

## Baudhik Yojana for Kishor - Jan 2006

### 1. Ideal Hindu Home

→ What is a Hindu Home?

- Vastu Shastra (Indian Architecture).
  - Link: [http://www.punditravi.com/vastu\\_sastra.htm](http://www.punditravi.com/vastu_sastra.htm)
  - Compare and contrast with the Feng Shui
- Basic Symbols inside and outside a Hindu Home – Tulsi (Holy Basil), Swastika, Ganesha Murti on the door, a small prayer place.
  - In modern times, the photos of ancestors are also appropriate.
- Meaning of Each Symbols.
  - Swastika –
    - <http://history1900s.about.com/cs/swastika/a/swastikahistory.htm>
      - The word "swastika" comes from the Sanskrit *svastika* - "su" meaning "good," "asti" meaning "to be," and "ka" as a suffix.
    - For more detailed explanation of Swastika – <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Swastika>.
    - Include Hitler and how he completely twisted the swastika and emphasize how the real swastika is different from the one of the Nazi's. (Resources: in the same link of wikipedia, there is a section titled "NAZI GERMANY". Please consult that information.)
  - Tulsi – Many uses of tulsi, one of the most as an Ayurvedic Herbal Medicine.
    - Tulsi as an elixir: Apart from its religious significance it is of great medicinal significance, and is a prime herb in Ayurvedic treatment. Marked by its strong aroma and astringent taste, tulsi is a kind of "elixir of life" as it promotes longevity. The plant's extracts can be used to prevent and cure many illnesses and common ailments like common cold, headaches, stomach disorders, inflammation, heart disease, various forms of poisoning and malaria. Essential oil extracted from karpooora tulsi is mostly used for medicinal purposes though of late it is used in the manufacture of herbal toiletry.
    - According to Jeevan Kulkarni, author of *Historical Truths & Untruths Exposed*, when Hindu women worship tulsi, they in effect pray for "less and less carbonic acid and more and more oxygen — a perfect object lesson in sanitation, art and religion". The tulsi plant is known to purify or de-pollute the atmosphere and also repels mosquitoes, flies, and other harmful insects. Tulsi used to be a universal remedy in cases of malarial fever.
    - Vaishnavites do not use her as a medicine, though, out of reverence.
    - More Detailed description: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tulsi>

- Includes Tulsi as a Deity; Tulsi as an elixir; Tulsi in legends.
- Ganesha – “Vidhaharta” (one who takes away all the problems from one’s life).
  - Different names for Shree Ganesha: Other names for Ganesha. Like other Hindu gods and goddesses, Ganesh has many other titles of respect or symbolic names, and is often worshipped through the chanting of *sahasranamam* (pronounced saa-HUS-ruh-naamam), or a thousand names. Each is different and conveys a different meaning, representing a different aspect of the god in question. Needless to say, almost all Hindu gods have one or two accepted versions of their own sahasranaam liturgy.
  - Ganesha is also known by other names:
    - *Anangapujita*, The Formless, or Bodiless
    - *Aumkara*, the Aum-shaped body
    - *Balachandra*, one who wears the moon on his head
    - *Dhumraketu*, or the fiery one
    - *Gajakarna*, one with ears of an elephant
    - *Gajanana*, elephant face
    - *Ganadhyaksha*, leader of the masses
    - *Ganapati*, Lord of the Ganas, a race of dwarf beings in the army of Shiva
    - *Ekadanta*, One-Tusked
    - *Kapila*, the name for a celestial cow. Ganesha represents the characteristic of "giving" that symbolizes a cow, thus this name.
    - *Lambodara*, big bellied
    - *Pillaiyar*, Tamil for "Noble Son"
    - *Shupakarna*, Large/Auspicious Ears
    - *Sumukh*, one who has a beautiful face: Ganesha is said to be possessing all the qualities of Moon, who is also called the God of beauty, and is hence also known as Sumukh.
    - *Vakratunda*, Curved Trunk
    - *Vighnaharta*, remover of obstacles
    - *Vighnesh*, *Vighneshwara*, controller of obstacles (*Vighna* = obstacle, *eeshwara*=lord)
    - *Vikat*, the ferocious one
    - *Vinayaka*, a distinguished Leader (Vi stands for vishesha *Special* and nayaka from root *ni* to lead, thus *Leader*)
    - More detailed information: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ganesha>

→ **How is it different than other homes?**

- It is different in more than one ways. It is built by more than the walls of bricks. It has definite symbols that makes it different than the other regular homes.

→ **Why do we need one?**

- Preserves our culture from generation to generation.

- To understand our customs, roots (i.e., why are we praying tulsi?)
  - An analogy can be given. The customs that we follow in our home are like street lights that keep us from getting lost from our traditions.

### **More resources (From Bala Boudhik Yojana Q-4)**

#### **Physical characteristics of an Ideal Hindu Home**

**Cleanliness:** A clean, organized house provides a healthy setting from which to grow and mature – physically, emotionally, and spiritually. A dirty and cluttered house is not conducive for a healthy and happy life. There is a saying that God lives in a clean house only. No matter how luxurious or simple your house is, keep it clean.

**Place for worship / meditation:** An Ideal Hindu Home should have a separate area for worship / meditation. Pictures of Gods, photos of ancestors, a lamp, incense sticks, religious books, etc are usually kept in this room. Each morning after shower, and once in the evening, spend a few minutes here, chant a few shlokas you know, and focus your mind on prayer. Learn to meditate.

**Displaying Hindu symbols:** Where appropriate throughout the house, display Hindu symbols such as Om, Swastika, Bhagwa Dhvaj, pictures of holy places, spiritual personalities, etc. These will constantly remind you of your hoary heritage, and serve as an inspiration to live as an ideal Hindu.

**Celebrating festivals:** Become educated on reading a Hindu calendar, and be aware of when festivals occur. Continue to celebrate festivals that are customary in your family. Learn why and how the festival is celebrated, including the rituals associated with it. These practices may have been passed on for several generations in your family, and you want to be sure to pass them on to your future generations. Share the happiness of the occasion by calling your friends and family to greet them, or visit them if possible. Contemplate the social aspect of the festival, and act (such as giving money for charity, doing social work, etc). Celebrate birthdays through Hindu traditions.

**Language, Music and Arts:** Someone once said “If you want to destroy a culture, destroy the language”. Language, music and arts are key things that form the basis of a civilization and culture. These too have been passed on through generations, so at home make every effort to preserve and practice them. Learn to speak, read and write in your mother tongue. Learn one or more Hindu arts (such as dancing, singing, rangoli, mehendi, etc), and when proficient, teach to others. The personal satisfaction in being good in language and arts, as well as the gratification in preserving and promoting them is invaluable.

#### **Behavioral characteristics of an Ideal Hindu Home**

**Respect for parents and elders:** Show respect to your parents and elders in deed and in words. If you have to disagree with them, do so in a way that is not hurtful or offensive. Remind yourself that your parent will never intentionally do or ask you do anything that would be detrimental to you.

Also be reverential to your forefathers.

**Doing things together:** Doing things together truly bonds the family, and develops mutual understanding, love, and confidence among the family members. Consider doing a collective evening prayer and Arti, having at least one meal together everyday, etc. Once a week, sit down together to discuss rituals, traditions, or just tell stories.

**Getting up early:** Early morning is called ‘Brahma Muhurt’ by Hindus and is considered a very auspicious time to do things. Modern science has also confirmed the varied physical and emotional benefits of getting up early (and consequently going to bed early). In practical terms, you will realize that you can get a lot more accomplished when your body and mind are rested and alert.

**Avoiding waste:** There’s a Hindu saying: “Mother Earth has enough to provide us with all our need, but not all our greed”. Be very mindful of what is consumed, and what is wasted. Water, food, all forms of energy, paper, etc are all precious resources that we should conserve as much as possible. By extension, try to avoid buying things on impulse; buy only what you have identified as truly needed after considerable thought. Avoid an ostentatious lifestyle – live frugally and learn to enjoy the pleasure in giving.

**Being a role model:** Practice the above, educate yourself on Hinduism, and resolve to be socially active. Try to do everything to the best of your ability. These will make you a role model for others to emulate. To create such individuals is the goal of an Ideal Hindu Home.

## **2. Makarsakranti**

→ **Not a baudhik** (Not complete charcha either. Baudhik – charcha mode leaning more towards baudhik)

- **Some questions:** Have you ever participated in MakarSakranti in India?
  - Ever flew the kites in US?
  - How do you celebrate Makar Sankranti in your part of Bharat?

→ **Why do we need to celebrate utsav?**

<http://www.ghspreston.org.uk/otherpages/hindu/festivals.htm>

- To a Hindu all days of the year are holy as they are dedicated to God. However, astrology, ritualism etc. have supplied us numerous holidays in a year. The festivals of India have a two-fold purpose. It gives an individual opportunity for his self-realisation as well as social gaiety. Each festival is unique in its appeal to some vital aspect of the evolution of the human soul and human society.
- Through celebration of festivals the whole family makes new acquaintances and renews the old, they enjoy delicious dishes after making due offering to the Divine, and exhibit new clothes and jewellery. At these occasions the little ones pick up their first lessons into Hinduism through songs and stories.

### → **Meaning of Makarsankranti**

- Makar means Capricorn and Sankranti is transition. There is a sankranti every month when the sun passes from one sign of the zodiac to the next. There are twelve signs of the zodiac, and thus there are twelve sankranti's as well. Each of these sankranti's has its own relative importance but two of these are more important - the Mesh(Aries) Sankranti and the most important, the Makar(Capricorn) Sankranti. Transition of the Sun from Sagittarius to Capricorn, during the winter solstice in the northern hemisphere is known as Makar Sankranti. From this day begins the six-month long Uttarayana, considered very auspicious for attaining higher worlds hereafter.

### → **Story** (different stories in each paragraph) – <http://www.rudraksharatna.com/makarsankranti.html>

- The Puranas say that on this day Sun visits the house of his son Shani, who is the swami of Makar Rashi. These father & son do not ordinarily get along nicely, but in spite of any difference between each other Lord Sun makes it a point to meet each other on this day.
- From Uttarayana starts the 'day' of Devas, while dakshinayana is said to be the 'night' of devas, so most of the auspicious things are done during this time.
- It was on this day when Lord Vishnu ended the ever increasing terrorism of the Asuras by finishing them off and burying their heads under the Mandar Parvat.
- The great savior of his ancestors, Maharaj Bhagirath, did great Tapasya to bring Gangaji River down on the earth for the redemption of 60,000 sons of Maharaj Sagar, who were burnt to ashes at the Kapil Muni Ashram, near the present day Ganga Sagar. It was on this day that Bhagirath finally did tarpan with the Ganges water for his unfortunate ancestors and thereby liberated them from the curse.

## **3. Symbols of Hinduism**

### **Symbols in Hinduism**

The Hindu symbols are divine and have a scientific, logical and spiritual significance. Understanding them lends meaning and appreciation to all Hindu customs, traditions and beliefs. Hindu culture tailors itself constantly to take the best of the modern technological age without losing its roots. It is this adaptability that has enabled Hinduism to be recognized as one of the world's oldest living religion. The term 'symbol' means 'representation'. Each symbol in Hinduism represents an aspect of Hindu way of life. Here are some of the most prominent and frequently used symbols.

## **Aum (Om)**

Aum is the universal name of Eshwara. The Aum symbolizes the three states (waking, dream and deep sleep), the three deities (Brahma, Vishnu and Maheshwara), the three Vedas (Rig, Yajur and Sama), the three worlds (Bhuh, Bhuvah, Suvah). Aum is also called pranava that means 'that (symbol or sound) by which the Eshwara is praised'. It is believed that Eshwara began to create the world after chanting Aum. Hence its sound is considered to create an auspicious beginning for any task that we undertake. Aum creates profound effect on the body and mind of the one who chants and also on the surroundings. So it is a frequently chanted sound by Hindus all over the world. The Hindus repeat Aum as a mantra for meditation. They greet each other saying 'Hari Om' or Om etc. They worship and use this auspicious sign for all spiritual occasions.

AUM is a very important symbol in Hinduism. It is a comprehensive symbol in the shape of the spoken word and thus reduces the infinite to the finite level of understanding in a form and name. AUM is the harmonious combination of three basic sounds – A, U, and M. Within these three sounds are all the sounds that can be produced by a human vocal system. AKAARA comes from the depth of the throat, UKAARA is the sound starting at the throat and coming towards the tongue, and MAKAARA is the sound concentrated at the end of the vocal system, the lips. It also has a fourth part which is the silence that takes one within oneself. AKAARA kills the krodha, anger, UKAARA kills the dwesha, hatred, and MAKAARA kills the fear. So, the compound symbol AUM in its entirety kills the ego in a man. AUM is supposed to be the ultimate sound and the sound that came out when the world was created. The genius in the Vedic Masters gave us AUM as an ideal idol to worship the inner temples of oneself.

## **Swastika**

Swastika is derived from sanskrit word 'svastika' which is composed of 'su' meaning 'good' and 'asti' meaning 'to be'. Together it means 'well being'. In India, it is used as a symbol of fertility and good luck. Swastika in Hindu culture also symbolizes the sun and the positive energy from it. It is most commonly associated with Ganeshji, the bhagwan of prosperity and wealth. Hindus all around the world use this symbol to

denote auspiciousness, good luck and prosperity in their homes and in all kinds of religious occasions.

Another one of the important Hindu symbols is Swastika. Swastika = "well being" (the good). The horizontal lines represent the "social aspect" of a person's life (or the soul) and the vertical lines are the "spiritual aspect". The big horizontal line in the middle has little vertical lines on the sides meaning that social aspects of life should have some spirituality in it. The big vertical line has little horizontal lines in the end which is that even the Spiritual aspect should have some social aspect in it. And the swastika, as a whole, kind of looks like its going in a circle (like a cycle) which represents the cycle of birth and death.

## **Bhagwa Dhwaj**

Bhagwa (saffron color) represents the "sun". The sun has the highest place in vedic literature as the sustainer of all and the source of energy. It acts as a reminder of the power of God, the act of selfless service and renunciation. The Bhagwa Dhwaj in the same way represents selfless service and righteousness. It stands for our sustained effort to uphold dharma through self sacrifice. The Bhagwa dhwaj reminds us of our duty towards the Hindu community and the society as a whole. The Bhagwa dhwaj can be found on Hindu temples and other Hindu religious sites.

No one knows when and how this flag came into being. It is an ancient as the Hindu people themselves. It has flown over the hermitages of the seers and sanyaasins and also over the celestial palaces of emperors. It has flown triumphantly over the battlefields of freedom struggle and has symbolized the immortal spirit of freedom in the Hindu mind. It is the one supreme symbol held in universal reverence by all sects and castes, and all creeds and faiths of the Hindu people. It is in fact the greatest unifying symbol of the entire Hindu world.

The color of the Bhagava Dhwaj - the saffron, depicting renunciation and service, epitomizes the culture of Bharat. The flames rising from the yajna are saffron in color and indeed reflect this spirit. The concept of yajna is extraordinarily unique to Hindu culture and tradition. Yajna is not merely a physical ritual. That is only symbolic. The Bhagavad Geeta describes the concept of yajna as the sacrificial offering of one's self to the good of all beings. "Not mine, but thine" is the true message of yajna. Whatever one achieves in this life in terms of physical prosperity and knowledge, one has to offer them back to the society.

## **Shankh (Conch)**

Shankh represents dharma or righteousness that is one of the four goals of life. The sound of conch is thus also the victory call of good over evil. The story goes, the demon Shankaasura defeated the devas, stole the Vedas and went to the bottom of the ocean.

Bhagwan Vishnu in the form of matsya (fish) killed Shankhaasura. Mahavishnu blew the conch-shaped bone of the asura's ear and head. The sound of Om emanated, from which emerged the Vedas. All knowledge enshrined in the Vedas is an elaboration of Om. The conch therefore is known as shankh. Shankh is blown traditionally in poojas and sacred occasions. The sound of the conch produces auspicious sounds and drowns all negative noises that disturb the minds of worshippers. Lord Krishna blew the conch called the paanchajanya when he was charioteer to Arjuna in the Kurukshetra war.