

शुभमस्तु  
Subhamastu

अविघ्नमस्तु  
Avighnamastu

विजयोस्तु  
Vijayostu



# आलय संदेशः

[Aalaya Sandeshaha]  
**Sri Venkateswara Temple Newsletter**  
10401 McKinzie Lane, Corpus Christi, TX 78410  
Phone 361-241-0550 [www.svtempletexas.org](http://www.svtempletexas.org)  
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Dear Devotees,

Thanks to everyone who congratulated us on the introduction of the Temple's first Newsletter. We welcome your suggestions and contributions. As we celebrate Bhogi, Makara Sankranti and Radhasapthami during the month of January, this Newsletter provides very interesting and useful information regarding these events.

## New Trustees

**Mr. Avinash Ahuja**

**Mrs. Sreedevi  
Padmanabhan**

**Mr. Rakesh Patel**

**Mr. Pinakin Patel**

Apart from this, I am pleased to welcome Mr. Avinash Ahuja, Mrs. Sridevi Padmanabhan, Mr. Pinakin Patel and Mr. Rakesh Patel to the Board of Trustees of our temple.

As I mentioned in the previous Newsletter, the Festival of India/Health Fair is scheduled for Saturday, February 27 from 10:00 a.m to 3:00 p.m. Lunch-plate tickets are available and I encourage everyone to buy these tickets for their family and friends as soon as possible. (Recently information regarding this event along with a colorful flyer was sent via e-mail). If you are interested in performing at the event, please feel free to contact Mrs. Ritha Kulkarni (361-991-2919) or Mrs. Sridevi Padmanabhan (361-813-8770) as soon as possible. Your help in this regard is highly appreciated.

Finally, I would like to remind our devotees to visit our website [www.svtempletexas.org](http://www.svtempletexas.org) to find out about temple events, read Newsletters and to view the gallery of photos taken during our previous events at the temple.

Sincerely,  
M.P.Sudhakaran  
President

Some of the major events during the month of January are **Bhogi, Sankranti, Rathasaptami** and **Bheeshma Ekadasi**. Let us have a look at these festivals and their importance and good effects of performing them.

First is Bhogi, the day before Sankranti. Traditionally, on this day everyone wakes up early in the morning before sunrise, takes head bath and wears new clothes, and starts fire in a safe area. Everyone gathers around the fire (good because it's cold). Old, discardable things are thrown into fire inviting Lord Agni, symbolic of burning useless thoughts.

**Sankranti**, also, popular as **Makara Sankramanam** is celebrated when Sun moves from Dhanuraasi to Makara raasi, hence the name Makara Sankramanam. "Sankramanam" means change from one place to another. Navagrahadhipati, Ravi (Sun) moves from one raasi to another once a month. Hence, there is a Sankranti every month from Mesha raasi to Meena raasi. Of all the twelve Sankrantis, Makara Sankranti is celebrated as the most auspicious Sankranti, because, from that day Ravi's travel is towards North which is the beginning of the **Uttarayanam**. This results in multifold increase in punya.. This was illustrated in Bheeshmaachaarya's story. He was badly hurt in war and it was **Dakshinaayanam** which was not a good time to die. Since he had the power to decide the day and time of his death, he stayed on bed of arrows until **uttaraayana punya kaalam** and left his body. Vishnu Sahasra Naamams were chanted and it imparted significance to annual rituals to "pitru devathas".

Sun's travel is divided into two parts. When Sun is in North of equator, it is Uttaraayanam and when it is in South of equator it is Dakshinaayanam. In uttaraayanam, Sun travels slowly, hence days will be longer and in dakhinaayanam Sun travels faster and days will be shorter. When he travels in Mesha(Aries) and Tula (Libra) Raasis, days and nights are equal.

Next is **Rathasaptami** (**Ratha** means Chariot and **Saptami** is seventh lunar day). This year it is on January 22, on seventh day of bright half (Sukla Paksha) of month Maagha. It marks the seventh day of Sun's northerly movement of vernal equinox, starting from Capricorn (makara). It is symbolically represented by Sun god (Surya) turning Ratha towards northern hemisphere in a northeastern direction. It also marks birth of Surya, hence called Surya Jayanti. The seven horses represent rainbow (seven colors) and also seven days starting with Sunday. Twelve signs of zodiac, each of thirty degrees totaling 360 degrees, constituting a full year (Samvatsara). Sun's own house is Simha (Leo). He moves from house to house every month and the total cycle takes 365 days.

Sun worship is deep rooted. Rathasaptami festival seeks the benevolent cosmic spread of energy and light from Sun god. Sun was born (incarnated) on Rathasaptami to Sage Kasyapa and his wife Aditi. It is also celebrated as Surya Jayanti (Birth of Surya). One of his names 'Aditya' comes from his mother. Worshipping Sun on this day is very auspicious. Worship of Sun blesses with health.

आरोग्यम् ददातु दिनकरः  
ArOgyam dadAtu dinakaraH  
( Sun gives health)

Sun god is “Namaskaara Priya” ( Loves to receive salutations). People offer *Surya Namaskaaras* in his honor reciting all twelve names.

### The 12 Names of Surya

- 1 Om **Mitraya namah** (The friend of all)
- 2 Om **Ravaye namah** (Praised by all)
- 3 Om **Suryaya namah** (The guide of all)
- 4 Om **Bhanave namah** (The bestower of beauty)
- 5 Om **Khagaya namah** (Stimulator of the senses)
- 6 Om **Pushne namah** (The nourisher of all)
- 7 Om **Hiranyagarbhaya namah** (The creator)
- 8 Om **Marichaye namah** (Destroyer of disease)
- 9 Om **Adityaya namah** (The inspirer)
- 10 Om **Savitre namah** (The purifier)
- 11 Om **Arkaya namah** (The radiant)
- 12 Om **Bhaskaraya namah** (The illuminator)

Of the rituals performed on this day, “Bath” is very important. Bath is best taken in a holy river in a holy place. Before bath, leaves are made like a bowl, “Deepam” (light) is put in it and left in river. The special bath includes placing seven leaves on head and other parts of the body to obtain good health. Mantra chanted while taking bath is---

यदा जन्म कृतम् जन्मसु जन्मसु                      yadA janma kRutam janmasu janmasu  
तन्मे रोगंच, शोकंच माकरी हन्तु सप्तमि              tanmE rOgaMca, SOkaMca mAkarI hantu saptami  
येतज्जन्म कृतम् पापम् यच्च जन्मान्तराजितः      Yetajjanma kRutam pApam yacca janmAntarAjitaH  
मनोवाक्कायजं यच्च डात डातेच येपुनः              manOvAkkAyajaM yacca gnAta gnAtEca yepunaH

The Maagha bath cures all ailments and erases sins committed in the past seven janmas (births).

The next event is **Bheeshma Ekadasi**, on January 26, (Shukla paksha Ekadasi) in Maagha masam.. It is an auspicious occasion, also considered as the birth day of Vishnu Sahasranama Stotram. Vishnu Sahasranama stotram was revealed to Pandavas by Bheeshma. While on the bed of arrows, Bheeshma revealed the stotram to Pandavas and became a major reason for their success in Kurukshetra war. Lord Krishna himself told Pandavas that chanting Vishnu’s thousand names will provide success and salvation in life.

\*\*\*Om Tat Sat \*\*\*