



Sanskar Gurukul Weekly Update



Class Name: Vasishtha

Week#03: Oct 06, 2013

General Assembly (GA)

Aparna Auntie started the GA with a small lesson on "grounding". Often times, we are physically in one place, but some place else mentally. She taught a way to bring ourselves mentally to where we are physically. Imagine you are standing with your feet firmly on the ground.. take a deep breath all the way to your feet, and imagine it going all the way to the ground through your feet. Then breathe out imagining your breath coming out all the way from your feet, through your body and out through your nose. This will help you focus and bring your attention to where you are.

Navratri started on Oct 6th. Here is the story behind why it is celebrated. There was once a asura called Mahishasura. People prayed to Durga Devi to defeat him. Durga Devi used to go to the top of a mountain every day for 9 days to fight with him. When she came down in the evening, the villagers wanted to entertain her, so they danced around her. That's why we dance around Durga Devi during this time.

Even today Mahishasura resides in all of us, in the form of negative thoughts. During this time, we need to invoke Durga Devi's help to get rid of these thoughts and to purify our minds. The first step in this process is grounding ourselves, which will give us the energy from the Mother. This will help us find the Mahishasura within us. Then we need to make an effort to get rid of it.

During this time of Navratri, come to the temple to dance, not just to have fun, but also with devotion to seek Durga Devi's blessings to get rid of our negative thoughts.

Class

- **Opening Prayers**
- **Class Expectations – discussed the 3 Rs**
 - **Be Ready** - come on time and come prepared with material like pencil, paper/notebook and prescribed study book
 - **Be Respectful** - raise hand for permission to speak, use your manners while speaking, sit cross-legged, chant sincerely to the best of your ability and no chewing gum/calling out/interrupting peers/instruction.
 - **Be Responsible** - participate in class by active listening, sharing/asking questions, reading weekly updates and completing HW whenever assigned
- **Navratri Festival – On the occasion of Navratri season, we gave a handout and discussed the following:**
 - *What is Nav+ratri?* Cosmic energy of Trinity Gods (Lord Brahma, Lord Vishnu and Lord Shiva) as Goddess Shakti in various forms to destroy evil.
 - *How is it celebrated culturally in some regions of India?* We discussed Dandiya/Garba Raas and Gollu with symbolic significance of each.



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- Significance of 9 Nights + 10th day

- First 3 – Goddess Durga for destroying the demons which are impurities of mind;
- Next 3 – Goddess Lakshmi to cultivate good Values and acquire any resources;
- Last 3 – Goddess Saraswati to acquire Knowledge in the purified Mind, Wisdom in Intellect and Compassion in Heart
- We discussed using the analogy of comparing the Mind with a Lawn – removing weeds every year, next we cultivate the soil by aerating etc.; now the lawn is prepared to receive the seeds which will bear flowers/lush green grass etc.
- On 10th day, we celebrate the triumph of good over evil/negativities. Hence. Navratri is also known as 'Dussehra' - Destruction of 10 enemies (of mind) symbolized by burning of the effigy of 10-headed demon, Ravana.

- Symbolic significance of demons destroyed by different forms of God

- We did a matching activity wherein, given a set of negative tendencies of mind, we have to match the demon name and the form of Goddess Durga that destroyed that 'demon'.

- Goal-Setting

- We discussed that we often make goals related to mastering a skill but the moment we encounter an obstacle or a distraction, we give up on our goals or we sabotage the goals we meet (Example – Tiger Woods, Lance Armstrong etc. They all achieved great success but also had a great fall from glory!). So, it is important to have goals related to first purifying and strengthening our mind with strong values which will serve as a foundation to meet other worldly goals. Navratri is a perfect time to pray for to Goddesses Durga Devi, Lakshmi Devi and Saraswati Devi, now that we know the true significance! ... Students were given HW related to this.

- **Chanting** - We chanted Lingashtakam – Verse 1.

- **Closing Prayers.**

Homework

- As discussed in class, complete the family HW (matching activity) and individual goal-setting HW in the given handout.

Announcements

- None