

Newsletter ~ Vallabh Vidya Mandir ~

Publisher – VVM

Volume Number 2

Issue Number 6

Date: March 2006

An Expression...

Spring is in the air and what better way to begin the season than to write about our own festival that cleanses our heart, cultivates friendships and thanks the Gods for the spirit, the color and the music in our life. Yes that is Holi. Holi is an annual Hindu spring festival. It takes place over two days between March and early April on a Purnima (Full Moon) per the Hindu calendar. It is also called the festival of color. On the first day, a bonfire is lit at night to signify the burning of Holika. On the second day, known as Dhuleti, people go around until afternoon throwing colors at each other and meet and have fun. In the evening, people invite each other to their houses for feasts and celebrations. Rangapanchami occurs a few days later on a Panchami (fifth day of the full moon), marking the end of festivities involving colors.

In Hindu mythology, Hiranyakashipu was the king of demons, and he had been granted a boon for his long penance. For that he could not be killed 'during day or night; inside the home or

outside; not on earth or in the sky, neither by a man nor an animal'.

Consequently, he grew arrogant, and attacked the Heavens and Earth. He demanded that people stop worshipping Gods and start praying to him. But his own son, Prahlad, was a devotee of Lord Vishnu. In spite of several threats from Hiranyakashipu, Prahlad continued offering prayers to Lord Vishnu. Getting angry with his son, Hiranyakashipu tried various ways of killing him, but failed. Ultimately he ordered young Prahlad to sit on a pyre on the lap of his sister Holika, who could not die by virtue of a shawl which if worn, would not let the person wearing be affected by fire. Prahlad prayed to Vishnu to keep him safe. When the fire started, everyone watched in amazement as the shawl flew from Holika, who, then was burnt to death, while Prahlad survived without a scar. The burning of Holika is celebrated as Holi.

In Vrindavan and Mathura the festival is still celebrated for 16 days (in commemoration of the divine love of Radha for Krishna). Lord Krishna is believed to have popularized the festival by playing

pranks on the gopis here. Krishna is believed to have complained about his dark color and Radha's fair color to his mother and so decided to apply color to her face. The celebration officially ushers spring - the season of love. Traditional significance of social harmony between various classes of society is also attached to Holi. It is the day when all classes of people draw all parts of society into the celebration.

With spring in our step and Holi on our mind we can continue to focus on the happiness of being with our inner self. The strong spirit and youthfulness sustains us on the path of enlightenment. In modern society people are obsessed with youth. We battle against losing our looks and capabilities. But in eastern philosophical systems like Buddhism, Taoism, and the Vedic traditions of India, longevity is viewed as a meaningful goal in a spiritual life. Taoists believe one cannot have strong spirit without a strong body.

When the physical being suffers; the spiritual being suffers as well. Staying in the best possible shape gives us more time and energy to

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reach spiritual enlightenment, and fulfill life's mission-"to do the work we are here to do". The twin goals of spirit and service depend on a physical body that retains its youthful ability.

There are six common attributes for youthfulness at any age: Energy, Peace of mind, Harmony, Awareness, Stability, and Suppleness. Age is the luck of the living, they say. May you feel lucky throughout your long, rich, naturally healthy lifetime.

Phalguni Kikani

Our Gratitude for these Generous Donations

Nehal Patel (Glaxo-Smith-Klein) \$6,000

Beena Patel (BHP Billiton)
\$5,000

Anand Sanwal (American Express)
\$7,000

The above donations will be processed for **Matching Grants** from their respective employers!

Up Coming Events
Issue of Discipline

VVM Annual Program –

April 22, 2006

In most Indian languages Vallab Vidya Mandir invokes the feeling of a Temple of Knowledge named after Jagadguru Vallabhacharya jee. At VVM our emphasis is on "*Vidya Vinayen Shobhate*". The goal is not only to impart knowledge in dancing, languages, religion, cooking, music etc. but also to build a better value system and better mannerisms.

Ravan was a learned king. Duryodhan was a prince who had acquired many a martial skills. And yet they and many like them were doomed to failure and were eventually destroyed due to their own faulty values and behavior.

When a student misbehaves, becomes insubordinate, shows rudeness towards teachers, disrupts class room activity, damages property or distracts others from learning it should not be accepted. When our teachers and most students show so much commitment and dedication, misbehavior of one or a few cannot be condoned. Emphasis on discipline is a must. Care and

love for young individuals, and commitment to better their lives inspired the formation of VVM in the first place. We will not deviate from that worthy goal.

Sureshbhai Patel

Announcements

- March 4th - CPR Workshop
- April 9th - Women's Health Workshop
- Kaun Banega Ramayan Expert - **Contest**
(Information /Sign-Up at Front Desk)

Special Thanks...

- Jayshree Patel for help in the Cooking Class. Her Chinese cooking lessons were great for the hungry pallet.
- While Jayshree taught the healthy cooking, Harsha Mithani's beauty workshop helped the ladies keep their youth. The workshop was a great success

Attention:

- If you are not receiving e-mails, please write to kikanis@earthlink.net
- Parents NOT allowed in classroom during session
- Regular attendance required