



RTP SPANDAN

A Triangle Area Hindu Temples (TAHTS) Newsletter

Executive Committee Message

Dear Community Members,

There is hope and excitement in the air with the arrival of the COVID-19 vaccines. Hopefully enough people will be vaccinated by the summer or the fall time and life will return to normal. Yet, there is also a concern of some people avoiding the vaccines (Vaccine hesitancy). They lack confidence because these vaccines have been developed in a record time. These doubts are unscientific. New technologies, from the 'biological' treatment of cancer, arthritis and skin diseases have been used to make m-RNA in a very short time. This took a long time in the older vaccines. m-RNA is the final link for all the vaccines, to produce the body defenses(antibody). Also, in the past, it took very long time to recruit decent sample size (30,000) patients in other diseases. During the pandemic, it was possible to do it in a few days only. Please do not hesitate and get the very first vaccine available to you.

Virtual Health Fair is starting on March 15, for one month. After registering on the TAHTS web site, the registrant will receive a LabCorp requisition form via email. This can be used at any LabCorp service station, to get the blood test (executive blood panel and hemoglobin a1c). After the results are in hand, the Triangle Indian-American Physician Society (TIPS) will arrange a telehealth consultation with two specialists of your choice. This is open to everyone in the country.

This newsletter has the theme of 'Yoga'. Articles and advertisement are to promote its practice in USA. Please tell your friends and family about the available places to learn it. VOI committee article on Farm laws in India has information on these three laws. How they are aimed to help the poorer farmers in India. Hopefully it will tell you why it is needed and help you understand the different arguments in favor and against.

A second article on 'Halal tax on vegetarian food', may be eye opening for many. We have not thought much of the 'Halal' label, in the past. This article shows that how this is a huge business for the Muslim clerics and their community. This money is used to fund various activities, including funding some organizations, with questionable motives. That is why they want to expand it to vegetarian food, cosmetics and even housing in India. TAHTS plans to start a petition drive to make non-halal food available on the India's air lines and hotels.

Finally we are happy to announce that the voice of India committee is ready to launch essay competition for the college students. Aim is to stimulate younger generation to learn about India and its history. With this in mind, the topic chosen is "Glorious past of India, its downfall and revival". Three cash prizes equal to \$1500 will be awarded.

Best wishes

Executive committee

आपको और आपके परिवार को होली की हार्दिक शुभकामनाएँ! होली के इस अवसर पर, ईश्वर से प्रार्थना है की ये होली आपके लिए सुखदायक, मंगलदायक व आनंददायक हो। होली की खूब सारी शुभकामनाएँ।

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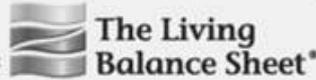
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होली – एक आस्था, एक परम्परा

ममता त्यागी

मौज मस्ती और प्रेम सौहार्द से सराबोर होली का यह त्यौहार अपने भीतर कितनी ही परम्पराओं के रंग समेटे हुए है, जो विभिन्न स्थानों में अलग अलग रूप में सजे धजे नज़र आते हैं।

विभिन्नता में एकता लिए हमारे भारतवर्ष में होली को मनाने के अलग अलग अन्दाज़ हैं। मगर विविधताओं के बावजूद हर परम्परा में एक समानता अवश्य है। और यह है प्रेम और उत्साह जो लोगों को आज भी सब कुछ भूलकर हर्ष और उल्लास के रंग में रंग देते हैं। राग रंग का यह पर्व वसंत का संदेशवाहक भी है। राग अर्थात् संगीत और रंग इसके प्रमुख तत्व तो हैं ही परंतु इनको उत्कर्ष तक पहुँचाने वाली प्रकृति भी इस समय अपने रंग बिरंगे यौवन के साथ अपनी चरम अवस्था में होती है।

वसंत पंचमी के दिन से ही गुलाल उड़ा कर इसका शुभारम्भ किया जाता है और फाग तथा धमार का गाना आरम्भ हो जाता है। खेतों में सरसों खिल उठती है, बाग बगीचों में फूलों की छटा बिखरने लगती है।

हमारा यह रंगों की मस्ती से भरा त्यौहार देश ही नहीं विदेशों में भी आकर्षण का केंद्र है। कृष्ण और राधा के प्रेम के प्रतीक मथुरा वृंदावन में तो होली की धूम सोलह दिनों तक रहती है। जिसमें उनके दिव्य अलौकिक प्रेम को याद किया जाता है।

बरसाने की लट्टुमार होली तो विश्व प्रसिद्ध है। इसमें स्त्रियाँ लट्टु से पुरुषों को मारती हैं और पुरुष उनकी मार से बचते हुए उन्हें रंग लगाते हैं। मणिपुर में होली के अवसर पर छः दिनों तक पारम्परिक नृत्य थाबल चोंगबा किया जाता है। बिहार में लोकगीत गाते हुए ढोलक की थाप पर लोग नाचते हैं।

गुरु रबीन्द्रनाथ के शांति निकेतन में वसंत उत्सव के रूप में होली मनायी जाती है। कुमायूँ की होली अपनी एक अलग ही ऐतिहासिक और सांस्कृतिक पहचान रखती है। यहाँ होली के कई रंग हैं; बैठकी होली, खड़ी होली, और महिला होली जो कि विभिन्न संगीत समारोह के रूप में मनायी जाती हैं।

दक्षिणी गुजरात के हर गाँव में होली मनायी जाती है इसके गीत गाए जाते हैं जिनके द्वारा देवियों को त्यौहार में उपस्थित रहने की विनती की जाती है।

वसंत मौसम में रंग डालना राधा कृष्ण की लीला का एक अंग माना गया है। यह माना जाता है कि सद्भावना बढ़ाने के लिए रंग डाला जाता है और यह रंग होता है प्रेम का, भाव का, भक्ति का और विश्वास का।

इससे पूर्व होलिका दहन में होली जलायी जाती है अहंकार की, वैर की, ईर्ष्या की, मत्सर की, संशय की और बदले में प्राप्ति होती है विशुद्ध प्रेम की। होली के दिन संध्या के समय सब एक दूसरे से होली मिलाने के लिए जाते हैं जहाँ विशेष स्वादिष्ट पकवानों से उनका स्वागत किया जाता है।

आइए हम सब भी मिलकर हर्षोल्लास से इस रंगों से भरे त्यौहार को मनाकर विश्व में सद्भावना और प्रेम के रंगों की बौछार कर दें।



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PRATIPAKSHA BHAVANA

HOW TO DEAL WITH NEGATIVE THOUGHTS IN A YOGIC WAY

- DISHA GALA

Have you ever wondered what happens to us when a negative thought arises in our mind? How does it make you feel? Does it lead to anger or anxiety? Do we take quick or shallow breaths? Do you feel heart racing leading to a spike in BP? If your answer is yes then it is a typical response to stress. Our ancient wisdom has a solution to this problem and that age-old technique is referred to as Pratipaksha Bhavana.

Promoting healthy and positive thoughts are essential to reach a balanced state of mind and body. Pratipaksha Bhavana is a yogic practice outlined in 'Yoga Sutra' in which yogis discontinue negative ways of thinking through the discipline of 'cultivating the opposite'. In Sanskrit Pratipaksha means 'opposite' and Bhavana means 'cultivation'. The real meaning is cultivating a positive thought every time a negative thought enters the mind. One should practice Pratipaksha Bhavana to overcome inherent negative thoughts and emotions such as anger, greed, pride, sadness, worry, tension etc. Negative thoughts affect our thinking and reactive capacity, and we may say or do something that we may later regret. Such feelings may trap you both physically and mentally. By creating the opposite thought and reflecting on the possible consequences of our thoughts, words and deeds, we instantly have more options for thinking, feeling, and reacting. It is like we are removed from a cave and placed on a mountain top, from where we can see in every direction, allowing us to respond positively to circumstances.

Pratipaksha Bhavana is a beautiful and challenging mind practice. It has the potential to shift energies and align them in such a way, that only goodness and positivity is presented and chosen in every situation. Once you practice it, you will notice your negative thoughts and emotions start to weaken, as you deny attention to them. Next time you find yourself under the dark cloud of negativity and stress; instead of spiraling down a staircase of negative thoughts, intercept them at the very first step, eliminating the domino effect. Slowly there will be a paradigm shift in your thinking pattern, and re-routing negative thinking to positive thinking becomes a habit. This simple yogic technique will manifest and transform your personality in more ways than you can imagine.

Congrats!

DR. KISHOR TRIVEDI

TAHTS would like to take a moment to congratulate one of our distinguished members Kishor ji, on this great achievement. Thank you for your contributions and making us all proud!



Kishor Trivedi, the Hudson Distinguished Professor of Electrical and Computer Engineering at Duke University, has been the recipient of the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE) Reliability Society's Lifetime Achievement Award. One of the highest recognitions that a society of the IEEE can bestow, the award was bestowed to Trivedi in recognition of his "sustained contributions to the methods, tools and education in the reliability assessment of hardware-software systems."



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Led by Arun Aggarwal, senior vice president and Certified Financial Planner®, the group includes his three sons—Aman, financial advisor, Arjun, financial advisor and senior portfolio manager, and Ashwin, assistant vice president and Certified Financial Planner®, Gaurav Judge, financial advisor, has recently joined. The Aggarwal Group, with Tracy Varner, client service associate, rounds out the practice. Together they make a formidable team, highly experienced in helping meet the needs of multigenerational families, transfer wealth, and succession planning for their approximately 200 clients as of September 2019 in the Raleigh area, including physicians, business owners, families, and individuals.

Multigenerational Team, Family Approach

"We look at a client's wealth from a 360-degree perspective and provide advice and solutions to help them meet their particular needs," Arun says. "We understand the complexities of managing a business and the importance of family, so we work on our clients' convenience so they can minimize the time spent dealing with financial issues and maximize the time spent with loved ones."

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(Left to right): Ashwin Aggarwal, Assistant Vice President, Financial Advisor; Gaurav Judge, Financial Advisor; Arun K. Aggarwal, Senior Vice President, Financial Advisor, Financial Planning Specialist; Arjun Aggarwal, Financial Advisor, Senior Portfolio Manager; Tracy Varner, Client Service Associate; and Aman Aggarwal, Financial Advisor

The Aggarwal Group is truly team-oriented, with each member having a specific role. This approach, suggests Arjun, helps solidify relationships. "Rarely do we have one-on-one meetings with our clients," he notes. "Based on current needs, a client may meet with several of us, helping ensure all aspects of their financial lives are explored, monitored, and followed up on."

For example, Arun, who possesses strong experience in estate planning and tax strategies, and Aman, who deals with wealth transfer and retirement cash flow planning among other matters, may join in a meeting with a business owner client for whom retirement is looming.

"Our clients don't only work with an advisor," Arun confirms. "They realize the benefits of having an entire financial team at their disposal."

Custom Tailored Investment Strategies

The Aggarwal Group is equally adept at uncovering investment strategies that are well-suited to the needs of their clients and that may be overlooked by other teams.

"While other advisors invest in funds that can be put on autopilot and largely forgotten

about," Ashwin says, "We're more hands-on and our services are more transactional."

Opportunities the team may pursue on behalf of clients include annuities and alternative investments, "the types of products that are typically outside of the advisory umbrella," explains Aman.

The group's association with Morgan Stanley is invaluable in this arena. Arun shares: "They have among the most flexible and unique products in the industry, and their world-class resources help us provide the personalized financial planning and investment and wealth management services our clients deserve. The Aggarwal Group has been with Morgan Stanley since 1988, and I wouldn't change a thing."

Morgan Stanley

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Halal Tax on Vegetarian products

“Halal” is an Arabic word meaning “allowed”, against “Haram”, that means not allowed. Muslim holy book (Koran), has given list of food that is “Halal” or “Haram”. In common use the “Halal” meat means that the animal was slaughtered while reciting the verses of Koran, and let to bleed to slow death, rather than quick slaughter, as done by “Jhatka”, done by non-Muslim butchers.

Although Government of India requires only the FSSAI (Food Safety and Standard Authority of India) certification to sell any food, Halal certification has become an unofficial standard for all types of non-vegetarian food in India. This was initiated by Mr. Mani Shankar Ayyar with the backing of Gandhi family during the rule of congress party. Indian “Halal” certification board was formed and their certification is needed to call any food as “Halal”. Gradually all hotels, restaurants, air lines and trains in India are only selling “Halal” products. Foreign franchises like KFC are also doing that.

‘Halalonomics’: Globally, “Halal” certification is a very big business. The charge is Rs 20,000-50,000 to certify any single product. It is estimated that last year they collected approximately Rs 110,000 crore (one hundred ten thousand crore) in Halal tax. This money is often used to fund different Muslim organizations. Worldwide, it is a \$2 trillion dollar business (bigger than the present Indian economy). Since “Halal” requires only a Muslim clergy to certify and process, it has taken also jobs away from other communities.

Halal Tax for Vegetarian products: The Muslim clerics have expanded the definition of ‘halal’ to include any product that has touched any utensil, of cooking spoon which is “non halal”. It means that the ‘Halal’ board can declare any product a ‘non halal’, unless certified by them. They have declared that some “Maida” products from China have L-cysteine. This is a kind of protein found in bird feathers or human hair. So, now all the food made out of ‘Maida’ also needs the “Halal” certification. Famous Indian brands, like Patanjali (by baba Ram Dev), Haldi Ram, Bikaner and Shri Shri Ravi Shankar also pay “Halal tax” to certify their products, for pure business reasons. Basically, Patanjali and these other companies pay the Muslim cleric to go to their factory, recite a ‘Kalma’ to declare its products as “Halal”. Once certified, their sale goes up. One can find ‘maida’ in Indian grocery store, saying “Product of India” and “Halal Certified”.

Recently the Christians in Kerala objected to be fed Halal without informing them, but the request did not go any further. Noticeably, in some cases certain non Halal products have been used in the Muslim world.continued on

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Halal Tax on Vegetarian products....continued from page 8

This was in the case of early days of insulin, when it was made out of pig (porcine) and it was used all over the Muslim world and recently they have also declared that Covid vaccine is fine to take. The COVID-19 vaccines from Pfizer, Moderna and AstraZeneca do not use pork gelatin in their formulas, but there is widespread concern over vaccines from other companies, which have not released a list of their ingredients.

Unfortunately, "Halal" has often been used for their convenience and for financial reasons, they want it expanded to beauty products, all day to day use items and recently, buildings in Kerala are also being given "Halal" certification. Only recently the Modi government has stopped "Halal meat" in the Indian parliament cafeteria. We as general public should try to boycott any vegetarian food or non-edible product that has "Halal" certificate printed on it. Efforts should be made to stop Air India and major hotels, to serve both "Halal" and "non- Halal" meat. The public could be given the choice. This way more than half of their consumption will be non halal meat.

Australia and Europe are putting restriction on "Halal" meat as it is cruel to let an animal bleed to slow death.



Dear community members,

Our subcommittee is put together so that you have a confidential outlet for your questions, queries, or concerns about family relationships. You can call us if you feel stressed, anxious, angry, or distressed. If the pandemic has made you anxious and upset in your relationship with your teen or family members, created tension, please email us or call us on the hotline to get directed to a counselor.

If you have a family or spousal issue, we will redirect you to call the 24/7 Kiran Hotline number and get you connected to the Kiran staff. Our team is here to support you, help you reflect on the challenges you face in wanting to instill your values and cultural beliefs. We realize there is intergenerational cultural stress between parents and the younger generation. You as a parent want them to get good grades, be at the top of their class, follow your desired career choice, be successful as defined by you. If you feel your teen does not adhere to your value system or beliefs, and you need suggestions, you need someone to talk to, we will listen to you, give you feedback and suggestions, make referrals, or suggest tips for better communication and ideas for positive parenting. We will find appropriate cultural resources to share with you and connect you with a clinician and therapist if that is your preference. We will help find non-conflicting ways of working with your teen, resources that will empower you to work on building a balanced and healthy relationship. Parents, if you feel stressed because your teen is acting out, having behavioral problems, displaying anger, hostility, or has anxiety, call us for your support. No question you ask us is too small or big.

Our team's goals are to provide:

- **Education and support**
- **Family coaching and support**
- **24/7 Crisis counselling**
- **Conflict resolution**
- **Referrals, and support**
- **Referrals for spousal and family problems**

The Farm Laws and Related Situation in India

- BY: KARDAMA MUNI @ MUNI BLOGS

Indian government recently passed three well-meaning farm laws that have caused protests and agitation primarily amongst the farmers of Punjab and Haryana. Intent of these laws was to help farmers make more profit on their efforts and help alleviate suicides due to financial reasons. Also, to eliminate the farmers' dependence on subsidies.

This article puts forth the facts in front of an open-minded reader.

The Laws

1. Allow farmers to sell their produce anywhere and anyone of their choosing.
2. Make provisions for setting up of a framework for contract farming just like in the USA.

Intended Benefits to Farmers

The three farm laws offer three basic freedoms to the farmer.

1. The farmer can now sell directly to the retailer or an end user.
2. Farmers are now allowed to store inventory. There is not artificial urgency to dump the produce at whatever price offered.
3. Farmers can sell produce before even planting by directly contracting with the corporations. Now, the farmer is free to make contracts and transfer risk to businessmen in deals made over a crop even before yield is made or met.

The Losers of Current System

The middlemen, mandi cartels, and the rich farmers who played the existing system are all going to lose out if they operate without a global vision. However, they can make same profit if they start making value added products. They too don't have to be losers unless they chose to be one.

Causes of Protest

1. Rumors that the price subsidy (MSP) is going to be withdrawn:

Of the 23 agricultural crops with MSPs, the government primarily buys rice and wheat. Being wheat producers, Punjab and Haryana farmers are the biggest beneficiaries of this. Government has repeatedly mentioned that MSP and APMC mandis will stay intact.

2. Fear of corporations:

Farmers likely do not trust corporates/big businesses. This may be well founded in some cases - especially when the corporations are creating a situation where farmers can't use seeds from the previous year to sow the next crop.

- Government can provide a standard proforma of the contract to alleviate this trust issue or help create local co-operatives in line with Amul.
- Seed banks would also be crucial to ensure traditional seeds are protected.

3. Short-sightedness of farmer leaders:

Farmer leaders are not able to perceive the long-term benefits of these laws alongside a continuation of the existing system for successful transition of all farmers over the years (making current system irrelevant then). International singer Mary Millben in her well-meaning thoughtful post tried to point this out.

4. Former middlemen possibly spearheading misinformation campaign:

The economic expert Gurcharan Das points out that a small, organized, and well-funded group in a democracy can hijack the nation's interest when the majority is silent and unorganized. Das claims that behind these protests are the arthiyas, buying agents in PMC mandis who stand to lose Rs 100 crore a year in commissions, as well as the few rich farmers of Punjab who have benefitted from the MSP regime.

5. National Politics:

The marginalized opposition need such stir ups to justify their existence and gain some grass root support. They are now opposing the laws that they themselves insisted be created a few years ago.

6. International Politics:

Countries like Pakistan and Canada are trying to intermingle anti-India forces with the farmers; it was visible from the slogans being chanted at some spots during the protests. This came out in open after Greta tweeted a toolkit for coordinated actions by "activists". Local misguided supporters of environmental movement groups have been arrested that worked closely with international criminal gangs using the WhatsApp group chats, administered, edited, and shared such documents. It is likely they were aware what they were doing because Greta shared a document, then deleted it seeing the outburst against it (instead of reporting the content and the source to the police), then uploaded a revised document.

Closure

A generation has grown up in peaceful India established after over two decades of fight against terrorism. Unknown to them is how many Sikh, Hindu, Muslim and other families have lost their fathers, mothers and children to the terrorism perpetrated by such countries and organizations. The same groups are now infiltrating naïve environmental and farmer's movements as a means to hijack it to support their ends.

Government is willing to modify the laws to ensure "intent of the laws" are met, not mere words. The change is necessary and inevitable as doing things in the current ways for over 70 years has only led to poverty and suicides for farmers. New ways must be tried and improved with successive cycles of course correction to ensure no farmer of future India has to beg for subsidy, has to kill him/her self or beg for food after a year's hard work.



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TAX COMMITTEE REPORT

AARP and VITA are two agencies, who help any one, with personal tax filing at not cost. Currently appointment log is full until March 4th. So if you are interested in getting taxes done by AARP-VITA, please call ASAP Before you go for your 1st appointment, you need to pickup a packet of information. In this packet there are two forms (14446 and 13614-C), that you need to fill out and sign, before going for your 1st appointment. One address, where you can pick up packet is "FOOD BANK HEADQUARTERS OFFICE, 1924 CAPITAL BLVD, RALEIGH".

DUE TO COVID-19, AARP TAX FOUNDATION WILL NOT BE DOING ON SITE TAX RETURNS. HOWEVER, THEY WILL BE DOING THE RETURNS AND E-FILING.

One should call the following numbers:

FOR CARY AREA: 919 764 0242 MON./WED./FRI 10:00 AM-4:00PM, 919 335 3152 TUE./THU 10:00 AM-3:00PM

The Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP) of Durham is helping to file tax returns this year also.

RSVP-VITA (Durham only) is using two models this tax season, drop-off and virtual. You may either drop your documents off to be scanned or scan documents into a secure data base yourself. Either method must be initiated by the office of Paula Reif.

Ms Reif is VITA Program Manager and her office is located in the Durham Tech complex (Phillips Building, 1637 Lawson Street, Durham, NC 27703). Ph. # 919-536-7270. rsvp@durhamtech.edu.

Another option is to do the tax filing yourself at <https://www.taxslayer.com/v.aspx?rdr=/vitafsa&source=TSUSATY2020&sidn=17061133>



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Support, connect and educate cancer patients

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newcomers@tahts.org
Help finding community connections, schools and housing etc.

HOSPITAL HELP

hospitalhelp@tahts.org
Visit and support patients in the hospital.

customerservice@tahts.org

For all other queries

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To reach out to other faith based organization, provide united support & actively involved in a community.

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