



participate in our puja and educational activities. Future pujas and events are being planned in Northstowe and Cherry Hinton. We seek your support in reaching out and engaging with Hindu communities in other locations too.

— CHF

## Satyanarayana Pooja

by Arun, Cambridge

A popular theme in today's political and organisational space is diversity and inclusion. In Hindu dharma, inclusivity is natural and unforced with community participation being celebrated to further promote these ideals. Our *stokas* emphasise not just inclusion but prosperity and peace of all animals and living beings. For example, a timeless shloka is:

“ ॐ सर्वे भवन्तु सुखिनः  
सर्वे सन्तु निरामयाः ।  
सर्वे भद्राणि पश्यन्तु  
मा कश्चिद्दुःखभाग्भवेत् ।  
ॐ शान्तिः शान्तिः शा-  
न्तिः॥ ”

This prayer requests happiness, good health and auspiciousness for everyone, and that no living being should suffer. It prays for peace for the entire world.

CHF recently conducted the Samuhik Satyanarayana swami vratham in Cambourne to symbolize this inclusive nature. Satyanarayana is

one of the names of Lord Vishnu. The Sanskrit word 'Satya' means 'truth' and 'Narayana' means the Supreme or the Highest form of being. It is believed that performing Satyanarayana Puja at home or Samuhika puja i.e mass puja in temples is very effective. The devotees performing this puja are believed to get blessed with a happiness and prosperity in life.



Shri Satyanarayana Swami Vratas have been conducted by CHF regularly and the most recent was led by Pandit Joshi-ji. The puja started with a prayer to Lord Ganesha, remover of all obstacles followed by a prayer to the Navagrahas – the nine important celestial beings to alleviate their negative influences.



The rest of the puja consists of worship to Satyanarayana. First “panchamritam” was used to clean the place where the deity is placed. Names of Satyanarayana are chanted along with offering of a variety of naivedyam (including a mixture of milk, honey, ghee/butter, yogurt, sugar) and other home made sweets. Five stories of Satyanarayana, from the *Skanda purana* were then read out completing the essential part of the Pooja. The prayer concluded with an Aarti. The participants then had the prasada and dispersed. Pictures from the puja event are presented below.

Source: Balaji Temple, Minnesota, Vedas Resources

## Lost Temples

by Anand S, Cambridge



Previous issues of this newsletter covered two 1300 year old temples - the Kailasa Temple in Maharashtra and the Martand temple in Kashmir. We now look at one of the famous *chota char dham* temples which is believed to have been constructed by the Pandavas and restructured to its present form by Sri Adi Shankaracharya in the 8th century. This temple has suffered relatively less damage from invasions due to its elevated location and also due to it being covered by snow for over 400 years during the Little Ice Age (1300 to 1850).

The Pandavas, in an attempt to atone for their sins during Kurukshetra war, went in search of Lord Shiva. Upon visiting the holy Kashi Vishwanath temple in present day Varanasi, they realised that Lord Shiva had taken the form of Nandi - the bull and hid in Garhwal Himalayas. The Pandavas persevered and went in search of the bull. Bhima, the second of the Pandavas found the bull grazing and as he approached it, Shiva, now in bull-form buried himself in the ground and reappeared in multiple places. Pleased with multiple locations to now worship Shiva, Pandavas built temples at all the five places. The first of these is the Kedarnath Temple.

The bull's hump remained in Kedarnath, the limbs and face appeared at Tungnath and Rudranath while the stomach and hair of the bull showed at Madhyamaheshwar and Kalpeshwar. After building the temples, the Pandavas performed

sacred rituals and meditated at Kedarnath until they attained salvation. King Janmejaya, a successor of the Pandavas, continued to perform puja and rituals at this temple and handed the right to perform worship to *Theerth Purohits* who continue the rituals to this day.



The temple has images of Parvati and the Pandavas at the entrance and in the inner hall there are decorated statues of Krishna, Draupadi, Pandavas, Vidarbha and other deities. A grand customary Nandi is located at the entrance. The Garbha Griha has a irregular shaped lingum with a 3.6m circular pedestal which is also 3.6m in height. Pilgrims typically start the journey at this temple and complete the Panch Kedar and finishing the pilgrimage at the Vishnu temple at Badrinath. The elevation, lack of urban pollutants allows pilgrims a natural healing touch and a fulfilling spiritual experience.

After their penance at Kedarnath, the Pandavas continued their journey towards *Swarga* and the mountain top that this path leads to is called Swargarohini. Only the eldest of the Pandavas and the most virtuous of the five brothers, Yudhistira, was able to complete the difficult journey to Swargarohini and in the process dropped a finger. The place where is finger touched the earth is still revered with a temple built around a miniature lingam.

The powerful protective nature of the temple was also recently witnessed during the 2013 flash floods when heavy rains destroyed everything in the area but the temple. Devotees and army personnel used the temple for shelter until they were airlifted

to safety. The temple stood directly in the path of the flood water which carried large rocks and debris including a giant boulder. The boulder stopped just short of the temple and prevented the temple from any major damage. Some consider this a modern day dharmic miracle.



## The Essence of Dharma

by Tarun Sharma, Cambridge

In the last article we've discussed the shloka from Manu Smriti that explains the qualities of Dharma. Here in this article we will delve into the first quality *dhṛtiḥ* (धृतिः) which, in Sanskrit, can mean

- Firmness, or resolve
- Contentment or Satisfaction
- Happiness and Pleasure
- Patience

If we see various examples from our scriptures, life of various Avatars or the way life style of our society evolved we can see all these aspects there. Bhagwan Shri Rama was firm and resolute in his words. Not only him, his whole Kula was famous for it. There's famous quadruped (चौपाई) in Ram Charita Manas.

“ रघुकुल रीति सदा चली  
आई प्राण जाय पर बचन न  
जाई। ”

So, the people of Raghu kula can even sacrifice their life in order to fulfil their words or keep their promise. Shri Rama kept his words to free Dandakaranya from all asuras who made life of Rishis and common man difficult. He also kept the words he gave to dying Bali, to make his son Angad, the prince of Kishkindha.

Being content with what one has is another important quality of a happy and healthy life. It does not mean that one should not progress in life. Hindu Dharma encourages everyone to achieve their best in every area of life. That doesn't mean one should be worrying or sad about what one doesn't have. We can achieve things in our life even after being content.



A similar proverb I've heard is that "happiness is not a place to go but a place to come from". It means that we do not get happiness by getting something, that sort of happiness is temporary but the real happiness comes from inside.

In Mahabharata, Pandavas sent the peace offer to Duryodhana that they will be happy and content by having just five villages. But, Duryodhana was so dissatisfied even after having so much that he was not even ready to give land equal to a tip of a needle.

Another meaning is Patience. It means acting with restraint in adverse situations and waiting for the right

moment and opportunity. Chatrapati Shivaji Maharaj is a great example in this regard. When, as per his plan, Afjal Khan harassed Hindus, broke and looted temples to incite Shivaji to come out, so that he could kill him. He even desecrated the temple of his family Goddess Bhavani. But, Chatrapati Shivaji Maharaj waited patiently for the right moment and then he planned and punish him to finish Adharma done by him. (The Sanskrit word Vadh (वध) is the appropriate word for 'punish').

We should practice dhṛti (धृतिः) in our life. In the next article we will look at the next quality of Dharma (धर्म).

## Spirituality meets Science

by Mithu Chopra, Cambridge

Fasting is an integral part of Hinduism or Sanatan Dharma. It is known to be the best form of physical, mental and spiritual detox. Let's explore the scientific benefits and reasoning behind these fasts.

Ayurveda describes fasting as a correction process. All the toxic waste accumulated in our body is cleaned up and corrected; our digestive organs as well are put to rest when the body goes into a fasted state.

On certain festivals, have you noticed your elders asking you to fast until midday prayers have been offered? Some people do not eat anything between sunset and sunrise. There is a modern term for this – Intermittent fasting

Medical science has proven that even people with Type 2 Diabetes can benefit from intermittent fasting; by increasing the body's sensitivity to insulin and improving metabolism.

See your elders fasting during full moon days – Purnima or Ekadashi? Fasting once a month has proven to

reduce the risk of heart diseases. In general, regular monthly or weekly fasting helps improve metabolism, aids in weight loss, improves muscle strength and balances growth hormones.

### Dates for your calendar

13 Aug	:	Fawcett School
10 Sep	:	Fawcett School
8 Oct	:	Mayfield School
24 Oct	:	Online
12 Nov	:	Mayfield School
10 Dec	:	Mayfield School

So, is absolutely no eating involved during fasting? Not quite so. Dead/damaged cells in our body are eaten up during fasting. Yes, according to research, 12-36 hours of complete fasting can initiate a process called Autophagy (literally translated to 'self-devouring') in which healthier cells of our body eat-out unnecessary or dysfunctional components in order to regenerate new cells. Cancer patients can therefore benefit from this process to eliminate and control cancer cells in the body.

Any form of abstinence is a form of meditation; and the benefits of meditation are well-known. Fasting gives the mind the ability to focus in a deprived state, tapping on the endless abilities of the human brain. Fasting helps improve concentration, strengthens one's perseverance and emotional balance. Those who practise fasting regularly have better control on their emotions, their needs and wants.

In Mahabharata, Yudhishtir asks Bheeshma "What is that end to which one devoted to the observance of fasts attains?" To this Bheeshma responds "It has been said that fasts are highly meritorious and that fasts are a great refuge." Fasting is considered the highest form of abstinence in our ancient scriptures, a form of meditation and prayer.

Hindu festivals and observance of

fasting also involve a practice of feeding Brahmans, the neighbours, feeding and nourishing younger children and the needy. i.e., a practice of distribution of food without any qualifications in economics! Modern research states that citizens fasting for just one day a month can save a country tons of food, which when efficiently distributed can be helpful for the needy and alleviate their distress.

As is the case with many other ancient practices, science is catching up with the full benefit-analysis, while our ancestors have imbibed these practices in us through simple religious and cultural means. It is time to make fasting a part of our health and fitness routine, or simply just follow your family traditions with respect to religious and festival fasting – back to our roots!

## Vedic Mathematics

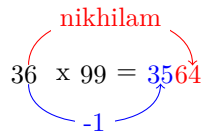
*by Dr Chandrappa, Cambridge*

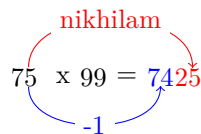
This is the third newsletter issue with Vedic mathematics content and the author hopes that readers now understand the usage of Vedic mathematics sutras. Last time the sutra that was introduced was *nikhilam navatah charamam dasatah* - meaning, to complete all from 9 and the last from 10, i.e. *nikhilam* - that which makes it complete or complement, *Navatah* - 9, *Charamam* - last/end, *Dasatah* - 10. Therefore *nikhilam* of a number when added to the number rounds it to the next power of ten having the same number of zeros as the digits in the number. If the *nikhilam* has fewer digits than the number for which the *nikhilam* has been derived, zeros are prepended.

This time we will learn about multiplication with numbers where one of the multiplicand or multiplier has all digits as 9 ( for e.g. 9, 99, 999 etc.). To be able to do this we need the

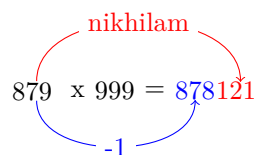
above sutra for *nikhilam* and one more sutra, which is *ekanyunena purvena*. The latter sutra can be expanded as *Eka* meaning ‘one’, *Nyunena* - ‘less than or subtract’ and *Purvena* as we know ‘from previous one’. To apply this sutra, the multiplier and multiplicand must contain the same number of digits.

We can now explore the application of these two sutras to multiply numbers where one of the multiplicand or multiplier has all digits as 9. The lower order digits in the product will have the *nikhilam* of the lower of the multiplier or multiplicand. The higher order digits will be one less than this *nikhilam*. Consider the following examples:

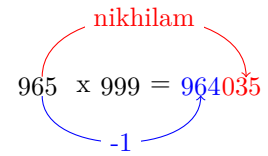
$$36 \times 99 = 3564$$


$$75 \times 99 = 7425$$


The common multiplicand in all the three cases above is 99. The *nikhilam* of the smaller of the multiplier and multiplicand is found in the digits in red in the product. Then apply the 1st sutra - *Ekanyunena purvena* one less than multiplier. This process is shown in blue arrow. For the first example, *nikhilam* of 36 is 64, which forms the units and tens digit of the product and the one less than the multiplier. i.e 36-1=35 which forms the next two digits in the product. The answer therefore is 3564. Similarly you can get the answers for the other 2 problems. You can apply the same sutras to calculate 3 digit numbers.

$$879 \times 999 = 878121$$


*Nikhilam* of 879 is 121, one less than 879 is 878 and hence the answer will be 878121.

$$965 \times 999 = 964035$$


*Nikhilam* of 865 is 135, one less than 865 is 864 and hence the answer will be 864135.

The reader is encouraged to try the following ten problems. Remember to prepend zero if the *nikhilam* has fewer digits than the number for which the *nikhilam* has been derived. Please email your answers or any clarifications to [chf.dharma@gmail.com](mailto:chf.dharma@gmail.com).

- |           |             |
|-----------|-------------|
| 999 x 964 | 78 x 99     |
| 96 x 99   | 428 x 999   |
| 19 x 99   | 1190 x 9999 |
| 11 x 99   | 37 x 99     |
| 82 x 99   | 1729 x 9999 |

## Editor's Corner

*by CHF, Cambridge*

Namaste to all readers from Team Dharma! We are humbled by the encouragement and feedback we have received so far on this newsletter. We welcome fresh ideas, new articles and contributions from the wider community. Suggested topics for newsletter articles include without limiting other related topics, spirituality and science, Ayurveda, Yoga, Dharmic stories etc. including related photos. The source for the information is usually embedded as hyperlinks for purposes of citation. We are also looking for volunteers to help with this newsletter and to grow our social media presence. For any other queries, feedback or to submit your articles and photos, please do get in touch with us at [chf.dharma@gmail.com](mailto:chf.dharma@gmail.com).