



Sanskar Gurukul Weekly Update



Class Name: Vasishtha

Week#10: Nov 24, 2013

General Assembly (GA)

Sridhar Uncle started the GA with three Omkars followed by the Shanti Mantra and Prayer Before Studies.

Sridhar uncle then talked about why Thanksgiving is celebrated. It was started in the year 1621. When the pilgrims came over they were welcomed by the Native Americans. President Abraham Lincoln declared this a national holiday and it used to be the last Thursday of November till President Franklin Roosevelt changed it to the 4th Thursday of the month. This year there is a rare occurrence - Thanksgiving is on the same day as Hanukkah. The next time this will happen is in the year 7981. The last time this happened was over 100 years ago.

It is a day when you offer thanks for all that you have. We learned the Taittiriya Upanishad, where we start by offering thanks and respects to our mother, father, guru and our guests.

There is no class next Sunday, so the next class is on Dec 8th. Also, please read announcement at the end about Yearbook entries.

Class

- **Opening Prayers**
- **Value - Attitude towards Food**
 - ❖ We discussed that Hinduism is a way of life, not just a religion. There are rituals about eating and our rishis or spiritual scientists have given us a wealth of knowledge about the proper attitude towards food, the need and importance for food, the right way of eating which is not just about manners and the right quantity of food to partake for proper assimilation in our body.
 - Proper attitude towards food: Attitude of "Prasad", which means accept it as food that has been blessed by God. If we have that attitude, we will not choose to complain about the food, we will eat it in the right quantity and we will want to share it - just like we don't complain that the "prasada" is too oily or too sweet or less in quantity and we always share Prasad with good cheer. We discussed what we can do if we are offered food that we "don't like" or which we normally do not take. Lying is not an option but we can be polite and use the right words or take just a little bit at least.
 - Right way of eating: Eat with a cheerful disposition and not in anger/sadness. Be mindful of what you are eating - eat slowly, attentively and with relish. The dining table should not be the place to have heated arguments or to get over-emotional.
 - Right quantity of food: Take just enough on your plate, so that you do not waste. Eat just enough to satisfy your hunger. Our ancient rishis have in fact given a 'formula' for how much food should be taken - Half the stomach should have solid food, one-fourth fill with liquid and the remaining one-fourth should be left empty to give room for food to move around for digestion.



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- **Need for food:** For the nourishment of our body and mind. If we are physically and emotionally healthy, the average person will be able to perform our duties better. *At this point, the students had questions about fasting.* We discussed that fasting periodically is also good for health for several reasons - eliminate toxins from our body, give our digestive system a little rest, it builds our 'forbearance muscle' and most importantly, the purpose is to withdraw from the mundane, daily chores or 'busyness' and do '**smaranam**' or remember God more intently. So, people also keep 'satsang'/Bhajans/chanting to raise their consciousness instead of living at the level of physical needs that day.
- ❖ Since **Thanksgiving** is approaching, we also discussed the Thanksgiving rituals in Hindu Culture - **Pongal, Lohri and Sankranti**. Yes, we are thankful to our parents/any person for getting food on the table and for cooking good food, but we are also thankful to the farmer, the oxen that ploughs the field, any animal/bird in nature as well as natural resources like Sun, Rain and Soil for a good harvest of vegetables/fruits/grains. We also pray that there is abundance in food so that nobody starves. We chanted our **Before Meals Prayer - Brahmarpanam**.
- **Lingashtakam Chanting**
- **Closing Prayers.**

Homework

- Please complete pg. 122-123 on "Charity" Values, if not already done.
- Also write 2-3 strategies you will use to meet your purifying goals on an index card and place it in a prominent place at home where you will see it every day. Track how you are meeting these goals on a daily or weekly basis by using a journal or any electronic means. We shall have a check-in every other month.

Announcements

Yearbook Art Submission Guidelines (**DEADLINE: December 8th!**)

- Drawing/painting/collage/coloring - 2nd grade and below can color existing drawings, 3rd grade and above should be original
- Art should be of Lakshmi Devi or a representation of her (we aren't doing traits this year.)
- Older classes can choose to write a piece or a poem about Lakshmi Devi as well
- Please make sure that the colors are bold, the pencil marks are dark
- Use printer paper (A4 size)
- Do not write your name on the front!!! Only on the back please!!