

Vedanshi

The part of the sacred knowledge

The reverent presentation to Me of a leaf, a flower, a fruit, or water, given with pure intention, is a devotional offering acceptable in My sight

Chapter 9, Verse 26; Bhagavad Gita

A Monthly Newsletter

Issue No 25: December 2015

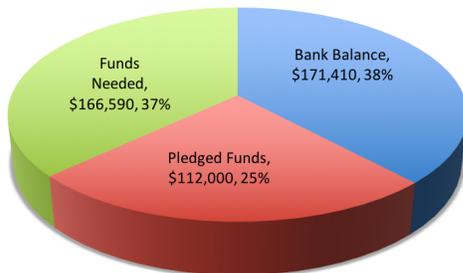
Sanatan Hindu Sanskar Kendra

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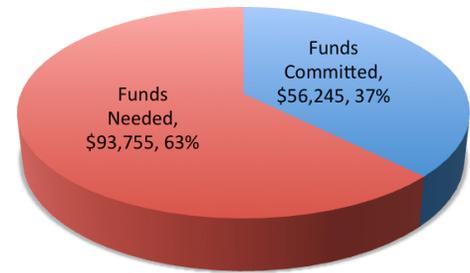


Temple - Fundraising Campaign

Estimated Construction Cost : \$450,000



Estimated Operating Cost : \$150,000



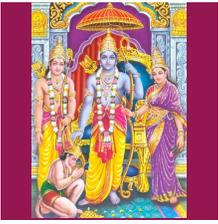
Sponsor Category	Sponsors Needed	Committed
\$15,000	6	1
\$10,000	6	3
\$5000	10	1
\$2500	15	3
\$1000	20	3

Residing Deities

Balaji, Padmavati (Lakshmi), Shiva, Durga, Ganesh, Radha Krishna, Saraswati, Hanuman

Yearly Contribution	Sponsors Needed	Committed
\$10,000	6	3
\$5000	8	2
\$2000	8	0
\$1000	12	4
\$500	15	0
Dollar-a-day	20	13
\$100	75	75

Sita Ram



Ganesh



Krishna



Durga



Shiva



Guru - Part II

by Swami Sivananda

The Need For A Guru...Continued

The scriptures are like a forest. There are ambiguous passages. There are passages which are apparently contradictory. There are passages which have esoteric meanings, diverse significance, and hidden explanations. There are cross-references. You are in need of a Guru or Preceptor who will explain to you the right meaning, who will remove doubts and ambiguities, who will place before you the essence of the teachings.

A Guru is absolutely necessary for every aspirant in the spiritual path. It is only the Guru who will find out your defects. The nature of egoism is such that you will not be able to find out your own defects. Just as a man cannot see his back, so also he cannot see his own errors. He must live under a Guru for the eradication of his evil qualities and defects.

The aspirant who is under the guidance of a Master or Guru is safe from being led astray. Satsanga or association with the Guru is an armor and fortress to guard you against all temptations and unfavorable forces of the material world.

Cases of those who had attained perfection without study under any Guru should not be cited as authority against the necessity of a Guru; for, such great men are the anomalies of spiritual life, and not the common normality. They come into existence as spiritual masters as a result of the intense service, study, and meditation practiced in previous births. They had already studied under the Guru. The present birth is only its continuative spiritual effect. Hence, the importance of the Guru is not lessened thereby.

Some teachers mislead their aspirants. They say unto all: "Think for yourself. Do not surrender yourself to any Guru". When one says, "Do not follow any Guru!", he intends to be the listeners' Guru himself. Do not approach such pseudo-Gurus. Do not hear their lectures.

All great ones had their teachers. All the sages, saints, prophets, world- teachers, incarnations, great men, have had their own Gurus, however great they might have been. Svetaketu learnt the nature of Truth from Uddalaka, Maitreyi from Yajnavalkya, Bhrgu from Varuna, Narada from Sanatkumara, Nachiketas from Yama, Indra from Prajapati; and several others humbly went to wise ones,

...Continued on Page 4

Dec 2015 & Jan 2016 Dates

Based on Lafayette, Louisiana, US Time

15 Tuesday	Vivah Panchami
21 Monday	Mokshada Ekadashi, Gita Jayanti
24 Thursday	Margashirsha Poornima, Dattatreya Jayanti
05 Tuesday	Saphala Ekadashi
14 Thursday	Pongal, Makar Sankranti
19 Tuesday	Pausha Putrada Ekadashi,
23 Saturday	Paush Purnima

For more details please refer DrikPanchang.com



Makar Sankranti Celebrations

Sunday, January 17th, 2015

110 Hapsburg Lane, Lafayette, LA 70506

Gayatri Yagna, Pongal, Lori & Kite Festival

Year-end Donation Appeal

Dear Friends,

Our organization, SHSK made a considerable progress in 2015 with the help of our community members. The trustees and many volunteers are making plans to build a temple structure in 2016.

Now, year-end is nearing. We are bombarded by requests for donations. Many answer those solicitations, happily giving to their favorite charities. This year-end generosity also might pay off at tax time, as long as you know and follow the Internal Revenue Service's (IRS) rules on tax deductions for donations.

Many of our members may also in the process of year-end tax planning. Please consider year-end donation to SHSK as part of your year-end tax planning. Also donating appreciated assets such as securities, real-estate, collectibles and artwork may realize a much more favorable result for tax purpose.

Some of us may not be able to itemize for tax purpose, because IRS allowed standard deductions amount is greater than our total itemized deductions. (2015 standard deduction amount is \$12,400 for married filing jointly.) In this case you may want to consider paying two years property taxes, donations, etc., in one year to maximize the total itemized deductions. For example, if you are planning to donate \$1,000/year, donate \$2,000 in every other year. For property taxes, pay 2015 taxes in early January 2016 and 2016 taxes at end of December 2016.

Please note donations must be made by the end of the tax year for which you want to claim the tax deduction and SHSK is an "IRS-qualified" charity.

Should you have any questions on tax deductions for donations, please feel free to call me at 337-857-1995.

Sincerely,

Ravi C. Vallalar

Treasurer



Find us on Facebook and get SHSK updates



Subscribe to SHSK channel on youtube and listen to devotional playlists.

Gayatri Japa

Meditation on Gayatri

*"Om bhur bhuvah svah tat savitur varenyam;
Bhargo devasya dheemahi dhiyo yo nah
prachodayat."*

ॐ भूर्भुवः स्वः ।
तत् सवितुर्वरेण्यं ।
भर्गो देवस्य धीमहि ।
धियो यो नः प्रचोदयात् ॥

Shabda-Artha

Om - Para Brahman; **Bhur** - Bhuloka (Physical Plane); **Bhuvah** - Antariksha **Svah**; Svarga Loka **Tat** - Paramatma **Savitur**; Isvara (Surya); **Varenyam**; Fit to be worshipped; **Bhargo** - Remover of sins and ignorance; **Devasya** - Glory (Jnana Svaroop); **Dheemahi** - We meditate; **Dhiyo** - Buddhi (Intellect); **Yo** - Which; **Nah** - Our; **Prachodayat** - Enlighten.

Bhava-Artha

"Let us meditate on Isvara and His Glory who has created the Universe, who is fit to be worshipped, who is the remover of all sins and ignorance. May he enlighten our intellect."

The aspirant prays to Mother Gayatri, "O Beloved Mother! At the present moment I have taken my body as the self owing to Avidya or ignorance, through my impure intellect. Give me a pure intellect which will enable me to know my real nature. Give me light and knowledge."

This is the Brahma-Gayatri Mantra. Gayatri is the 'Blessed Mother' of Vedas. There is no milk superior to cow's milk. Even so there is no Mantra superior to Gayatri. As Omkara or Pranava is for Sannyasins, so is Gayatri for Brahmacharis and householders. The fruits that are attained by meditation on Omkara can be attained by meditation on Gayatri. The same goal that is reached by a Paramahansa Sannyasin can be reached by a Brahmachari or a householder by meditating on Gayatri.

Get up at 4 a. m. in Brahmamuhurta and start Japa and meditation on Gayatri (Panchmukhi or five-faced Devi seated in lotus flower), sitting on Padmasana, Siddhasana or Virasana, facing North or East. Burn incense in the room.

In summer you can take a bath. In winter you can simply wash your face, hands and feet and do achamana only. Continue the Japa for two hours or more. Have another sitting at night between 7 and 8 p. m. Constantly feel that you are receiving light, purity and wisdom from Gayatri. This is important.



Keep the image of the Gayatri at the Trikuti, the space between the eye-brows by closing the eyes and concentrate there, or keep the image in the lotus of the heart and concentrate there. You will have Darshan of Gayatri.

It is better if you do Japa of Gayatri 3000 to 4000 times daily. Your heart will be purified rapidly. If you are not able to do this number, you can do 1008 times daily. If you find it difficult to do this number also, do at least 108 times daily, 36 times at sunrise, 36 times at noon, 36 times at sunset. There is special, mysterious spiritual force or wonderful magnetic power at Sandhi or junction of the time, sunrise and sunset. The mind will be elevated quickly. It will be filled with Sattva. Concentration will come by itself without any effort at this time. If you find it difficult to get up at Brahmamuhurta,



get up before sunrise. That man who fails to do Gayatri at the Sandhis fails in the discharge of his daily duties. He becomes a Bhrashta or fallen man. He loses vigour, vitality and Brahma-tejas.

In the Gayatri Mantra there are 9 names, viz. , 1. Om, 2. Bhur, 3. Bhuvah, 4. Svah, 5. Tat, 6. Savitur, 7. Varenyam, 8. Bhargo and 9. Devasya. Through these nine names the Lord is praised. Dheemahi is worship of the Lord. Dhiyo Yo Nah Prachodayat is prayer. Herein there are five halts or stops viz. , 'Om' is the first stop; 'Bhur Bhuvah Svah' the second; 'Tat Savitur Varenyam' the third; 'Bhargo Devasya Dheemahi' the fourth; and 'Dhiyo Yo Nah Prachodayat' the fifth. While chanting or doing Japa of the Mantra, we should stop a little at every stop or halt.

Savita is the presiding deity of the Gayatri Mantra, Fire (Agni) is the mouth, Vishwamitra is the Rishi and Gayatri is the metre. It is recited in the investiture of sacred thread, practice of Pranayama and Japa. What Gayatri is, the same is Sandhya, and what Sandhya is, the same is Gayatri. Sandhya and Gayatri are identical. He who meditates on Gayatri, meditates on Lord Vishnu.

A man can repeat Gayatri mentally in all states while lying, sitting, walking etc. There is no sin of commission and omission of any sort in its repetition. One should thus perform Sandhya three times with this Gayatri Mantra every day, in the morning, noon and evening. It is the Gayatri Mantra alone that can be commonly prescribed for all the Hindus. The Lord commands in the Vedas "Let one Mantra be common to all" "**Samano Mantrah.**" Hence the Gayatri should be the one Mantra for all the Hindus. "The secret lore of the Upanishads is the essence of four Vedas, while Gayatri with the three Vyahritis is the essence of the Upanishads." He is the real Brahmin who knows and understands thus, the Gayatri. Without its

knowledge he is a Sudra, though well versed in the four Vedas.

Benefits of Gayatri Japa

Gayatri is the mother of the Vedas and the destroyer of sins. There is nothing more purifying on the earth as well as in the heaven than the Gayatri. The Japa of Gayatri brings the same fruit as the recitation of all the four Vedas together with the Angas. This single Mantra, if repeated three times a day, brings good (Kalyan or Moksha). It is the Mantra of the Vedas. It destroys sins. It bestows splendid health, beauty, strength, vigour, vitality and magnetic aura in the face (Brahmic effulgence).



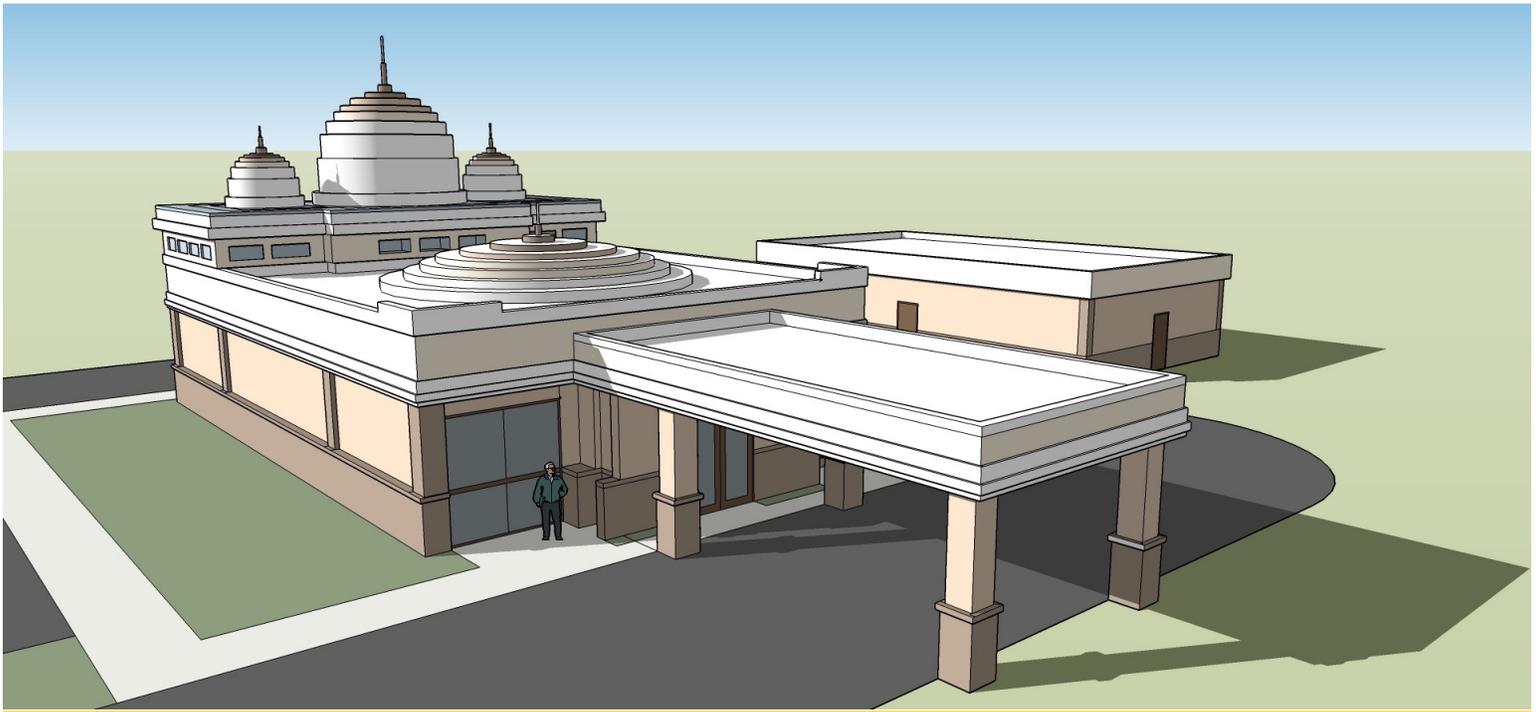
Gayatri destroys the three kinds of Taapa or pain. Gayatri bestows the four kinds of Purushartha viz. , Dharma (righteousness), Artha (wealth), Kama (desired objects) and Moksha (liberation or freedom). It destroys the three Granthis or knots of ignorance, Avidya, Kama and Karma. Gayatri purifies the mind. Gayatri bestows Ashta Siddhis. Gayatri makes a man powerful and highly intelligent. Gayatri eventually gives liberation or emancipation from the wheel of births and deaths.

The mind is purified by constant worship. It is filled with good and pure thoughts. Repetition of worship strengthens the good Samskaras. "As a man thinks, that he becomes." This is the psychological law. The mind of a man who trains himself in thinking good, holy thoughts, develops a tendency to think of good thoughts. His



character is moulded and transformed by continued good thoughts. When the mind thinks of the image of Gayatri during worship, the mental substance actually assumes the form of the image. The impression of the object is left in the mind. This is called Samskara. When the act is repeated very often, the Samskaras gain strength by repetition, and a tendency or habit is formed in the mind. He who entertains thoughts of Divinity becomes transformed actually into the Divinity himself by constant thinking and meditation. His Bhava or disposition is purified and divinized. The meditator and the meditated, the worshipper and the worshipped, the thinker and the thought become one and the same. This is Samadhi. This is the fruit of worship or Upasana.

Swami Sivananda
- www.sivanandaonline.org



3D-Rendering of Santan Hindu Sanskar Kendra Temple Project

Two Separate structures approximately 4200 sq ft in total. Building 1 will be Temple only approximately 65' x 40' housing altar area for Deities, assembly area, small office and small break room with sink and stove. Building 2 is mainly a utilitarian building housing a warming kitchen, classrooms, men's and women's restrooms, storage and utility space provisions. Building 2 will have provision for future expansion

Guru - Part II

... Continued from page 2

observed strict Brahmacharya, practiced rigorous discipline, and learnt Brahma-vidya (the science of God) from them.

Lord Krishna sat at the feet of His Guru Sandeepani. Lord Rama had Guru Vasishtha who gave Him Upadesha (spiritual advice). Lord Jesus sought John to be baptised by him on the banks of the river Jordan. Even Devas (celestial beings) have Brihaspati as their Guru. Even the greatest among the divine beings sat at the feet of Guru Dakshinamurti.

A neophyte must have a personal Guru first. He cannot have God as Guru to begin with. He must have a pure mind. He must have ethical perfection. He, must be intensely virtuous. He must be above body-consciousness. Then alone can he have God as Guru.

How to choose your Guru

If you find peace in the presence of a Mahatma (great soul), if you are inspired by his speeches, if he is able to clear your doubts, if he is free, from greed, anger, and lust, if he is selfless, loving, and I-less, you can take him as your Guru. He who is able to clear your doubts, he who is sympathetic in your Sadhana, he who does not disturb your beliefs but helps you on from where you are, he in whose very presence you feel spiritually elevated-he is your Guru. Once you choose Your Guru, implicitly follow him. God will guide you through the Guru.



Do not use your reason too much in the selection of your Guru. You will fail if you do so. If you fail to get a first-class Guru, try to follow the instructions of the Sadhu (a spiritual person) who is treading the path for some years, who has purity and other virtuous qualities, and who has some knowledge of the scriptures. Just as a student of the Intermediate class will be able to teach a student of Third Form when a professor with M.A. qualification is not available, just as a sub-assistant surgeon will be able to attend on a patient when the civil surgeon is not available, this second- class type of Guru will be able to help you.

If you are not able to find out even this second-class type of Guru, you can follow the teachings contained in the books written by realized saints like Sri Sankara, Dattatreya, and others. You can keep a photo of such a realized Guru, if available, and worship the same with faith and devotion. Gradually you will get inspiration, and the Guru may appear in dream and initiate and inspire you at the proper time. For a sincere Sadhak (aspirant), help comes in a mysterious manner. When the time is ripe, the Guru and the disciple are brought together by the Lord in a mysterious way.

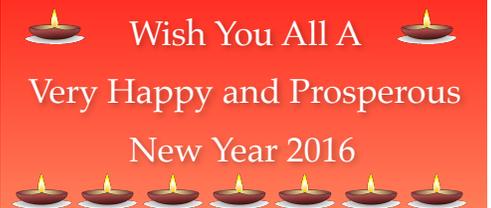
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Srinivasan Ambatipati, Editor