



# PATRIKA

Newsletter of the Hindu Society of Minnesota

[www.hindumandirmn.org](http://www.hindumandirmn.org)



## Message from the President

Namaste to all!

I am truly honored to serve in the Executive Committee as the President of the Hindu Mandir for 2009. We are especially fortunate to have a team of dedicated volunteers both long-standing and recent to conceive, create and contribute their talents and resources to this magnificent place. Unlike temples in India, we cannot take temples and social institutions in the United States for granted. Our continued involvement is key to the very existence of our temple and for the Hindu Society of Minnesota. Unless we continue to show our support by paying mentally, financially and physically for the benefits we receive, these organizations will not survive. So we ask you for a lot! We ask for your time, your money, and your commitment.

The world is changing, and now is the time for us to ask tough questions about who we are and what is important to us. Now is the era of positive spiritual change - a shift from greed, fear, and self-centeredness to an era of abundance in compassion, trust, intuition and creativity. Now is the time to consider how what we do with our lives every day has an impact on ourselves, our children, our neighbors, our community and our world. As volunteers, we must realize that even if our intentions are good, we still have to work hard to understand each other. We understand the connectedness of ourselves and that we need to constantly find ways to improve the potentialities of all humans. Like anything else, volunteering is practicing patience, to see the good and the good within each of us.

Our Raja Gopura Mahotsav, the celebration festivities of the completion of the temple construction, is on June 26, 27 and 28 this year. I want to thank all of the volunteers who are willing to step up to the occasion. For me, volunteering has been nothing but a rewarding and excellent experience! I have already benefitted from your minds, your attitudes, and your energies. When we expand our circle of caring past our friends and family to the greater community, we benefit a thousand times over. Thank you all for giving the Executive Committee the opportunity to serve you and discover the joys of volunteering! Special thanks to Nayana Ramakrishnan and the outgoing Executive Committee for the truly outstanding job they have done for the last two years.

On behalf of the Executive Committee,  
Sincerely,  
Mythili Chari  
President, EC  
February 2009



Mythili Chari





# Holi Festival

Holi is the 'Festival of Colors' which marks the coming of Spring. It is celebrated over several days in the Hindu month of Phalunga, which falls in February/March of the Gregorian calendar. It is also a celebration of new life and the seasons. Some families hold religious ceremonies, but for many Holi is more a time for fun than religious observance.

Holi is the most vibrant Indian festival, when distinctions of caste, class, age or gender are set to one side. Hindus have fun by smearing each other with paint and throwing colored water at each other, all done in a spirit of celebration. White clothes are worn, which makes the paint more obvious. Bonfires are lit and parents make sure they carry their babies to protect them from any demons.

Some believe the origin of the festival lies with Krishna who was very mischievous as a young boy and threw colored water over the gopis (milkmaids) with whom he is believed to have grown up. This developed into the practical jokes and games of Holi. The legend of Prahlad and Holika is also connected with Holi. Prahlad was the son of King Hiranyakashyapu. The king wanted everyone in his kingdom to worship him. However his son, Prahlad refused to and worshipped Lord Vishnu instead. The king's sister Holika, who was supposed to be immune to fire, tricked her nephew Prahlad into sitting on her lap in a bonfire in order to destroy him.



However, because she was using her powers for evil, the plan failed and Prahlad emerged from the fire unharmed, while his aunt was devoured by the flames. This event is seen to symbolize good overcoming evil and is why traditionally bonfires are lit at Holi. In some parts of India effigies of Holika are burnt on the fire. Ashes from Holi bonfires are thought to bring good luck.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/religion/hinduism/holi.shtml>

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## Bal-Samachar

Meghna Kaul took part in the MID WESTERN SYNCHRONIZED FIGURE SKATING CHAMPIONSHIPS at Broomfield, CO and has qualified for US National synchronized figure skating championship to be held at Portland, ME from March 3<sup>rd</sup>-6<sup>th</sup>. Meghna skates with the Lake Minnetonka figure skating club as an individual and team skater. Meghna is the daughter of Deepti and Rajeev Kaul of Plymouth, MN and a 7<sup>th</sup> grader at Wayzata East Middle School. She has a younger brother Akash Kaul.



Meghna Kaul





## Recent Temple Events

The year began at the Mandir with a well attended set of poojas. We continued our tradition of performing a 'Sudarshana Homam' on New Year's Day along with a special alankaram for Lord Varadaraja. For festivities on the auspicious day of Vaikuntha Ekadashi on Jan 7<sup>th</sup>, we constructed a special 'swarga dwaram' for devotees when devotees could pass through this and pray to the lord for salvation. 'Arudra Darshanam', a celebration of the cosmic dance of Shiva, was marked on Jan 10 with a program of prayer to Lord Nataraja -followed by dances performed by dancers from the Twin Cities.

The special day of 'Thai Pushyam', Feb 8<sup>th</sup>, was joyously celebrated by re-enacting marriage of Lord Subramanya to Valli. On this day, we also consecrated the new kavachams for Lord Subramanya, Valli and Devasena and had a special vibhuti alankaram for Lord Subramanya.

'Maha Shivaratri', Feb 22<sup>nd</sup>, was marked by day long pujas which began with Rudra Homam and Rudra Japam. A group of 11 devotees chanted the Rudram 11 times during the day which culminated in a special abhishekam and puja in the evening. We also continued our practice of providing devotees the opportunity to personally perform an abhishek to the Jade Shiva Ling at all through the day.

We celebrated the 'Holi Festival' at our temple on Saturday, Mar 14<sup>th</sup>, at the Nath Auditorium. Over 550 people attended and it was a grand success! A special thank you to Bombay Bistro for donating dinner, to Sanjay Syal and friends for state of the art audio and video and the coordinators Madhu Jain, Chetna Atreya and Sangeeta Chopra with family and friends for doing an outstanding job of pulling this spectacular event together.



## Message from the TEC

Dear Devotees,

Namaste. It is my honor & a distinct privilege to wish you all a very happy, peaceful & prosperous year on behalf of the Trustee Executive Council of the Hindu Society of Minnesota.

Your temple had a very successful and busy 2008. We succeeded in refinancing the temple loan with a very favorable lower interest rate just in time. Thanks to the refinancing and yeoman service by Mr. Palaniswami we were able to reduce the temple debt by \$ 123,945.85. We still have a loan of over 6 million dollars to be paid in the next five years. We are in the process of selling the adjacent land parcel to reduce the debt load.

New Year tradition of Sudarshan Homa was maintained and many of you participated in those special prayers. Makar-Sankranthi celebrations were a grand success as well. 75 such religious celebrations have been planned for the year of 2009. The biggest of those would be the Grand Celebration 'Raja Gopura Mahotsav' planned for June 26, 27 and 28<sup>th</sup>. Please be sure to get actively involved in planning as well as celebrating.

Before this Grand celebration the landscaping will be completed and the pond in the front will be cleaned and a fountain added. All the work inside and outside will be completed. The steps will be carpeted and all the shrines of worship will be freshly painted.

This year will be highlighted with several educational activities including Yoga, Meditation, and Children's Classes & Gita Group Studies. In these challenging times make sure to avail of those opportunities.

I want to express my gratitude to Mrs. Nayana Ramkrishnan and her executive committee for an outstanding job. I also want to welcome the new Executive Committee led by Mrs. Mythili Chari and wish them a grand success.



Kumud Sane



Kumud Sane , M.D.  
Chair, TEC.







## Temple Announcements

### Raffle Update

I want to take this opportunity to thank all of those individuals and families who have contributed to the fund-raising efforts of the Hindu Temple of Minnesota. Our community is very blessed and fortunate to have such a beautiful sacred place to worship and to have a community auditorium and center to celebrate our heritage as we gather for various cultural, social, and educational events at the temple.

As you may know, our current fund-raising goal by selling raffle tickets is to raise \$1,000,000 to at least partially pay for the Temple loan for construction. With that in mind, we started a raffle ticket fund-raiser in 2008 with the hope to raise the funds by the time Raja Gopura Mahotsav to be held in June 2009. However, at this time, we have only sold 5% of the tickets and raised only \$50,000.

Our goal now is to raise at least \$100,000 by the June 2009 celebration, when the Grand Prize drawing will be held, by selling the raffle tickets at \$25 each. Check out the Mandir website ([www.hindumandirmn.org](http://www.hindumandirmn.org)) for the details of the beautiful Lexus car, which is the Grand Prize.

During these tough economic times, the entire Hindu Temple committee understands the difficulties that all members are going through in their daily lives, but also know that this temple serves to not only promote, preserve and celebrate our Hindu heritage but to provide the comfort and support of a sacred place of worship, prayer and meditation especially during those difficult times, not only for ourselves, but for our children and our grandchildren. With that focus in mind, please help us fulfill this fundraising goal and purchase raffle tickets and volunteer to sell raffle tickets in your community. To those volunteers who have helped sell the tickets and in all of our fundraising efforts, I again would like to thank you for your time and commitment to this goal.

Dr. K.V.K. Murthy



Dr. K.V.K. Murthy



## Volunteer Opportunity

**Raja Gopura Mahotsav** (June 26<sup>th</sup>, 27<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup>, 2009)

Come be a part of the biggest Mandir Celebration of the year! Be a part of history!

The following committees are looking for help:

Religious, Food, Cultural, Bhajans & Dances, Logistics, Facilities Management, Fundraising & Sponsorships, Decorating and Garlands, Landscaping, Reception- Ticket Sales, Greeters, Anand Bazaar, Commemorative Book, Youth Programs, Publicity, Raffle Drawing Multi-Media, Crane, Helicopter rides, Budget & Finances

Please contact the Volunteer Coordinator, Shanti Sury at [shantisury@hotmail.com](mailto:shantisury@hotmail.com) or call 651-644-8604 for questions or to join a Committee. Include your name, contact information and the committee you are interested in with your message. If you don't have a preference and would like to be included in a general pool of volunteers, we welcome that too.

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## Hindu Ethics

### Purusharthas

Hindu view of life is neatly expressed through four “Purusharthas” or the ultimate goals of human existence. They are 1) *Dharma*. 2) *Artha*. 3) *Kama*. 4) *Moksha*.

*DHARMA* means righteousness, duty, morality, virtue and ethics. Shri. Krishna describes the moral and ethical values that we must uphold in the 13<sup>th</sup> chapter of Gita. Some key values were discussed in my earlier article on “Hindu Ethics” in the past issue of the Patrika. Every individual has the duty to fulfill one’s potentials; carry out Vedshastra prescribed duties towards one’s spouse, parents, children and other family members. Duties also include serving in the best interest of the community, country and the world at large.

*ARTHA* means attaining several forms of security. The wealth, material possessions, power, prosperity etc. are considered to represent “ARTHA”. In life, however, the real security comes through the love and support from friends, family and faith.

*KAMA* means pleasure, sensual gratification, sexual fulfillment, Eros, the aesthetic enjoyment in life and the pursuit of happiness.

*MOKSHA* means liberation of our inherent spirit (Atman) from the cycles of birth-growth-decay-disease and death. This comes about after gaining the knowledge regarding our true nature, which is SAT-CHIT-ANANDA. It signifies Ultimate Truth or Immortality, Infinite Wisdom & Absolute Awareness, Total Fullness which is Eternal Bliss, Everlasting Love & Happiness.

Swami Dayananda Saraswati explains these Purusharthas succinctly and beautifully. He expounds, “Dharma occupies the first place in the four categories of human goals, because the pursuit of the security, artha and the pleasures, Kama, need to be governed by ethical standards. Artha, striving for security, comes second, because it is the foremost desire of everyone. Everyone is obedient under the doctor’s scalpel precisely because everyone wants to live. Granted life, one then wants to be happy, to pursue pleasures, Kama. I want to live and live happily; and both pursuits, the struggle for security and the search for pleasure, must be governed by ethics. The last category is the goal of liberation, Moksha, placed last because it becomes a direct pursuit only when one has realized the limitations inherent in the first three pursuits”

These four Purusharthas embrace both earth and heaven; both Time and Eternity. Moksha or the Liberation of Freedom of the Spirit is the Kingdom of God which is Eternal. Its counterpart in Time is Dharma, which is the Kingdom of God on earth under human conditions. It is part divine and part human. It is divine because it is a highway to Moksha or a transcript of Moksha. Moksha as described above is other word for divine consciousness or awareness of our true nature. It is human because it is subject to progress and change and must fulfill itself in spiritual freedom beyond time.

Purusharthas include Artha and Kama namely our possessions and passions. Thus we must understand that our (Dharma) righteousness consists in our directing our (Artha) possessions and (Kama) passions to a spiritual end (Moksha). The more we do this, whether as individuals, communities or as nations, the greater is our progress in Dharma and such endeavors ultimately lead to the establishment of a cultured, highly evolved and spiritually enlightened civilization.

God, by any name or form, is eternal perfection. In order to be one with Him and Her we have not only to discharge faithfully the duties that belong to our station in life and to the stage of our spiritual development, but also to cultivate the essential qualities and become thoroughly pure and virtuous in character. Thus by glorifying the householder and sanctioning the pursuit of wealth (Artha) and pleasure (Kama) within limits of moral law (Dharma), Hinduism does justice to the flesh (Human Body) as well as to the true nature of the man (Soul-Atman-Brahman).



Dr. Shashikant M. Sane



Dr. Shashikant M. Sane, M.D.



## Ratha Yatra Festival

Ratha Yatra is the world famous 'Chariot Festival' of Lord Jagannath, Lord Balabhadra, Devi Subhadra and Lord Sudarshana. Hindu society of Minnesota is celebrating this auspicious festival on July 05, 2009, Sunday within the Hindu temple premises. All the deities will be taken out from the temple precincts in an elaborate ritual procession to the richly decorated chariot. The journey of the deities to the outside world, starts with an elaborate royal ritual called **Pahandi** - literally, going forward in a step by step movement, by the devotees. The second phase of the festival is known as '**Chhera Pahanra**', cleaning the platform with a golden broom, sprinkling flowers and fragrant water on the surface of the chariot. The last ritual in the celebration is the pulling of the chariots by the devotees around the Hindu Temple, Maple Grove. Devotees will get a chance to perform archana of the deities on the Chariot.

The grand return journey, **Bahuda**, will take place on the eighth day, Sunday, July 12, 2009. Deities will be taken down from the chariots in a ritual descent to enter the temple.

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### Prayer Coupons

New at the Mandir! Request a Prayer for any reason- to celebrate an occasion, thinking of a special one or anything else or no reason at all! Fill the coupon on the right & send it along with a check made out to 'Hindu Society of Minnesota' at the mailing address. Feel free to attach an additional note.







**Dr Govind Vatassery** (February 28, 1939 - February 24, 2009) was born in Tripprayar, Kerala, the oldest child of a headmaster and his wife, a teacher. He entered school at the 5th grade and graduated high school at the age of 13. Due to his young age, he was forced to stay home for a year before starting his intermediate classes and subsequently Bachelor of Science (honors) coursework at Maharaja's College of Kerala University in Kochi. Following his BSc Honors he was a trainee in the Atomic Energy Commission for a year and then worked there for three more years as a Scientific Officer. On August 15th, 1963 he embarked for the United States. He took a ship to Italy, then a train through Europe, ending in London, where he boarded a plane to New York. He arrived in Minnesota, which had not seen many Indians at that time.

He studied Biochemistry under the guidance of Professor Wallace Armstrong. His exceptional performance in graduate school earned him a spot on the faculty at the University of Minnesota after completing his Doctorate degree. His professional research focused on neurochemistry and oxidative stress and he worked closely with his clinical collaborators at the Veteran's Administration Medical Center.

Govind and his colleagues developed some of the HPLC methods for detection of small molecules in the brain that are widely used today. He received international recognition and awards for his work with Vitamin E. His role as a professor and adviser helped many graduate students, medical students, and researchers start their careers and flourish in their fields. He published 120 articles and was cited over 1300 times during his tenure as a professor. He was active in research until his untimely passing on February 24, 2009.

Govind was an enthusiastic volunteer at SILC, Boy Scouts of America, India Association of Minnesota (IAM) and Hindu Society of Minnesota. He was particularly active with IAM as a committee member, treasurer and served many other roles. For the Hindu Society of Minnesota, he was editor of the Patrika for 2 years and edited the commemorative edition of the book, which was published at the opening of the new temple.

He is preceded in death by his parents, two sisters, other relatives and friends. Deeply mourned by his wife Sandra (nee Stoeckel); sons Jayan (fiancée Anu) and Rajan (Sunayana); brothers, Chandran (Shoba) and Vijayan (Rathi); sister Ambujam (Balakrishnan); Brothers-in-law CPN Nair and Eugene (Kathy) Stoeckel; sister-in-law Oriet (Joseph) Diamond; many nieces, nephews, relatives and friends. His positive outlook uplifted all those around him, from his family to his coworkers and friends.

Govind will be missed, but certainly not forgotten.



**Dr Govind Vatassery (1939-2009)**

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#### Editorial Committee

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Dolly Majumdar  
Noopur Narayan  
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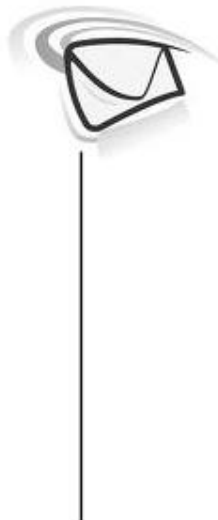
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Saturday & Sunday | 9:00 am - 8:30 pm |



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The Divine Gateway Celebration  
Friday, Saturday & Sunday June 26<sup>th</sup>, 27<sup>th</sup>, 28<sup>th</sup> - 2009

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\$501	<b>Heeraka Gopura Sponsor (Diamond)</b> Indian Souvenir, Sankalpas for all 3 days, Commemorative Book, Bag
\$125	<b>Navaratna Sponsor</b> Navaratnas, Indian Souvenir, Sankalpa for Sunday 28th June 2009
\$101	<b>Suvarna Gopura Sponsor (Gold)</b> Indian Souvenir, Sankalpa for Friday 26th June or Saturday 27th June 2009, Commemorative Book, Bag
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