

# DEEPAM



## **HAPPY DEEPAVALI AND PROSPEROUS NEW YEAR**

**Volume 32, Deepavali Special Issue 1  
October 2022**



**Hindu Temple**

**13010 Arbor Street, Omaha, NE, 68144**

# NAMASTE

P L A Z A

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October 29, 2022 • 4 PM

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**RAFFLE TICKET \$10**

**Raffle Contact**

1st Prize : \$1000 in cash

Alekha Dash : 402 492 9707

2nd Prize : 65" TV (\$700)

Anil Bhalla : 402 333 6607

3rd Prize : Vitamix Blender (\$350)

Shantaram Joshi : 402 965 9777

4th Prize : Apple AirPods (\$160)

Deepa Kashyap : 402 932 7395

5th Prize(3) : \$100 Indian Grocery Gift Card

Malathi Balu : 402 968 2594

6th Prize(6) : \$50 Indian Restaurant Gift Card

7th Prize-(10) : \$15 Hindu Temple Cafe Gift Card

Chandrasekhar : 402 812 5654

Cultural Program Contact : [cultural@htom.us](mailto:cultural@htom.us)

## COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Priest: **Pandit Nagabhat Vidyashankar**  
**Pandit Badari Narayana**  
**Pandit Laxmikant (Amol) Kulkarni**  
Facility Manager: **Chandrasekhar Karmegam**

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President: **Malathi Balu**  
Vice President: **Venkatesh Bettadapura**  
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Member (21-23): **Aswathy Nair**  
Member (20-24): **Rajesh Sharma**  
Member (20-24): **Amit Khot**  
Member (20-24): **Prem L. Bansal**

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**Venkat Suman Maddula**  
Facility Maintenance: **Sivakuma Shanmugam/**  
**Priti Patel**  
IT Management: **Sujeet Reddy/Shivakumar Nyalam**

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Temple Tours/Public Relation: **Vandana Singh**  
Volunteer/Welcome: **Nageswarao Atota / Roshni Rao**  
Nomination: **Ketan Patel**  
Vedantic Center of Nebraska: **Dr. Sanjay Singh/**  
**Dr. Phani Tej Adidam**  
Cafeteria: **Srini Nedunoori/Ketan Patel**

### BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Chairperson: **Srini Mallipudi**  
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Secretary: **Kantharaj Etigi**  
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Member (21-23): **Venkata Kameswararao**  
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Member (20-24): **VT Ramakrishnana**  
Member (20-24): **Anil Bhalla**  
Member (20-24): **Sivamani Somasundaram**  
Fund Raising: **Dr. Alekha Dash**  
Long Range Planning: **Muralidhar Chintapalli**  
Past Chairperson: **Dr. Subash Bhatia**

# MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

**Dear Hindu Temple Devotees,  
Namaskaram All!!**

**Om Ganeshaya Namaha! Om Murugan Thunai!**

On Behalf of the Executive Committee, I want to wish you all a very Happy Deepavali!!



We have started this year with lot of festivals and successfully completed Jagannatha Ratha Yatra, Bahuda Yatra, Kuzhandhai Velan Kaavadi, RishiPanchami Santsadan, Sri Garuda Panchami, Guru Purnima, Sri Vara Mahalakshmi, SriKrishna Janmashtami, Onam, Ganesh Chaturthi, Venkateshwara Jayanthi, Navarathri, Dasara, and Durga Puja. I want to thank our Puja committee and Priests for their dedication and commitment. We have also celebrated 75 years of India's Independence Day and partnered with Tri Faith and many of our volunteers participated in the 1k mile walk. My heartfelt thanks and gratitude go to our Executive committee, Board of Trustees, wonderful volunteers, and devotees to make those events a grand success.

With all your continual support, we have come a long way. We have recently added Brindavan to our temple and beautified main entrance with a fountain. Thanks to the volunteers who made it happen and continue to maintain it. We have inaugurated our new Kitchen for the temple cafeteria in the community center. My heartfelt gratitude and Kudos go to all the volunteers (~200+) who run cafeteria by giving countless hours of service to the temple. We are looking to expand our operations to both Saturday and Sunday sooner. We have about 30+ middle and high school volunteers involved in the temple Seva and other initiatives as part of the Youth Committee. We are grateful to the services of our facility manager who helps us with facilities and cafeteria operations.

I want to thank all volunteers who are supporting Religious and Vedanta activities, Finance, IT and Communications, Bal Vihar, Temple Tours, Publications, Cultural, Facility Maintenance and Decorations, Maha Prasadam and Cafeteria.

We are continuing our weekly food service to Stephen center and will provide Thanksgiving dinner and winter blankets during the upcoming winter. If you want to sponsor any of our temple activities like Stephen center, weekly or yearly cafe, weekly Abhisegam etc., Please reach out to me.

Our Temple is fortunate to have the support and guidance from our Founder members, Senior leaders, Past leadership, and I am thankful for their support and guidance. We have paid off more than half of our devotee's loan recently and Thanks to our ACH sponsors and generous donors. We are about 250K away from being debt free. For our temple to self-sustain, I humbly request our entire community to come together and join hands to make

**“Our Temple a Debt-Free Temple” (~ 250k needed)**

by end of this year. My sincere thanks and Pranaams in advance to all the donors and patrons. Always at the service of our temple and the community!!

May Lord Prasanna Ganapathi Bless us all!!

With Gratitude and Best Regards

Malathi Balu  
President, Executive Committee (2022-23)  
402-968-2594

president@htom.us



## MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN

Respected devotees,

Namaste.

I wish you all a very happy Diwali. May God Prasanna Ganapathi bless you all a very happy and prosperous Diwali.



Our Temple will be celebrating Diwali with great fervor and festivities, I invite you all to come and be a part of this grand celebration. First, I want to express my gratitude to Dr. Subhash Bhatia, the outgoing Chairperson of the BOT, Sri Ankit Patel, outgoing president of the Executive Committee. I also want to thank all the team members of the various committees, along with all the dedicated volunteers who served the temple in various capacities. I would also like to express my gratitude to Dr. Phani Tej Adidam, chair of the Vedantic center who arranged various spiritual talks for our community. I also want to thank Sri Muralidhar Chintapalli the current BOT chair for Long range, Dr. Alekha Das the current fundraising chair, Dr. Ram San-karaneni current vice chairperson, Sri Kantharaj Etigi secretary of BOT, and all board members for their continuous support. My sincere thanks to Smt Malathi Balu, President of the executive committee and all members of the EC for their support in operations of the temple.

I am pleased to announce that the kitchen construction in the community center is almost complete, it will be open for service by early December. I want to extend my thankfulness and gratitude for all donors and volunteers that are supporting the cafeteria.

I want to thank all the donors who are continuously supporting the temple. I started a committee that will review the remaining temple bylaws, which will conclude by the end of the year.

Finally, please know that we take your suggestions for improvement seriously. If you have any thoughts, please feel free to contact any member of the Board of Trustees, Executive committee, or priests.

Thank you, I want to wish everyone a Happy Diwali.

Srinivasarao Mallipudi

Chairman, Board of Trustees



**Please Support Your Temple by Buying the Deepavali Raffles Tickets!** The details of prizes are provided below:

Ticket No: _____			Ticket No. _____		
_____	_____	_____	<p>hindu temple <b>Annual Deepavali Raffle 2022</b> <b>OCTOBER 29   4 PM</b></p> <p>1st Prize: \$1000 in cash 2nd Prize: 65" TV (\$700) 3rd Prize: Vitamix Blender (\$350) 4th Prize: \$160 Apple AirPods 5th Prize(3 each): \$100 Indian Grocery Gift Card 6th Prize(6 each): \$50 Indian Restaurant Gift Card 7th Prize:(10 each): \$15 Indian Restaurant Gift Card</p> <p><b>\$10</b></p>		
_____	_____	_____			
_____	_____	_____			
_____	_____	_____			
Name:	Address:	Phone:			

## **HAPPY DEEPAVALI AND PROSPEROUS NEW YEAR WISHES**



From:  
**PURNIMA AND BABU GUDA  
RAHUL AND REEMA**

# Financial Update: Hindu Temple Omaha

## Hindu Temple, Omaha NE (Jan 2022 thru Sep 2022)

INFLOW		OUTFLOW	
<i>Hundi collections cash</i>	\$201,327 \$36,377	<i>Operating expenses</i>	\$182,381
<i>Direct deposits</i>		<i>Priest &amp; Staff expenses</i>	\$123,635
<i>Puja services</i>	\$110,727	<i>Temple Events Expenses</i>	\$4,476
<i>Temple Events Sponsorship</i>	\$51,579	<i>Devotee Loan &amp; Mortgage Int</i>	\$13,687
<i>Other sponsorships</i>	\$26,476	<i>Towards Mortgage/payoff</i>	\$8,187
<i>Pledged Donations</i>	\$26,962	<i>Kitchen Construction</i>	\$122,050
<i>Temple Prasadam Sponsorship</i>	\$22,449	<i>Temple Prasadam Expenses</i>	\$51,832
<i>Temple Prasadam</i>	\$123,252		
<b>Total Inflow 2022 (YTD)</b>	<b>\$599,149</b>	<b>Total outflow 2022 (YTD)</b>	<b>\$506,248</b>

### ----- Balances As of September 2022 -----

Balance owed on Devotee loans: **\$200,000**

Balance owed on priest/staff housing mortgage: **\$116,622**

Operating Account Balance : \$83,939

Savings (Endowment) balance : \$163,383

**Interested in donating your appreciated securities (stocks)?** It's very easy to transfer to your Temple! Please supply the following info to your brokerage firm.

Receiving Firm Name: **TD Ameritrade**

Receiving Firm DTC number: **0188**

Receiving Account title: **HINDU TEMPLE OMAHA**

Receiving Account Number: **868591259**

**NOTE: This is subject to change and hence please check with Temple for the latest account information.**

Then, email [htom.finance@gmail.com](mailto:htom.finance@gmail.com) with the details about your donation and contact information and with the subject line "Securities Donation" so that we can follow up to ensure a successful transfer. We generally consider the closing price of the stock on the day we have received to value your contribution. It's that easy!!

**TRACK YOUR DONATIONS** – We track your donations as complete as possible and send annual donation amounts to your address or email. You can track your donations by creating a donor account at <https://www.aplos.com/aws/donors/reg> using the registered email address.

**For any changes please keep us updated with your latest email and physical address by e-mailing to [htom.finance@gmail.com](mailto:htom.finance@gmail.com) so that we can send financial communications to your latest email / address.**





May This Auspicious Festival of Lights  
Illuminate Your Life with  
Prosperity, Happiness and Good Health.



Wishing You A Happy Diwali & A Prosperous New Year

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contact:

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\*Conditions Apply



**Happy DEEPAVALI and Prosperous  
NEW YEAR**

From:



**Sundar Chokkara  
Geeta Chokkara  
Sukarn Chokkara  
Sumeet Chokkara**



# Balvihar Activities and Learning

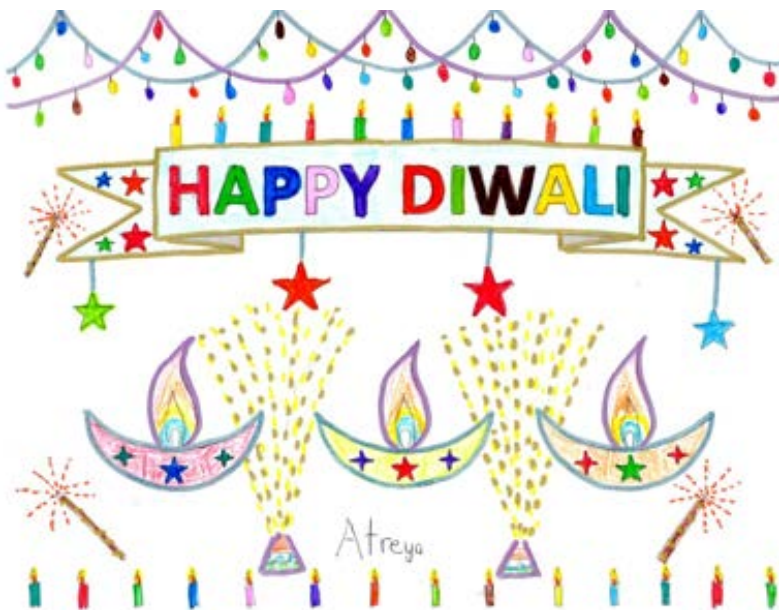
D ecorations all around  
I ndian smells filling the house  
W arm glows of orange light is everywhere  
A ll my family is playing to god  
L akshmi, goddess of wealth blesses us  
I look forward to celebrating Diwali next year



Aarohi Agarwal-Dwitya Jr.-22



Saanvi Shikhar - Dwitya Sr.-22



Atreya N. Mishra - Dwitya Jr.-22



Sarvesh More - 22



**Aishwarya Chandrasekaran- Prathma Jr.-22**



**Swara Gopal Jadhav- Prathma Jr.-22**



**Aahaan Singh.-22**



**Vivaan Shinde- Prathma Jr.-22**

## **Balvihar Activities by Kids**



Avyan Jain -Tritiya- 22

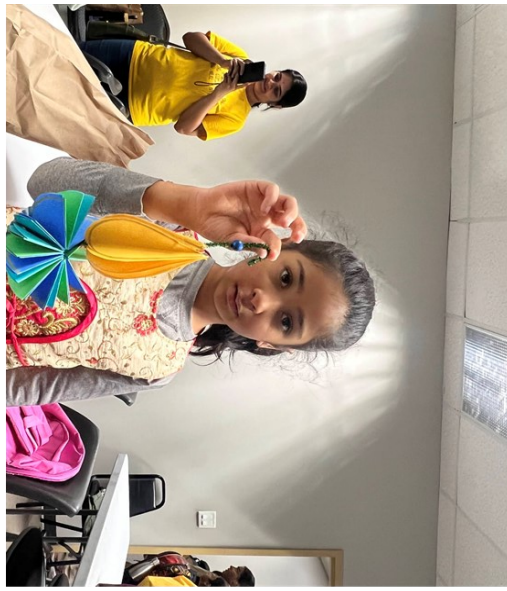


Shambhavi Shikhar Tritiya-22



Prahaan Chaturvedi- Dwitya Jr.-22

# Balvihar Activities by Kids



# Balvihar Activities by Kids



## Diwali: Festival of Lights and its Many Colors

Diwali is one of the major festivals celebrated in India and Indians living all over the world. Although celebrated by all, Hindus, Buddhists, Jains, and Sikhs in India celebrate Diwali with regional traditional and cultural uniqueness. The festival is celebrated on the third day coinciding with the darkest night on lunar month of Kartika (between mid- October and mid- November). Diwali symbolizes “victory of Light over Darkness, or Good over Evil, and Knowledge over Ignorance”. It is also celebrated to worship “Lakshmi”, the goddess of prosperity, fertility, and wealth and “Lord Ganesh, God of wisdom and remover of obstacles. Additionally, it marks return of “Lord Ram with wife Sita and brother Lakshman” after defeating demon Ravana in Lanka and serving 14 years in exile. Diwali celebrations typically start after festival of Dusshera that precedes Diwali by about 20 days.

Irrespective of different cultures and backgrounds, India comes together on this auspicious day for celebrations. Celebrations include people lighting diya (oil lamps), candles, lanterns, make rangoli (colorful art patterns), performing prayers to goddess Lakshmi, Ganesh, and Ram, dan (charity donations), decorating homes, exchanging gifts with family and friends, and light fireworks. Even though, the essence of the festival stays the same across the country, Diwali traditions and activities vary from state to state.

Regional influence of Diwali celebrations:

**Eastern India-** In Bengal, it is associated with Goddess Kali, who symbolizes the victory of good over evil. In Odisha, on the occasion of Diwali, people perform Kauriya Kathi. It is a ritual in which people worship their ancestors in heaven. They burn jute sticks to call upon their ancestors and seek their blessings. During Diwali, Odisha worships Goddess Lakshmi, Lord Ganesh and Goddess Kali.

**Central India-** Varanasi observes it as the Diwali of Gods, known as the Dev Deepawali. Devotees believe that Gods and Goddesses come down to earth to take a dip in the holy Ganga during this time. Prayers and *diyas* are offered to river Ganga and the banks, adorned with lamps and rangolis look profoundly mesmerizing. Dev Deepawali falls on the full moon of the *Kartika* month and takes place fifteen days after Diwali.

**Northern India-** In North India, the celebrations of Diwali start with Dussehra, where Ramlila, a dramatic rendition of the story of the Ramayan is depicted. It continues for several nights ending with the defeat of Ravana (Evil) by Ram (Good). In Himachal Pradesh, Delhi, UP and other surrounding areas, houses are decorated with candles, lights, diyas, bandhanwars, and rangolis. Laxmi puja is performed at night. In some houses, there is a tradition of putting a silver coin in a tumbler of milk, which is then sprinkled in all the rooms. In Punjab, Diwali falls around the same time of Bandi Chhor Diwas, a Sikh festival celebrated with lighting up of households and gurudwaras, gifting, bursting crackers and feasting. Punjabi Hindus worship Goddess Lakshmi on Diwali. The celebration of Diwali also marks the arrival of winters in Punjab.

**Southern India-** When lord Krishna overcame and destroyed the evil demon King Narakasura. In Tamil Nadu, people celebrate the festival in the Tamil month of Aipasi (Thula month). It is also known as Naraka Chaturdashi among south Indians. On this day, houses are decorated with kolam designs and they bathe in oil and eat sweets to commence the festival. Besides, they also celebrate a unique festival called Thalai Deepavali. During this day, newly weds spend time at the bride’s parental house. Tamilians wake up at the crack of dawn to bathe in oil infused with betel leaves, fragrant pepper, and so forth. After their bath, they consume a tonic, Deepavali Lehiyam before their feast. In Andhra Pradesh, people chant

*Continued to the next page.....*

prayers and seek blessings from the clay idol, Satyabhama. After prayers, they begin celebrating Diwali with their loved ones with excitement. In Karnataka, Diwali celebrations last for two days, on the first day, which is the day of Ashwija Krishna Chaturdashi, people take an oil bath. There is a belief that Lord Krishna took the oil bath to remove the bloodstains from his body after killing Narakasura. Bali Padyami is the third day of Diwali when women sketch colorful rangolis in their houses and build forts from cow dung. There are stories associated with King Bali that are celebrated on this day.

**Western India-** Diwali in Maharashtra commences with the Vasu Baras ritual that takes place to honor cows. People celebrate Dhanteras to pay homage to the ancient doctor, Dhanvantari. On the occasion of Diwali, Maharashtrians worship Goddess Lakshmi and observe Diwali Cha Padva, celebrating the love of husband and wife. The celebrations end with Bhav Bij and Tusli Vivah that marks the starting of weddings. Maharashtrians feasts on a special Diwali preparation consisting of delicious sweets like “karanji” and “ladoo” and spicy eatables like “chakli” and “sev”. This feast is known as Faral. On Diwali day, Lakshmi Puja is performed. Maharashtrian families’ worships Goddess Lakshmi and items of wealth like money and jewelry. With Diwali, a year ends for the people of Gujarat. Gujaratis celebrate the Gujarati New Year’s Day, *Bestu Varas*, on the next day of Diwali. The celebrations start with Vaag Baras, followed by Dhanteras, Kali Chaudash, Diwali, Bestu Varas, and Bhai Bij. In some houses in Gujarat, a diya lit with ghee is left burning the whole night. The next morning, the flame collected from this diya is used to make kajal, which is applied by women on their eyes. This is considered to be a very auspicious custom and is believed to bring prosperity for the whole year. In Goa, Diwali is dedicated to Lord Krishna destroying the demon Narkasur. Mammoth effigies of the demon are made and burnt down on the dawn of Narakasura Chaturdashi, a day before Diwali.

#### Religion specific Diwali Celebrations:

**Jainism-** It is observed as “Mahavira Nirvana Divas”, the day of physical death and attainment of nirvana by Mahavir Jain.

**Sikhism-** It is observed as “Bandi Chhor Divas”, the day when Guru Hargobind arrived at the Golden Temple in Amritsar after his release from Gwalior fort by Mughal emperor Jahangir. Additionally, Diwali celebrations also signify founding of Amritsar as holy city in 1577 and Bhai Mani Singh’s martyrdom in 1738 for failing to pay a fine for celebrating Diwali and refusing to convert to Islam.

**Buddhism-** Not all followers of Buddhism celebrate Diwali. As part of celebration, Lakshmi, Vishnu, and other deities are worshiped. The day is also celebrated as “Diwali- Tihar festival” by Nepalese Hindu- Buddhist followers.

Indian diaspora all over the world including in Omaha celebrates Diwali. Indian community comes together and perform prayers at the temple and in their homes, community members put together a cultural program at the temple depicting stories from different parts of India and prasad is served to all attendees. Balvihar teachers graciously volunteer to provide an opportunity to children growing up in Omaha to learn different facets of Indian cultural, traditions and festivals. Balvihar kids participate in many activities thought out the year and celebrates diverse festivals in collaboration with Omaha Hindu temple. This year, kids have made 3-dimensional paper diyas/lamps and these lamps will be used in decorating the temple hallways. Additionally, kids will sing prayers and bhajan showcasing their abilities and talents.

Rajesh Sharma  
Balvihar







**TIME TO EXPRESS**

**OUR GRATITUDE**

**TO**

**VOLUNTEERS!**



*Continued .....*

## Cafeteria Volunteers



***Your Selfless Service is Priceless***

*Continued .....*



***Your Selfless Service is Priceless***

*Continued .....*



***Your Selfless  
Service is  
Priceless***





***Thank you so much for  
all your hard work  
in maintaining the fountain and  
beautiful flower garden***

# Lord Jagannatha Brindavan Construction



***All of your hard work in building this Brindavan is always appreciated by the community, A Big Thank You!***

# Hindu Temple Donations thru Sep 30, 2022

## Grand Benefactor (Over \$250,000)

Shobhana & Jagmohan Desai	Usha & V T Ramakrishnan	Vinod Gupta
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## Grand Guarantor (Over \$100,000)

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Bharti & Ashok Amin	Indira & Bala Wariyar	Sandhya & Shailendra Saxena	Usha & Sushant Devaraju	

## Grand Patrons (Over \$25,000)

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Asha & Bikram Singh	Kumudini & Jagdish Pai	Premkumar Neelakanta	Sushama & M Shashidharan	
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Gyanendra & Smriti Bhandari Chhotry	Madhuri and Chandra Are	SaiBaba Nebraska Inc	Umasankari & Raviku-mar Subramaniapillai	

## Patrons (Over \$10,000)

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Asha & Murali Deshpande	Jayashree Giridhar & Giridhar Thoranagallu	Murthy Adabala	Rajesh & Teresa Kumar	Sudhir Gajre
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Balu Ramakrishan & Malathi Balu	Kalpana & Prasad Padala	Nalini & Pradeep Nartam	Reetu and Susanta Hota	Suseela Sarasamma & Premchand Nair
Bangalore Arunagiri	Kalpana & Vasudeva Murthy	Namaste Foods	Rekha & Devendra Agrawal	Sushma & Vijay Dewan
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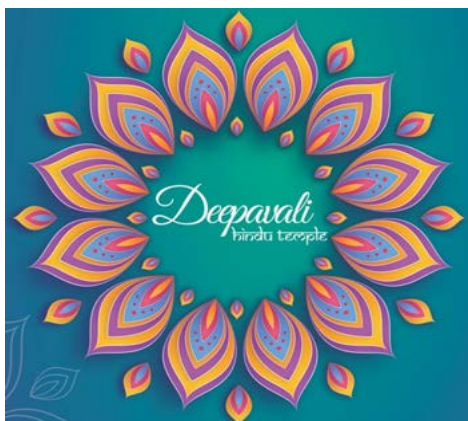
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Deepavali greetings to all

From

**Ramakrishnans**

—V T, Usha, Praveen, Madan, Lauryl, Sabina, Liliana—

## Sanatana Dharma: by Sean Bradrick

Sanatana Dharma provides various multicultural paths to religion, philosophy, metaphysics and altruism. Not only through the vast beauty of Hindu Dharma, but through its sister religions. Diwali is such a truly magnificent and magnanimous celebration of the divine and of our own divinity in the form of light. It is not limited to the adherents of one spiritual tradition, but many. It is a Hindu festival also celebrated by Sikhs, Jains, Buddhists, non-Hindu yogis and other spiritual seekers.

For Hindus, Diwali reminds us of the assurance that truth, light, dharma and knowledge always prevail over darkness, ignorance and adharma. Just as a spare or a small flame peers outward and penetrates many square miles of prior darkness. During Diwali we are also reminded of the epic battle won over Ravana. Afterwards Sita, Rama, Lakshman and Hanuman reached their home of Ayodhya, after fourteen years of banishment.

During Diwali, we also give our obeisance to Sri Devi Lakshmi. We are drawn to the image of the goddess rising from the ocean of milk, churned by the Devatas and asuras. The devotee churns his or her own mind, containing both light and darkness. Ultimately, we find that abundance of the purified mind, enlightenment, and the Atman or true Self. An inner light, not separate from Sri Lakshmi herself. In this image She represents and awakens this aspect of ourselves, from within and from without. Sri Lakshmi is both transcendent and immanent, esoteric and material.

Being the Diwali season, I'd like to write about light. Specifically inner light. The word 'enlightenment' has lost much definition, and is used much by many who unfortunately do not understand its meaning. It is not something we just hear about in movies. It is an attainable reality.

One Vedic path towards enlightenment is simply being with nature. The five elements of matter correspond with our five senses and affect the mind. Energy and Brahman as pure consciousness, correspond to our sixth sense, which is the mind itself. The Vedas also speak of the essential psychological and psychic forms of matter, light and energy known as ojas, tejas and prana. Physical, mental and holistic or spiritual health, all rely on becoming aware of them and balancing them within one's being.

We also hold dear to the great wisdom of Sri Bhagavan Krishna found within the Bhagavad Gita. There we find the road maps to life through bhakti, jnana and karma yoga. Krishna doesn't seem to focus on raja yoga or the path to enlightenment through ashtanga or the eight limbs that lead to meditation proper and samadhi, but this is also an important and attainable path in this age. Remember, true and comprehensive yoga is fully Hindu. One doesn't need to be Hindu to benefit from it, but every Hindu should know it is Bhagavan's gift to us and our gift to the world.

Long ago, the Rishis and yogis of Vedic times recognized the existence of 'chitta' or the subconscious mind. The Sanskrit word 'chitta' means "mind-stuff" or "conditioned consciousness". They found that during meditation, what seemed to be foreign and forgotten thoughts, memories, emotions, fears, impulses and desires, would bubble up or suddenly start to seep from chitta, the subconscious mind, into 'manas' or the normative mind. They found this kept them from reaching higher states of consciousness or 'chitt', the super-conscious mind or unconditioned consciousness.

*Continued to the next page.....*

They called these impressions 'samskaras', meaning 'recollections' or 'psychological imprints'. They theorized that thought itself was a form of subtle matter. A quiet mind creates space for matter from the unconscious mind to emerge. In between the waking and meditative states, the yogis recognized what they called 'vrittis' or resurfacing thoughts. The Sanskrit word 'vritti', literally means 'whirlpool'. These Vedantins realized meditation could act as a sort of mental medium that could process hidden or subconscious impressions, as they became known in the more perceptive state of mind we use in the normal everyday waking state.

Of course, the pressures of everyday life, along with the pressures from our pasts, can appear at any time. A verse in the Upanishads says, "This mind is like a chariot yoked to wild stallions". These stressors can be more easily dealt with in mindful and meditative states than in anxious states or in chaotic situations. These pressures can erupt in an emotional meltdown, or they can be released after the mind has had time to calm and quite down.

Regular practice of meditation can relieve the pressures of life each day. As such, meditation can take the power out of stressful situations and stress itself, but it isn't meant to replace addressing underlying causes of our various issues. It can help us cope with certain situations by allowing us to respond to them in a more effective and efficient manner. It can make us less impulsive and less likely to turn to anger, rage, substance abuse, violence or other compulsive behaviors. Meditation is after all, a modality for overall health found within a larger school of practical metaphysics and holistic medicine.

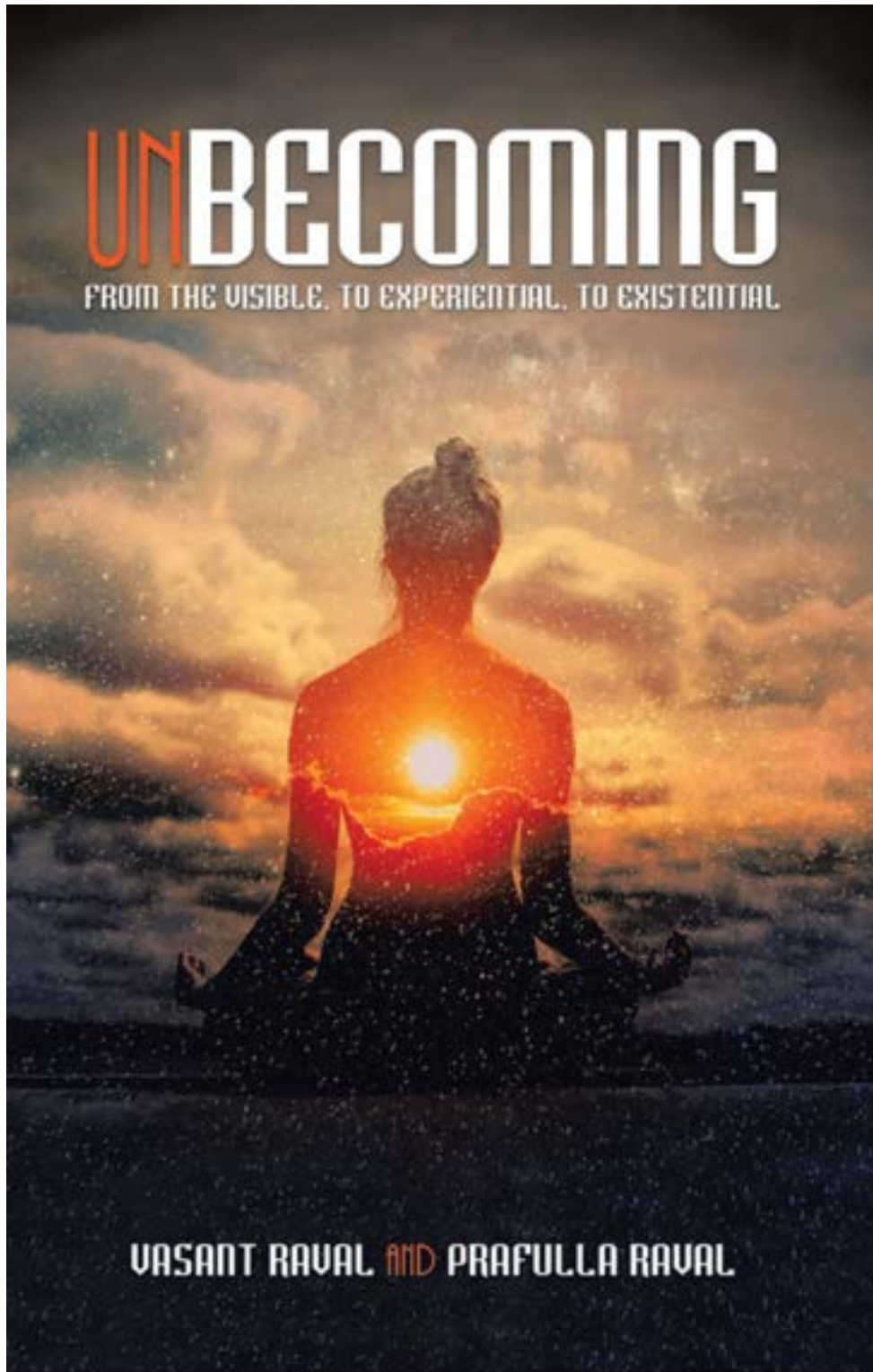
Meditation is what the indigenous Americans call "Big medicine." It is to be respected for the powerful effects it can have, and not taken for granted. It's no wonder that the end result of meditation is historically known to be what we call 'enlightenment'. When we trace the word 'enlightenment' back to its Sanskrit origins, we find quite a few etymological terms. One is the word 'bodhi'. Bodhi means 'awakened intellect' or more simply 'clear perception'. It is where we get the word 'buddha'.

By practicing meditation we can gain this clear perception. We can learn to discern between what is true, constant and eternal, as compared to what is fleeting or limited by time and space. This is not about being in a so-called 'eternal now' or in the present moment, which does not endure even for an instant. It is about being mindful of presence itself or simply paying attention to what is, and as a result, we can see that which is not.

Sanatana Dharma represents the world's most ancient continuously practiced, indigenous spiritual and philosophical tradition, which focuses on inner knowledge over outer belief and finds its basis in timeless truths and natural law. These truths have been recorded in our scriptures throughout the ages. The wisdom of the Vedas comes from the ancient rishis, nagas and yogis who observed nature and the mind in various states of consciousness, including the state of samadhi or super consciousness.

This Diwali I want to wish all members of the temple abundance of spirit, joy, health and wealth. I am an American Hindu adoptee. Sanatana Dharma is my way of life. I thank the indigenous Hindus in Omaha for our beautiful temple. I'd like to end by saying that I think all Hindus, especially the youth, should be proud of their Hindu tradition and identity. **Shubh Diwali.**





We wish you a joyous Deepavali celebration and a prosperous New Year.

On this occasion, we are happy to announce the publication of our second book titled, **UNBECOMING: From the visible, to experiential, to existential**

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With Best Wishes,  
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Vasant Raval**





## Ganesh Chaturthi Puja - 2022



## Onam Celebration - 2022

# Sri Ramana Maharishi

## –Life and Teachings

Jitender Singh Deogun

Sri Ramana Maharishi, popularly known as “the Sage of Arunachala” is revered by millions of devotees all over the world. Some devotees refer to Sri Ramana as Bhagavan Sri Ramana whereas others as Sri Ramana Maharishi. Swami Shantananda Puri writes in the beginning of one of his books, “...  *veneration at the Holy Feet of Bhagvan Sri Ramana who is inspiration ... to the Spiritual Sadhaks all over the world.*” Many books on life and teachings of Sri Ramana Maharishi have been written in Tamil, English and other languages.

Sri Ramana Maharishi was born on December 30, 1879, into an orthodox Hindu Brahmin family in Tiruchuzhi, a village south of Madurai in Tamil Nadu, India. He was second child in the family and had an elder brother. The birth name of Sri Ramana Maharishi was Venkataraman Iyer. Sri Ramana’s father passed away when he was twelve years old and the family moved to Madurai to live with his uncle. In Madurai, Sri Ramana first attended Scott’s Middle School and then American Mission High School. However, he was not a serious student in the school and was never very interested in the school studies as he was born for a different purpose.

About the time Sri Ramana was in the high school, he found and read Sekkizhar’s book about the lives of 63 Saivite saints known as Nayanmars. The book called “Periyapuranam,” describing the deep love and devotion of the Nayanmars, made profound impact on Sri Ramana and readied him for his spiritual journey of self-inquiry. When Sri Ramana was fifteen years old, an elderly relative came to visit the family in Madurai. While talking to the elderly relative Sri Ramana came to know that the relative was from Arunachala. Hearing the name Arunachala, a strange thing happened to Sri Ramana, and he felt like he was struck by a magic spell and had become immovable. He felt a yearning for Arunachala and sure wanted

to know more about Arunachala from the elderly relative. During the conversation, he came to understand that Tiruvannamalai was Arunachala. He describes his first experience about Arunachala in one of his hymns:

Oh, great wonder!  
As an insentient hill it stands.

... ..

But even when I came to know through another that it was the same as Tiruvannamalai I did not understand its meaning.

When, stilling my mind, it drew me up to it, and I came close,

I found that it was the Immovable.

**Enlightenment:** Sri Ramana spontaneously felt awakening to Self-knowledge at an early age of sixteen. Sri Ramana has given a first-person account of his enlightenment. It is said that suddenly, Sri Ramana was overwhelmed by a violent fear of death. He felt that his body is inflexible like a dead body but consciously he knew that “*I*” was *alive*. Slowly, the fear of death disappeared but Sri Ramana felt that a process of self-enquiry, that is, contemplation on the “self” has started. This event led to his spiritual journey of *self-enquiry* of “Who am I?” Sri Ramana has stated that some inner force, a spiritual power took control over him and started the self-inquiry of “Who am I?” Few weeks after this incidence, Sri Ramana left Madurai and boarded a train to go to Arunachala, in Tiruvannamalai. After changing trains and walking last ten miles on foot he reached Arunachala where he lived for his entire life as an Advaita yogi. There was no other or otherness for Sri Ramana Maharshi. Bhagavan Ramana’s teachings were universal, and he bestowed his blessings and love on all.

Sri Ramana Maharishi was an enlightened soul. It is said that he was “not a learned pundit or an accomplished academic philosopher.” However, there is no parallel to the depth of

*Continued to the next page.....*

spirituality and wisdom reflected in his life and in his teachings. He was an apostle of Advaita and a "Sage" in the truest sense. Sri Ramana's devotees found his teachings as "*Intuitive Knowledge of the Heart*." Sri Ramana Maharishi is known to say: "*People wonder how I speak of Bhagavad Gita, etc. It is due to hearsay. I have not read the Gita nor waded through commentaries for its meaning. When I hear a sloka, I think its meaning is clear and I say it. That is all and nothing more.*"

**Self-Inquiry:** Bhagavan Sri Ramana has a simple and straightforward way of explaining the core tenets of his Spiritual philosophy. The concept of Self and Self-inquiry leading to Self-realization is the essential core or fundamental essence of Bhagavan Sri Raman Maharishi's teachings. The inner force, current or the spiritual power that took control over Sri Ramana Maharishi during the early life enlightenment event and continued over his entire life, that force is described as the Self by the maharishi. He also calls it the real "I." In fact, several different words including *Sat-Chit-Anand*, Brahman, Siva, and the Heart are used by Bhagavan Sri Ramana to indicate the Self. David Goodman says that according to Bhagavan the "Self"—the real "I" is the *non-personal all-inclusive awareness*. It is also called consciousness and consciousness is the only reality as Advaita philosophy states that nothing exists except the one reality —the *all-inclusive awareness*. It is the mind that sees what it has created and differentiates the seen from the seer. There is nothing separate from the seer and thus there is no "seen." Mind, acting as ego, thinks he is separate existence and that "I" (the body) am the doer. Self-inquiry encompasses and starts with a simple question, "Who am I". The mind exists only with the illumination of Self. Bhagavan Sri Ramana teaches that the mind merges into the Self only by Self-inquiry. For all thoughts, like

"I did," "I will," "I thought," even for the thought of inquiry—"Who am I," the source is the "I," the mind. In the inquiry, the thought "*Who am I?*" cancels all other thoughts and finally, cancels and kills itself. The way of inquiry is to steadfastly keep going inward until the mind merges with the consciousness, the supreme "Self." As the enquiry progresses the ego is destroyed, and the Self is realized. Thus, Self-inquiry is also a way to surrender unto the Brahman. Sri Ramana said, "Space and time bind me, only if I am the body, I am nowhere, I am timeless, I exist everywhere and always."

**The Guru:** Arunachala was first regarded as a *guru* by a 16th century Sage, G. Namasivaya. Sri Ramana Maharishi's guru was also the Holy Arunachala. He attested the Holiness and Guruship of Arunachala in some of his hymns. He also made it clear in his conversations that "he regarded Arunachala as his guru".

... "*O Arunachala, you who stand and shine before me in the form of my guru, destroy utterly my faults, cure me, and convert me, and as your servant govern me.*"  
"*Look at me! Think of me! Touch me! Make me fit, ripen me! Then be my Master, govern me, O Arunachala.*" ...

**The Maharishi:** The profoundness, yet the simplicity of Sri Ramana's teachings has the power to spontaneously enlighten the mind of a devotee. At the Holy Arunachala, he lived a life of compassion, tranquility, renunciation, and perpetual Self-Awareness. The Sage also created an *experiential spiritual ambience* for his devotees. He captured the essence of his teachings, the entirety of Dharma in a phrase of three words, "Who am I", and in fact, in two words in his mother-tongue, Tamil: நான் யார்?

**Acknowledgements:** The author greatly benefited by study of Hindu and Sikh Scriptures, and books by many authors, S. Puri, A.R. Natarajan, T.M.P. Mahadevan, D. Godman, & A. Mudaliar.



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**Vinay Dewan**

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Best Wishes  
and  
Happy Diwali  
From:



**Smita and Alekha Dash**  
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Peace, health & happiness  
be with you and yours,  
today and always!!!



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&  
PROSPEROUS  
NEW YEAR!!!

Bhavana - Rakesh  
Janakbhai





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**Sumangala and Shantaram Joshi**  
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**Wishing You All**  
**A Very Happy**  
**Deepavali**

From:

**Jitender and Ravinder Deogun**



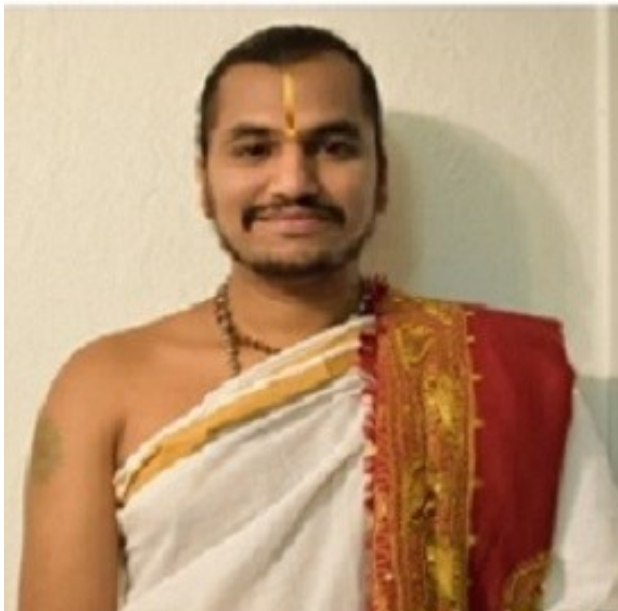
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# Editor's Corner

"It is my great pleasure to bring the 2022 Deepavali special issue of Deepam to you all. We have included the useful updates and details of the major events such as Deepavali Puja, messages from our leaders, Deepavali greetings from our community members, a brief reports on Bal Vihar activities and upcoming major events/pujas of 2022. We thank all the devotees for their continued support of Deepam.

In this special issue, we have included an updated donors list as of September 30, 2022, including donors who have donated over \$1,000 donation to the temple since its inception. We sincerely thank all the donors for their generous contribution. If there is any error in the amount we have listed, please contact Shri Venkatesh Bettadapura or Shrimati Malathi Balu. Please help temple to grow by giving your precious time, effort, constructive criticism and generous donation.

We also want to thank all the advertisers for their support of this publication. We invite you all to consider contributing articles for publication in the quarterly Deepam issues. Articles from young adults are also welcome and I request the parents to encourage their children to contribute their articles. I look forward to your suggestions to improve the Deepam.

I also take this opportunity to thank the members of Publication Advisory Committee for their help in bringing this special issue. We also want to thank the Printing Facility, Creighton University for this publication.

Wishing you all a **"Very Happy Deepavali and Prosperous New Year 2022"**

**Nagendra Chaturvedi, Editor**

*on behalf of Publication Committee*

*Hindu Temple*

## **HAPPY DEEPAVALI AND PROSPEROUS NEW YEAR WISHES**



From:  
**Archana and Nagendra Chaturvedi  
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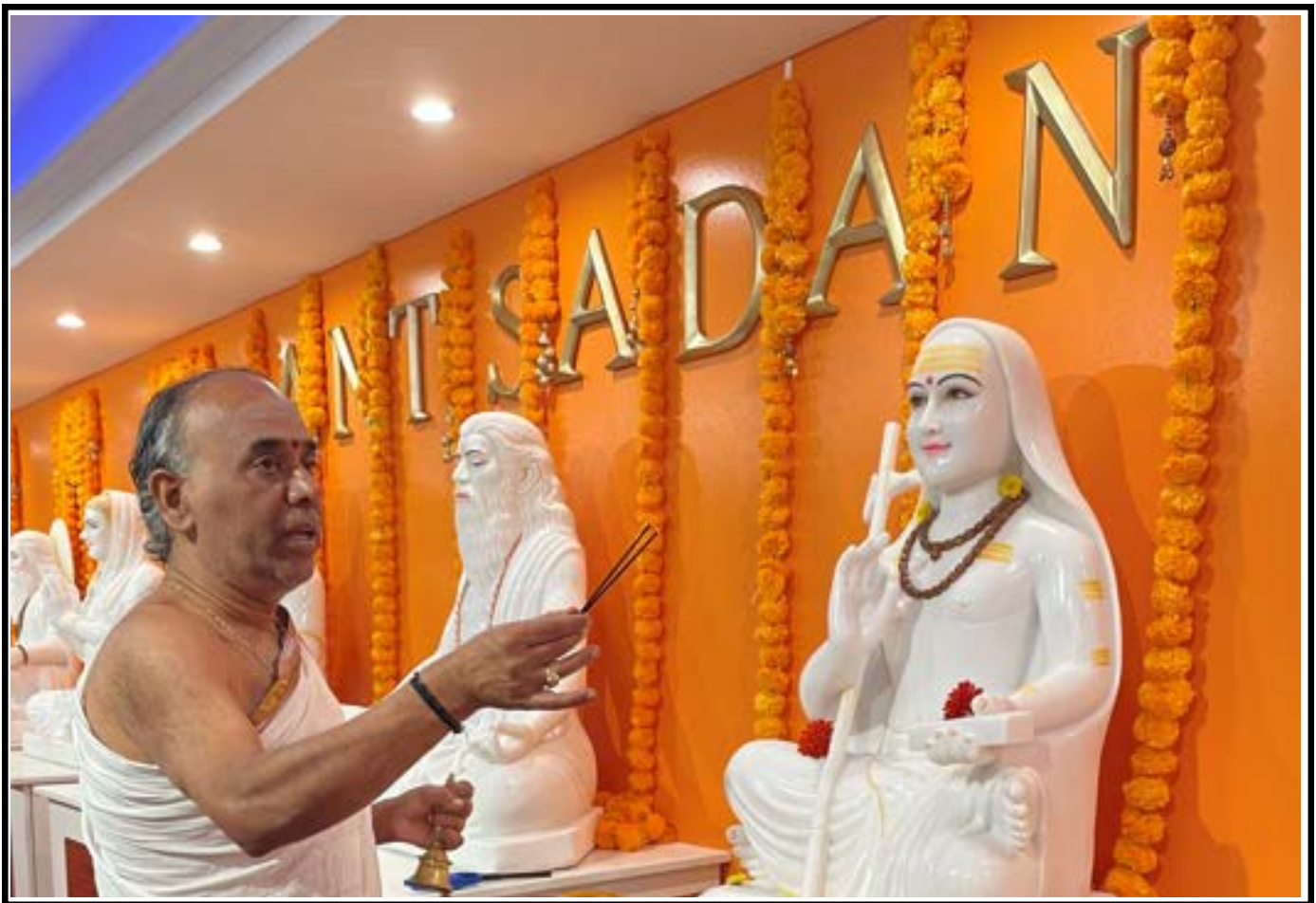
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