



## Table of Contents

President's Message .....	2
Sanskrit – Our Heritage: Learn a Mantra .....	3
Learn 5 Sanskrit words.....	4
Advaita Vicara – Notes about the Mind.....	5
Navaratri .....	6
Spotlight: Navaratri at the Hindu Centre .....	8
Kshatriya in the Gita – Inspired by Sri Aurobindo.....	18
Hindu Centre's Puratassi Book Sales.....	20
Temples in SG – A walk with our ancestors .....	22
Recent Events at Hindu Centre .....	24
Ayurveda Bytes – The Importance of Dinacharya.....	29
Upcoming events at Hindu Centre in November.....	30
Request for Volunteers & contributions to the Patrika .....	33
Help Us Promote our Vedic Heritage.....	34
Ask Us Anything on Hinduism .....	34
The Hindu Centre WhatsApp group.....	35



## President's Message

Dear Friends and Supporters of Hindu Centre,

Navaratri is a major event in temples and households in Singapore, honouring the nine forms of Shakti. This year the Navaratri celebrations at Hindu Centre took the centre stage. Over a period of 9 days, more than 15 arts and cultural groups performed at the Hindu Centre drawing an estimated 500+ devotees at the Centre. Indeed, it is our blessing that we have been a facilitator in the journey of devotion for so many bhaktas in Singapore.

Artists, musicians and performers ranging from as young as 7 years to those in their 50s and 60s showcased their musical talent and expressed their bhakti to Amman in her various forms. It came to a grand end with Saraswati Puja and Vijayadashami celebrations.

Read all about this in our spotlight feature on Navaratri and do enjoy the numerous pictures that we have put together for you.

The book sales that we had at the Perumal Temple during the four Saturdays of Puratassi month also drew a lot of interest among the book lovers. The brisk sales of the popular copies were a proof that this would be a mainstay event of Hindu Centre for many more years to come!! Coming soon – gift hampers of books, gifts and sweets. Look out for them.

We will be having shloka chanting classes on 4 and 5 November at the Centre. Check them out in the Upcoming Events section.

May I take this opportunity to wish all of you a very Happy Deepavali and 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

### The Mahamrityunjaya Mantra

ॐ त्र्यम्बकं यजामहे सुगन्धिं पुष्टिवर्धनम् ।  
उर्वारुकमिव बन्धनान् मृत्योर्मुक्षीय मामृतात् ॥

### Transliteration

*Om Try-Ambakam Yajāmahe Sugandhim Pusṭti-Vardhanam  
Urvārukam-Iva Bandhanān Mṛtyor-Mukṣīya Mā-[A]mṛtāt ॥*

### word-by-word-meaning

ॐ: The primordial sound, Pranava; Try = Three; Ambakam = Eye; Yaj = To Worship; Sugandhim : Who is Fragrant [as the Spiritual Essence];

Pusṭti = Nourishment; Vardhanam = Increasing; *Urvāru* = Cucumber; Iva = Like, In the same manner;

*Bandhanān* = Bondages [of Samsara similar to Cucumbers tied to their Creepers]; *Mṛtyor* = From Death; *Mukṣīya* = To Liberate; *[A]mṛtāt* = Immortality

### Meaning

- 1: Om, We Worship the Tryambaka (the Three-Eyed One),
- 2: Who is Fragrant (as the Spiritual Essence), Increasing the Nourishment (of our Spiritual Core);
- 3: From these many Bondages (of Samsara) similar to Cucumbers (tied to their Creepers),
- 4: May I be Liberated from Death (Attachment to Perishable Things), So that I am not separated from the perception of Immortality (Immortal Essence pervading everywhere)

## Notes

1. This is also known as the **Rudra Mantra** and is a verse (*sūkta*) of the *Rigveda* (RV 7.59.12). The *sūkta* is addressed to Shiva, the Three-Eyed-One or Tryambaka.
2. This *Rudra mantra*, refers to the Rudra aspect (furious) of Shiva;
3. It is said to be beneficial for mental, emotional and physical health. In addition, it is said to be a moksha mantra - which develops concentration that leads to realisation of the Ultimate Truth (a transformation of awareness).

## Learn 5 Sanskrit words

Panchamrita (Tamil: பஞ்சாமிர்தம் Sanskrit: पञ्चामृत, or the five Amṛtas - five nectars) which is a mixture of five foods used in Hindu as well as Jain worship as offerings. The five ingredients are typically

- (i) क्षीरं or க்ஷீரம் or Ksheeram: Milk
- (ii) दधि or ததீஹி or Dadhi: Curd
- (iii) शर्करा or சக்கரை or Shakkara: Sugar
- (iv) मधु or மது or Madhu: Honey
- (v) घृतं or த்ர்த்தம் or Dhratam: Ghee or clarified butter

According to Ayurveda, it is believed that Panchamrit nourishes the seven bodily tissues – reproductive, bone marrow and nervous, bone and teeth, fatty, muscles, blood cells, and plasma - which are responsible for our overall health, wellbeing, and immunity.

## Advaita Vicara – Notes about the Mind



[Source: Stock pics from Adobe]

The way our Vedas describe the "manas" or mind is different from how it's often translated as "Mind" in English. This essay explains what our sastras say about the mind.

Because of past actions in previous lives or "prarabdha karma," thoughts flow through us, and the Consciousness lights them up. Prarabdha Karma underscores the idea that our present circumstances are shaped by past actions.

If we look closely, we can't find the mind inside our body. It's more like the "Sukshma sharira" or subtle body, so it's not like the physical brain.

### Popular misconceptions

Mind is simply a collection of thoughts - there is no separate physical thing inside the body called the mind where intellect, memory, and ahamkara (I-consciousness) all live together. The mind, intellect, memory, and ahamkara together are called "Anthah-karana" or inner equipment. Science can't find this inside the body or map thought patterns. All science can do is track electrical activity in the brain when different types of thoughts happen. So, the mind is really just thoughts and more thoughts!

These inner equipment functions are just different kinds of thoughts:

- ❖ Mind: Nature of the mind is to be indecisive (thoughts leading to vacillation or indecision)
- ❖ Intellect: This is a thought that decides - using memory and thinking about future possibilities.
- ❖ Memory: It's thoughts about the past.
- ❖ Ahamkara: This is a thought that appropriates all our actions and ties them to a person (jiva).

Prarabdha's momentum brings a stream of thoughts, some good and some bad. It's the decisive thought (intellect) that picks the right thought based on our tendencies (pravritti). In doing so, thoughts about the past and the future (memory) influence our actions.

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एतेषां पञ्चतत्त्वानां समष्टिसात्विकांशात्  
मनोबुद्ध्यहङ्कार चित्तान्तःकरणानि सम्भूतानि ।  
सङ्कल्पविकल्पात्मकं मनः ।  
निश्चयात्मिका बुद्धिः ।  
अहंकर्ता अहंकारः ।  
चिन्तनकर्तृ चित्तम् ।

[Source: Extract from Tatvabodah]

It should be noted that in a person, only one thought can exist at a time. And this has the "I-thought" (ahamkara) in it. It is the I-thought which creates ignorance and makes us believe in a jiva as being separate from Consciousness.

All thoughts come and go within Consciousness, and they don't exist independently.

## Navaratri

-By Deepika Sharma

As autumn begins, the atmosphere is replete with a feeling of festivity for Hindus around the world.

The much awaited nine holy days of Sharad Navratri arrive and set in motion a celebration that continues with Dussehra, Diwali and other festivals till the end of the Gregorian calendar year.

This year the first Navaratri (started) on 15th Oct 2023 and ended on 23rd Oct followed by Dusshera on 24th October.

The presiding deity of Navaratri is Goddess Durga. Each of the nine days are dedicated to nine different forms of Goddess Durga: Shailputri, Brahmacharini, Chandraghanta, Kushmanda, Skandamata, Katyayani, Kalratri and Mahagauri.

Hindus across different cultures and locations observe various rituals to worship her and aspire to connect to their higher spiritual self by receiving her blessings.

Navaratri is also observed in the month of Chaitra, Ashadha and as well as in Vaisakh when it leads up to Ram-Navami on the ninth day. However, Sharad Navratri is the most popular of all celebrations. Different regions in India celebrate it differently.

As per the North Indian tradition, Navaratri is celebrated by observing a fast where one abstains from eating food containing grains for 9 days. A major tradition is the ritual of Kanya Puja on ashtami (day 8) or Navmi (day 9) when little girls are invited by devotees to

their homes and worshipped as forms of Adi-shakti by offering them prasad made of halwa-puri & black chana which is considered as Goddess Durga's favourite food.

Many devotees also throng to major shaktipeeths like Jwalaji, Chintpurni Maa, Naina devi which are among the 51 different major shrines dedicated to adi-shakti spread across much of North and East India and even Tibet, Pakistan and Bangladesh.

A tradition which has been somewhat on a decline is the performance of Ram-Lila in the evenings all through navratri. This is a stage re-telling of the story of Ramayana. It is believed that for 9 nights, Lord Rama worshipped Goddess Durga and on the tenth day, armoured with her blessings, he was able to defeat Ravana to win the war over evil.

Hence on the tenth day, festival of Dusserha is celebrated by burning life-size effigies of demon King Ravana, celebrating good over evil.

In the states of Bengal, Orissa and Assam, Navratri is observed as a celebration of Goddess Durga's victory over buffalo faced demon, Mahishasura. Celebrations begin a day before Navaratri with the festival of Mahalaya which marks the advent of Goddess Durga. During Navaratri, pavilions are put up in various places across cities and towns. These pavilions host huge statues of Goddess Durga which are worshipped for 9 days and immersed in water on day 9 when devotees bid farewell to the mother goddess.

In the West Indian state of Gujarat, Navaratri celebration involves fasting and is centred around reverence to a holy claypot called Garbo which is kept in the house and worshipped by all. It symbolises the family and universe's womb. As a way of reverence to Garbo, community dance is performed. Over the years, this dance form itself has come to be known as Garba dance and apart from being a religious celebration it has become a major social event.

In South India, Navaratri is celebrated by worshipping Goddess in all three forms - Maa Durga, Maa Lakshmi and Maa Saraswati. One major tradition that is followed in most of the places include keeping a Kolu (Golu) display by devotees in their home. This is a display of Gods, Goddesses, animals and plants in their miniature form. Friends and family are invited to view Kolu displays. On the last day of Navaratri, one of the dolls is put to bed to mark the end of the celebration and to thank all deities for their blessings.

Among the Indians living in Singapore and Singaporeans too, one can see all these different flavours of Navaratri celebration. Personal celebrations are held with the hosting of Kolu displays, ashtami kanya puja and other region-specific rituals. Many communities' centres host Dandiya celebrations which is the social event to perform Garba dance form. These celebrations are hosted all through the months of September and October in various





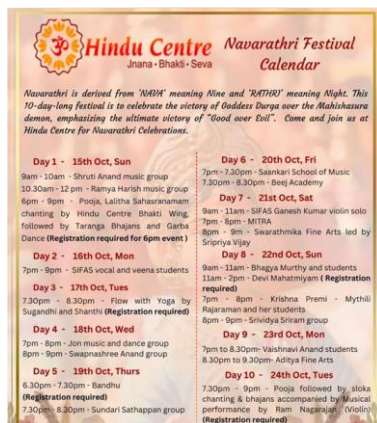
locations. Similarly, Durga Puja pandals are hosted by Bengali and Odiya communities during the nine holy days. Devotees throng to offer their respect as well as to partake in culture in the form of enjoying street food and donning ethnic clothes. Apart from these events, special prayers are performed during Navratri in major temples dedicated to the Goddess including Sri Mariamman Temple and Sri Vairavimada Kalliamman temple in little India and in Sri Sivan temple in Geylang.

## Spotlight: Navaratri at the Hindu Centre

### NAVARATRI FESTIVAL 2023 AT HINDU CENTRE (HC)

15<sup>th</sup> OCTOBER to 24<sup>th</sup> OCTOBER

- By Shankar Raman



Historically, Hindu Centre (HC) has been celebrating the 10-day Navaratri Festival annually, albeit on a small scale. In the COVID years 2020 and 2021, this had to be stopped to avoid close contact with devotees. Last year, Navaratri celebrations were held but at a smaller scale as some COVID precautions were still being observed.

2023 saw the awakening of a much grander festival with full concerts every day of the festival. Many singing and dancing groups in Singapore, including the larger academies like Singapore Indian Fine Arts Society as well as the younger

academies like Arts and Artistes School of Fine Arts (ANASFA) were invited to perform.

Concerts and prayers were held on all ten evenings, and morning concerts were held on the three mornings of weekends- Sunday, 15<sup>th</sup> October, Saturday, 21<sup>st</sup> October, and Sunday, 22<sup>nd</sup> October.

Varieties of prasadam were ordered from a local caterer every day for the performers after their concerts. The whole festival was a very joyous and successful one with full attendance for prayers as well as performances, which included classical and folk dancing.

It is impossible to do justice to the programme of performances trying to describe the divine fervour in words! However, here is an attempt nevertheless!





### **Day 1- Sunday 15th October**

Three groups performed kicked off by the songs from Shruti Anand's music group. This was followed at noon by Ramya Harish' music group. Both melodious concerts with full devotion to Ambal and songs of her glory.

Lalitha Sahasranamam by the Hindu Centre's Bhakti Wing was energetic and highly devotional chanting.

Taranga dance was launched by dancer Pankhi followed by Garba dance. Indeed, it was a spectacle watching a bevy of dainty ladies dancing in a devotion to their inner calling. The whole dance element was a new introduction to HC and Navarathri festival. We are grateful to Pankhi for her efforts.

### **Day 2 Monday 16th October**

SIFAS veena and violin students gave outstanding concerts in the evening. That SIFAS is the leading Indian classical music school in Singapore was obvious with the quality of performances. Thank you to the two Gurus.

### **Day 3- Tuesday 17th October**

Again, history was made by our yoga ladies who did yoga and dance which blended together like rice and sambar! Thanks Suganthi and Shanthi for leading the group. We had very good attendance including several on lookers (like me). Interestingly there were over 20 ladies doing the yoga dance.

### **Day 4- Wednesday 18th October**

Jon's music and dance groups kicked off the evening with a wide variety and very interesting to performance. Thank you Jon.

This was followed by Swapnashree Anand group who celebrate Amman with a carnatic presentation of Amman songs. The evening was truly immersed in the music.

### **Day 5- Thursday 19th October**

Bandhu groups prayers and bhajans lent a quiet atmosphere with their presentation.

This was followed by Sundari Sathappan and her 2 young daughters gave an excellent concert. It speaks well for Singapore that youngsters are picking up classical singing with much interest.



#### **Day 6-Friday 20th October.**

The evening started with Shaankari Academy who had an energetic group of children singing. The senior ladies later followed with their melodious renditions.

This was followed by a large group from Beej Academy led by versatile musician Gokulakrishnan (Gokul) who played mridangam pakka vadhyam for all the vocal concerts. I first met Gokul, a talented singer himself, about this time last year when his group performed at our Navarathri. An evening full of devotional songs followed with his assistant, Priya Srinivasan.

#### **Day 7- Saturday 21st October.**

There was a concert by the SIFAS musicians in the morning.

Violinist Ganesh Kumar gave an outstanding performance with kritis including Marive (Anandabhairvi raga), Kanchadalayadakshi (Kamalamanohari raga) and Devi Neeyethnai (Keeravani). All the songs were by outstanding composers Syama Shastri, Deekshitar and Papanasam Sivan. He was accompanied by mridangam vidwan Sivakumar and gatam expert Mahesh Patameswaran. Wonderful accompanists with a great tani avartanam enthralled the audience.

The music was like therapy to me as I was little off colour on that day. That speaks to the divine power of music! The MITRA group did bhajans in the 7pm to 8pm slot.

Between 8pm and 9pm- Sripriya Vijay performed with her Swaraathmika Academy. An excellent group which presented several touching songs. A good Saturday indeed for Navaratri.

#### **Day 8- Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup> October.**

The morning concert started with Singapore's very well-known vocalist Mrs Bhagya Murthy and her students. I was emotionally moved as memories come back to the times when my late wife Saradha Shankar and Bhagya used to be regular singing partners known as Singapore sisters. Together they had many concerts on stage, radio and Vasantham television - uncountable and exceptional kacheris.

Many children and adult ladies' groups presented very well. Carnatic songs on Saraswathi and devotional ones like Bhagyada Lakshmi Bamma filled the room with positive vibes.

The performance also saw a good crowd of parents and supporters. Bhagya's group ended their concert with a thillana in revathi raga and a tiruppugazh. What an exhilarating concert-



emotionally moving too. With ~ 50 persons in the room, it was certainly among the finest concerts in our Navarathri festival.

Thanks to Bhagya and her singers.

Bhagya had Sriranjani as violin accompanist, Muthu Subramanian on the kanjira and his young student on the mridangam. Good pakka vadyam support.

The evening started with Mythili Rajaram vocalist, her little son Raja Gopalan with violin and Rajaram Iyer on the mridngam. It was all in the family as they say!

The second evening slot was by led by Srividya Sriram and her large group of students. What an outstanding presentation! Mridangam support was by T. Ramanan who could easily be called an international artiste as he has performed in nearly all countries in the world. They sang a lovely Bharathiyar song ' Vellai Thamarai' which was a nice Tamil addition to the concert.

It was an evening of outstanding singing by Srividya and her co-singers. She just did Samaganapriye in Ananda Bhairavi- composed by Periasamy Thooran.

What a Sunday- top kacheris both in the morning and evening. We were truly blessed!

Here I must commend our caterer who provided very tasty varieties of prasadam like tamarind rice, tomato rice, lemon rice, sambhar rice, ven pongal and uppuma on all days). Needless to add - every supply also came with sweet kesari. Thank you Muthaiyas Food Caterers for your excellent prasadam and efficient delivery.

#### **Day 9- Monday 23rd October- Saraswathi Pooja and Ayutha Pooja.**

The evening looked promising with the first concert by Vaishnavi Anand, an outstanding vocal musician with more than 12 years of teaching and performing experience in Singapore. It was nice to see a family in performance- mother vocals, father Anand on the violin and little son on the mridangam. A good family affair indeed. Several groups of children then gave faultless concerts.

Vaishnavi's next song was an outstanding composition of stalwart Syama Sastri in Poorvikalyani raga and misra chapu tala. What energetic presentation with strong violin and mridangam support. Mesmerising 'Ethayya Gati' - composition of koteeswara Iyer in a rare raga Chalanata. Two young lads rendered it beautifully. The song they chose was Tyagaraja's 'Tulasi Dalamulache'. If you toss your memory back - this song was made famous in the Tamil movie 'Unnal Mudiyum Thambi' (1988) where famous actor Gemini Ganesan plays the role of a learned music bagavathar and sings this song with gusto. Great selection!

The second group this evening is the music group led by Violinist Aditya and his troupe of students from Aditya Fine Arts.

Musician Aditya brought a new dimension to Navaratri concerts. Indeed, a pleasant twist to the contents. The kids mainly sang bhajan- type of songs - based in Hindi. The instruments used were mostly keyboards but led by a violinist. In the end Aditya himself performed on the violin which was a pleasure to listen.

Both groups had solid support from parents and families - it was indeed nice to see crowds enjoying good concerts. Overall, a fully satisfying 9th day of Navaratri.

#### **10th day Tuesday 24th October 2023.**

It was Vijayadashami- a special day in Navaratri for students who begin learning in the fields of arts or sports. Pooja began with the fresh fragrance from the flowers brought from my garden.

Vijayadashami Puja concluded the nine days of Navaratri. About 20+ people present in the last session which was also very prayerful. In addition, there was a wide variety of prasadam brought by members.

Prayers on all the Amman deities was done by a group of ladies from the Bhakti team followed by bhajans.

This was followed by a violin concert by Ram Nagarajan accompanied on the mridangam by Shankarji. Exciting devotional songs including "Bhagyada Lakshmi Baramma" and the performance ended with a short mridangam Tani Avartanam.

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## Kshatriya in the Gita – Inspired by Sri Aurobindo

-By Manu Kohli



(Source: Sri Aurobindo Ashram)

In the actualities of human life, the aspect of struggle must be accepted. The context of the Gita is such a crisis, as mankind periodically experiences, and which typically culminates in strife. The Gita accepts the inevitability of such moments both in their physical and ethical aspects. Universal and abiding peace calls for universal goodwill. Our current systems are in essence accommodation amongst various

contending interests and seek to minimize the probability of occurrence of the worst kinds of conflict.

There will come a day when humanity will be spiritually, ethically, and socially be ready for universal peace. Until then, any practical philosophy must address the aspect of battle and the function of man as a warrior. The Gita, taking life as it is, considers how this aspect of life can be harmonized with spiritual existence. While the ideas of Gita have a universal appeal, one must note that it is addressed to a man of action, the warrior. The obligation to perform military duties is limited to a small group who, by their traditions and nature, find their natural means of self-development in the flowering of qualities like courage and nobility. Further, one's conduct in battle is governed by high ethical ideals. War under the conditions Gita propounds, while being destructive of physical life within certain carefully set limits, is constructive of inner life. It aims to uplift rather than harden those who perform it.



Who are the 'Kshatriyas' of today? In ancient India, thought and knowledge, war and government, production and distribution were socially differentiated functions, each assigned to those who had a natural call towards these. The right means were provided to all to facilitate their own spiritual development. The modern idea of common social obligation towards various social functions has enabled

greater fullness in the life of the community. This has helped bridge the endless divisions and artificial shackling of individual lives, which the Indian system eventually led to.

Thus, any member of society today, who elects to have a professional life in public administration particularly in the domains of law & order and defense, is a modern-day successor to the 'Kshatriya' of the Gita.

### Acknowledgement

This essay is drawn from the Complete Works of Sri Aurobindo Volume 19, titled 'Essays on Gita'. It is paraphrased, but with fair use of the text as it originally appears in 'man-and-the-battle-of-life'/'Essays on the Gita'

Born in **1972** and educated Cambridge in England, **Sri Aurobindo** was one of the most influential leaders of the Indian Independence movement, until 1910. He later moved to Pondicherry and dedicated his life to spiritual work. He developed a spiritual practice he called '**Integral Yoga**'.

Central to Integral yoga is the idea that Spirit manifests itself in a process of involution, forgetting its origins. The reverse process of evolution facilitates complete manifestation of spirit.

According to Sri Aurobindo, the current status of human evolution is an intermediate stage, which will culminate in the unfolding of the spirit, and self-revelation of divinity in all things. Yoga enables a rapid evolution of being, which can take effect even in one lifetime. On the other hand, unassisted natural evolution may span across many centuries or several births.

(Source: Wikipedia)





## Hindu Centre's Puratassi Book Sales

-By S. Anuradha

Hindu Centre's Puratassi book sale on four Saturdays at the Sri Srinivasa Perumal Temple in September-October was a roaring success.

Hundreds of reasonably priced Tamil and English books and comics were sold to readers of all age groups. The books included Amar Chitra Katha, Tinkle, colouring books, ancient classics and contemporary best sellers.

The best sellers of this year included Mandala colouring books for kids and adults, Sudha Murthy's novels in English and Bala Kumar's works in Tamil.

Hindu Centre thanks all the volunteers who battled inclement weather conditions to make the sale successful. Hindu Centre is also grateful to the Sri Srinivasa Perumal Temple for allowing it to sell books on its premises.

The Puratassi Book sales is one of Hindu Centre's key outreach program in the community. It not only fosters lifelong learning, a key cornerstone of our government and society, but also promotes the habit of reading, or swadhyaya. The proceeds from the sale of the books also helps us fund other such initiatives. Soon, plans are afoot to launch Grantha – a book reading club for reading enthusiasts. We invite all interested participants to register their interest with us.



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## Temples in SG – A walk with our ancestors

-By Nitya Menon

The Sri Ramar temple in Changi is particularly unique as the only one in the whole of Southeast Asia dedicated to this Maryada Purusha – Lord Ram (man of honour and righteousness). The origins of the temple can be traced back to a shrine that was situated at the foot of a tree at 14<sup>th</sup> milestone in Changi. It was with the support of the British Army that its current site was donated to build the temple in 1946, after the Second World War. Given its location near an Air Force base, many of its initial devotees were Hindu workers from the air force. Today, it attracts worshipers from the entire eastern part of Singapore.

Apart from the main deity Sri Rama depicted with his wife Sita, the temple also hosts a galaxy of other deities such as three different Vinayagas, Ramalingeshwar, Parvathavarthiniambal, Subramaniya, Bhuvaneshwari Ambala, Muthumariamman, Mahalakshmi, Krishna Nagar, Vishnu durgai and a Shiva Lingam that devotees can do abhishekam to. The Shaivite influence is due to the temple having absorbed the deities from the Sri Manmatha Karunaya Eswara Temple, Sri Muthu Mariamman Temple and Sri Pallani Aandavar Shrine, when these had to be relocated.

Most interestingly, the temple also houses a unique depiction of the nodal grahas Rahu and Ketu in a single statue and complete whole, unlike their usual depiction in Jyotish as a head without a body and body without a head. There is also an impressive ~30 ft tall statue of Hanuman, as well as small statues of Kwanyin and Buddha.

Although a Vaishnavite temple, there are also Saivite deities in the temple. The presence of Saivite deities made it possible for Hindus to conduct their post-funeral rites at the seaside and thence proceed to the temple to complete their rituals.



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(source: Sree Ramar Temple website)



Source: roots.gov.sg



## Recent Events at Hindu Centre

- by Manu Kohli

### “Reading Sri Aurobindo” author Devdip Ganguli in Hindu Centre Singapore

On Saturday, 26<sup>th</sup> August 2023, Hindu Centre had the pleasure of hosting Shri **Devdip Ganguli**. This coincided with Sri Aurobindo’s 150<sup>th</sup> birthday celebrations.

### About Devdip Ganguli

Devdip is based in Pondicherry, India. He teaches undergraduate students at the Sri Aurobindo International Center of Education. His area of interest is social and political philosophy of Sri Aurobindo, as well as ancient Indian history, art, and culture.

Devdip recently co-edited “Reading Sri Aurobindo” with Gautam Chikernam. The book introduces the entire collected works of Sri Aurobindo, which run into thirty-six volumes and over twenty thousand pages, through the perspective of twenty-one authors.

### The Pustaka session at Hindu Centre

Supported by over 30 participants in an intimate setting, the session was co-hosted by Sri Aurobindo Society, Singapore. Devdip had a sore throat but found the will power to soldier on at the event. He introduced the book, including how the idea of writing the book was seeded during the COVID induced lockdown in 2020-21.

Keen for the reader to gain an introduction to Sri Aurobindo’s vast works from different perspectives, Devdip & Gautam reached out to the twenty-one contributors in the volume, all of whom had engaged with Sri Aurobindo’s texts for a long time. The concluding section in the book penned by Devdip himself, includes some helpful tips for first time readers struggling to comprehend the long sentences and complex vocabulary, which intimidate many and discourage them from exploring Sri Aurobindo’s enriching and life-transforming writings.

Devdip’s introduction was followed by a lively question and answer session. The session ended with some pictures being clicked for memory and attendees queuing up to buy copies of the book which Devdip had brought along, all of which he courteously and patiently signed. Devdip promised to schedule more time for a more detailed discussion in Hindu Centre, around Sri Aurobindo’s ‘Integral Yoga’, during his next visit to Singapore.



## Hinduism Life and Living series

-By Yasho Dhoraisingham

*Hindu Centre's Hinduism Life and Living series of talks, explores and shares the teachings of Santana Dharma and its application in our daily life. With information compiled from scriptural sources (sastra pramana), these workshops are designed to help people live their daily lives in a dharmic way by being prayerful and happy. Due to smaller groups composition, these knowledge sharing workshops tend to be highly interactive and valuable to the students.*

These sessions provide many benefits including positive personal development, being in harmony with society and the wider community and living a life focused on Ishwara.

Participant feedback showed that they found this workshop refreshing as it allowed them to pursue their religious journey and welcomed more such teaching/sharing sessions at the Centre. Some participants shared that consciously practising the three values brought joy and closeness with loved ones including neighbours.



In this workshop on **Human Values, conducted on 21st & 28th August**, we explored the 10 universal human values of Hinduism also called Yamas – meaning restraint. This led us to an understanding that to adhere to these values one must restrain from unethical personal conduct.

These values are universal as they will be accepted as timeless values that are beneficial to humankind and certainly promote right or good conduct. This is applicable to all regardless of gender or religious faith. It is for this reason in Hinduism the yamas are also called Samanya (universal) or Manava (human) dharma.

The 10 universal values were described and explained with examples and benefits. These included:

1. Ahimsa- non injury in thought, word, and deed
2. Satyam- truthfulness
3. Brahmacharya- self control
4. Daya-compassion towards all forms of life
5. Arjavam-being straightforward /honest /law abiding
6. Asteya-non-stealing
7. Dhriti- firm resolve /determination in pursuing undertakings
8. Mitahara-moderation in food
9. Kshama-capacity to forgive /to be patient
10. Shaucham- external cleanliness of the body, surrounding environment, and the internal cleanliness of one's mind.

Led by Hindu Centre's teacher Yasho, participants discussed their personal experiences of (in) adhering to these values and the challenges they faced while practising them in daily living. Participants were given reflective homework task after the first session - to consciously practise the values of Ahimsa, Satyam and Daya in their everyday life and later share their experience in the next class.



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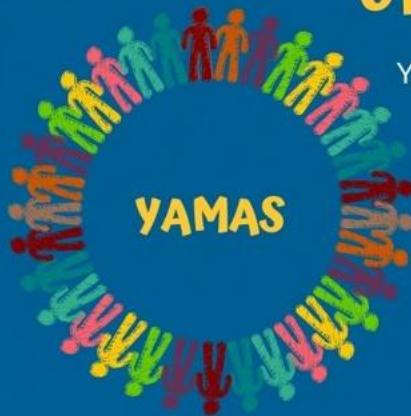
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**Hindu Centre**  
Jnana • Brahm • Seva

**Hinduism Life and Living series**

## LIVING THE HUMAN VALUES OF HINDUISM



Yamas - The Universal values defined in our scriptures.  
What are these values?

How do we cultivate them and practise them,  
To live a happy, conflict-free, comfortable life?

Why do we need these values?  
Be guided by what our scriptures tell us.

Please join us for an interactive,  
reflective learning session

**Date: 21 & 28 August 2023**

**Mondays, 7:30-9 pm**

**Fees: \$20 for 2 sessions**

**Venue: The Hindu Centre,  
132 Owen Road, S 218935**

Register at the following link

<https://sfh.sg/hindulife>

Or Scan the QR Code



For enquiries, pls call us at 62918540  
or mail us at [admin@hinducentre.org.sg](mailto:admin@hinducentre.org.sg)

To receive notifications of future events  
Please add +65 87680532 to your contacts  
send JOIN on WhatsApp to +65 87680532

### Mitra Volunteers

At the Singapore Prison Service (SPS), since 2005, Hindu Centre's Mitra counselling focuses on Hinduism-based values to support change, stop re-offending and help reintegration with family and the community.

This year, SPS organized a volunteers' appreciation event on 14 Oct for volunteers of Institution A2 in the Changi Prison Complex. The event began with breakfast and followed by speeches from SPS stakeholders thanking the volunteers. While Hindu Centre have many

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volunteers serving in A2, due to organisational requirements of SPS, five participants from each agency were allowed at the event. The Hindu Centre was represented by five of our Mitra volunteers - Kamala, Sadashiv, Parvathy, Samar, and Mahesh. They have been providing Hindu counselling to inmates in Institution A2. SPS expressed their sincere thanks and appreciation to the volunteers serving A2 for their contributions over the past years.

Earlier, there was another appreciation event by SPS held on 25 Aug. The volunteer Long Service Award ceremony held at the expo. Some of our volunteers received 15, 10, and 5 year awards at that ceremony as well.



## Ayurveda Bytes – The Importance of Dinacharya

-By Dr. Poorna Menon

***Food should be sharp, balanced, compatible with body temperature, and natural – Susruta Samhita***

Our bodies tend to love routine - in and of itself, living with a routine that is grounding can be a way to self-regulate. Healthy routines provide an anchor for our bodies - a means by which to feel centered. To think back on how we evolved as humans, for thousands of years before the advent of electricity, we rose with the sun and retired for the day after sunset. We ate seasonally available food and lived in tune with Nature's own rhythm. For the last few centuries, we have started moving away from such rhythmic and routine living, changing our circadian rhythms, eating whenever we feel like it, and paying less heed to Nature's own cycles.

This is why our ancient Hindu traditions talk about doing certain practices at a certain time of day, in a certain ritualistic way. Following an Ayurvedic daily routine, starting with a Surya Namaskar at sunrise, eating in accordance with the seasons, and winding down the day at dusk in sync with nature's own rhythm will, over time, start bringing calm and health to your nervous system.

Routines take away uncertainty - and a routine that is punctuated with uplifting practices like Yoga - provide your body with confidence and healing through an energizing and centring activity. A daily routine, involving Yoga, is a chance to improve your health through your lifestyle itself.

*This health tip is contributed in part by Dr. Poorna Menon, a Singapore-based Doctor of Naturopathic Medicine who has also received guidance in Ayurvedic practices.*





## Upcoming events at Hindu Centre in November

### NOVEMBER 2023

November 4<sup>th</sup> & 5<sup>th</sup> – Saturday / Sunday – 4 PM – 5:30 PM – Daily Shlokas for a powerful life

November 18<sup>th</sup> – Sunday 5PM – 7:30 PM – Prayers for the sick and Healing

November 19<sup>th</sup> & 26<sup>th</sup> – Sundays 4 PM – 6 PM – Learn to sing Bhajans

November – 24<sup>th</sup> & 25<sup>th</sup> – Friday / Saturday – Learn to do Home Puja

### Ongoing programs

Yoga for the young – Saturday's morning 10:30-11:30 AM

Vedic Yoga – Tuesday's evenings 7:30-8:30 PM



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## Chanting Classes

### HINDU CENTRE NOVEMBER 2023 - ZOOM DETAILS



5.11.2023  
(SUNDAY)

Mooka Pancha Sathi (MPS)-(Arya shathakam shlokas,  
Padharavindha shathakam shlokas) chanting

7:30 am - 9:00 am SGT | 5:00 am to 6:30 am IST

9.11.2023  
(THURSDAY)

Soundarya lahari (Shlokas 1-100) chanting

7:00 pm - 8:30 pm SGT | 4:30 pm - 6:00 pm IST

11.11.2023  
(SATURDAY)

Sivarathri day chanting (Thiruvagasam mutrodhal)

7:00 am - 12:00 pm SGT | 4:30 am - 9:30 am IST

13.11.2023  
(MONDAY)

Ammavasya Abirami Andadi chanting

7:30 pm - 8:30 pm SGT | 5:00 pm - 6:00 pm IST

17.11.2023  
(FRIDAY)

Chathurthi Vinayagar Agaval chanting

7:30 pm - 8:30 pm SGT | 5:00 pm - 6:00 pm IST

18.11.2023  
(SATURDAY)

Devi Mahatmyam (Chapters 1-13)

8:00 am - 11:00 am SGT | 5:30 am to 8:30 am IST

18.11.2023  
(SATURDAY)

Kanda sashti parayanam

7:30 pm - 8:30 pm SGT | 5:00 pm - 6:00 pm IST

27.11.2023  
(MONDAY)

Pournami Lalitha sahasranamam chanting

7:30 pm - 9:00 pm SGT | 5:00 pm to 6:30 pm IST



ZOOM ID

840 592 44048

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## Shloka Chanting

### Daily Shlokas

For a prayerful life

Simple  
Sanskrit shlokas  
2 to 4 lines each

Prior  
knowledge of  
Sanskrit NOT  
needed

Medium of  
instruction  
English

A prayerful attitude towards life is one of the easiest and most effective ways to earn punya (merit) and to purify the mind.

Convert your entire life into a prayer by reciting and assimilating the meanings of these prayers. As you wake up, walk on the ground, brush your teeth, take a shower, eat your food, do your duties and go to sleep.

November 4th & 5th  
Saturdays 4 – 5:30 PM

Fees: \$20 for 2 sessions

Venue: The Hindu Centre,  
132, Owen Road, S 218935



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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](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto: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



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  **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!**