers & contributions to the Patrika

The Hindu Centre invites interested participants who would like to volunteer for our various programs either as a program lead or a volunteer. Please register your details at this link <https://www.hinducentre.org.sg/volunteer-with-us/>

For those that are interested in contributing content to the Patrika, please send us an email at editor@hinducentre.org outlining your interest in one or more areas. We are currently looking for journalist who can interview prominent Hindus in Singapore and others who can contribute articles for the various sections. Editorial support will be provided for all your content ideas including drafting and proof-reading as needed.





Help Us Promote our Vedic Heritage

“Help us change lives by **Donating**”

EVERY LITTLE BIT COUNTS

Our Activities

- Jnana**
 - ✓ Hinduism classes
 - ✓ Hinduism forums
 - ✓ Balagurukulam classes for kids, teens
 - ✓ Vedic Yoga
 - ✓ Sanskrit, chanting classes
 - ✓ Inter-faith events
- Bhakti**
 - ✓ Monthly bhajans
 - ✓ Joined prayers for the sick
 - ✓ Hanuman Chalisa mass chanting
 - ✓ Skanda Sashti mass chanting
 - ✓ Festival related celebrations (Maha Shivarathri, Ganesha Chaturthi etc)
- Seva**
 - ✓ Mitra prison counselling
 - ✓ Chakra program for young offenders

 **Hindu Centre**
Jnana - Bhakti - Seva

Your donations make our work possible!

“Every Little Bit Counts”

Hindu Centre Singapore is dedicated to the spiritual progress of Singapore Hindus through the three pillars of Jnana (Knowledge), Bhakti (Devotion) and Seva (Service). We are a non-profit society run entirely by volunteers. HC depends on the goodwill of generous donors and supporters who believe in our work and mission.

For more information, please click here
<https://www.hinducentre.org.sg/donate/>

Ask Us Anything on Hinduism

Do you have a question about Hinduism, Sastras, Life in general, Relationships or activities of Hindu Centre? Send us your question at admin@hinducentre.org.sg and our panel of respondents will get in touch with you. Please be assured of protection of privacy, at all times, regardless of the nature of your questions. Please refer to our privacy statement listed at the end of the Patrika or email us at admin@hinducentre.org.sg

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The Hindu Centre WhatsApp group

Thank you for reading Patrika our newsletter. Learn more about our events and engage meaningfully with the community by being a part of our WhatsApp group.

If you would like to receive our event notifications by WhatsApp, please send "JOIN" to 8768 0532 and save this number as What'sUp@HinduCentre



WHATSUP@HINDUCENTRE

  **Hindu Centre**
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Be in the loop of happenings@HC

- ✓ Hinduism talks
- ✓ Hinduism for kids (*Balagurukalam*)
- ✓ Hinduism forums
- ✓ Q & A sessions
- ✓ Vedic Yoga
- ✓ Mass Chanting sessions (*Skanda Sasthi, Maha Shivarathri etc*)
- ✓ Our Publications
- ✓ Community Service opportunities (*eg Mitra*)

+65 8768 0532

Add number to your phone contacts..

and Whatsapp 'JOIN' to join our publicity list!