

RIACC (Regional Indian American Community Center)

Hall of Worship & Amy Community Center. Non Profit Tax Exempt 501 c(3) {Tax ID: 62-1497843}
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NEWSLETTER QUARTER IV 2009

Date	Program	Time
1-Jan	Bhagvad Gita Discussion	11:00 AM
10-Jan	Havan	11:00 PM
17-Jan	Pongal/Utteryan	11:00 AM
24-Jan	Vasant Panchami	11:00 AM
31-Jan	Satya Narayan Katha	11:00 AM
7-Feb	Bhagwad Gita Discussion	11:00 AM
14-Feb	Havan	11:00 AM
21-Feb	General Body Meeting	11:00 AM
28-Feb	Satya Narayan Katha/Holi	11:00 AM
TBD	Ugaddi	11:00 AM
7-Mar	Bhagvad Gita Discussion	11:00 AM
14-Mar	Havan	11:00 AM
21-Mar	Ram Navmi/Bhajans	11:00 AM
28-Mar	Satya Narayan Katha/Mahavir	11:00 AM

Friendly Reminder

A big thank you to the members of the community who have paid their Yearly Membership fee of \$100 and a reminder to those who have not yet made the payment. Please do so at the earliest. Payment can be made via a check.

☀HOW Hours☀

Sun-Fri: 10:30am-1:00pm; 6:00-8:00pm; ~On Saturdays Call Before
Visiting~ Aarti at 12:30pm and 7:30pm.

Ishtadevta

by Dr. Jayant Mehta. Edited by Dr. G.S Kumar



Ishtadevta, literally means "household or chosen deity" in Sanskrit finds a prominent place in a polytheistic religion such as Hinduism. In meditation a person attempts to focus on one idea or image. If one tries to worship Lord Shiva, Vishnu, Durga or Rama, all at the same time that would become difficult. Ishtadevta aids in this respect.

Swami Vivekananda in a lecture in 1892 at the International Congress of World Religions, held in Chicago, discussed both dualism and non-dualism of Hindu philosophy. At the end of his talk someone asked him, "Swamiji, you are talking of one God, but Hindus worship millions of gods. How do you explain that?" Swami Vivekananda said, "Yes we have 33 million gods. I wish we had a few million more. I would like to give you a god too, so you can own Him as your own." Rig Veda says, "There is one God; scholars know it by different names."

Multiple gods are different manifestations of one God. Mr. Smith may be the CEO of his company, but he is at the same time a father to his son and a husband to his wife. There are certain basic rules to selecting the Ishtadevta that are listed below:

- The God should be a valid god in that he or she should possess certain virtues. You select your particular god based on what virtues appeal to you. If you would like a playful and charming god you might select Krishna. If you like Gyan with detachment, you would select Shiva. Lord Krishna asked Arjuna to worship goddess Durga before he entered the battlefield.
- Once you have selected your Ishtadevta, stick to him or her. Do not keep on changing. Once you have dug a hole, go deep enough till you find water. Do not start another hole before you have done that.
- Do not be overwhelmed by the task. The ocean is vast. To appreciate that, you need to start at some point in the seashore, take your boat and start sailing to appreciate the infinite nature of the sea.
- Do not insult or find fault with other gods or Ishtadevtas of other faiths. You are seeking love and kindness and such thoughts do not find a place there.
- Ultimately, this Ishtadevta will become the supreme Brahman. At that time do not hesitate to release this personal god. To see the infinite, one has to let go the limitations of the finite. When you are in a house you need a window to see what is outside. Once you have gone outside & climbed the peak of a mountain, you no longer need the window to see what is around you. Remember, you are not forsaking the personal friend in your Ishtadevta. The infinite and your chosen deity have become one.

Can this concept works for a monotheistic religion? I think the answer is yes. As long as the monotheism does not believe in exclusivity, this concept will be useful to Christians & Muslims. A Christian will take Jesus Christ as the Ishtadevta, but instead of starting with the entire idea of God he or she will start with some aspect of Jesus. Let us take Jesus as your Ishtadevta. Through meditation and other methods of worship he can deepen his devotion. Another option is to use a selected prayer or a paragraph from a scripture or a good book. Use this selected words repeatedly and try to concentrate on the meaning. Select the verses that you like the most. Recitation of these selected verses will act like an Ishtadevta. In the time of crisis this may serve as your best friend. I feel this concept of Ishtadevta is very practical and a good way to embark on one's spiritual journey.

RIACC Youth Group Announcement

Some Great News on the Community front ! Mrs. Parul Majethia has very kindly stepped forward and volunteered to set-up a RIACC Youth Group for the Tricities Area. Thank you for your leadership and community spirit. The Program is aimed at developing & encouraging the growing youth population within our community. Parul has some great ideas but we need all your support & participation to make this successful . The Program will involve:

- *Aiding students in receiving community service hours*
- *Engaging the teens in activities which are enriching and entertaining. This includes cultural and social programs, fundraisers, group discussions, parties, guest speakers, and much more!!*

If you have any ideas or if you would like to contribute your time to this effort please contact any of the following folks listed below:

- Parul Majethia (423)-948-9043
- Nila Patel (423)-246-6110
- Dr. Darshan Shah (423)-202-7919
- Dr. Brajesh Dubey (423)-747-0231
- Rekha Kadam (423)-741-4500

4th Annual RIACC Golf Tournament Sep 2009

By Dr. Andy Delwadia



We had a very exciting and successful Fourth Annual RIACC Golf Tournament on Sept 13th at Crockett's Ridge Golf Course. There were a total of thirty two players who participated. The winning team included Satish Hira, Vishal Shah & Arun Suresh. Three other teams finished within one stroke of the champions. The Longest Drive winner was Ashok Gala (265 yards) and the Closest To Pin winner was Andy Delwadia (charity begins at home after all!). All winners received attractive trophies. We also had food, drink and goodies that were given away.

In addition to participants, we had many sponsors instrumental to make this event a success. Sponsors included, Tushar Patel, Rajni Patel, Pramod Sapra, Narayan Kutty, Dilip/ Binita Patel, Andy Delwadia, Darshan Shah, Dr. Jaishankar, Dinkar Patel, Haresh Patel, Ashwin Patel, Anil Agrawal, Ashok/ Pragna Mehta, and Ron Mathews from State Farm Ins.

I sincerely thank all the players, sponsors, Ashok Gala and Sahib Restaurant for their support. I hope to see you all and many more new faces at next years tournament. Meanwhile any comments, opinions or suggestions for improvements in future tournaments, please e-mail me at delwadia@yahoo.com or call me.

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

12 Days of Christmas—The Significance



The 12 Days of Christmas begins on Dec 25 & ends before Epiphany, that falls on Jan 6. **The Origin** : The feast was initially based on, and viewed as a fulfillment of the Jewish Feast of Lights known as Chanukah. This was fixed on January 6 , but over time the western churches decided to celebrate X'mas on Dec 25. This has given rise in the west to the notion of a 12 day festival. **The Song**: This period is referred to in the song 12 Days of Christmas & dates back to 16h Century.

- 1st Day: The partridge in a pear tree is Christ Jesus upon the Cross.
- 2nd Day: The "two turtle doves" refers to the Old and New Testaments.
- 3rd Day: The "three French hens" stand for faith, hope and love.
- 4th Day: The "four calling birds" refers to the four evangelists who wrote the Gospels
- 5th Day: The "five golden rings" represents the first five books of the Bible, also called the Jewish Torah: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy.
- 6th Day: The "six geese a-laying" is the six days of creation.
- 7th Day: The "seven swans a-swimming" refers to the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit: wisdom, understanding, counsel, fortitude, knowledge, piety and fear of the Lord.
- 8th Day: The "eight maids a milking " reminded children of the eight
- 9th Day: The "nine ladies dancing" were the nine fruits of the Holy Spirit found in Galatians: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self control.
- 10th Day: The "ten lords a-leaping" represents the Ten Commandments.
- 11th Day: The "eleven pipers piping" refers to the eleven faithful apostles.
- 12th Day: The "twelve drummers drumming" were the twelve points of belief expressed in the Apostles' Creed.

Directions to the Hall of Worship:

From Johnson City - Take I-26 towards Kingsport. Take Exit 6 (Rock Springs Exit). Take a left on the RAMP and see below

From Kingsport: Take I-26 towards Johnson City. Take exit 6 (Rock Springs Exit). Take a Right on the RAMP and see below

Drive about quarter of a mile and make a left turn on to Westfield Road, immediately after the Power building. Drive about half a mile and keep right on the fork onto Westfield place, the third building on the left is Hall of Worship.