



Baudhik Yojana for April-May 2006

Target Group: Kishor

<u>Format</u>	<u>Topics for April</u>	<u>Page</u>
Baudhik	Hindu Dharma and Sewa	2
Charchaa	P.P Guruji and Spiritual Nature of Sangh Work	4
Baudhik	Hindu Dharma and Women	6
Baudhik	Ramnavami	7
Charchaa	Spiritual Nature of SanghWork	8

<u>Format</u>	<u>Topics for May</u>	<u>Page</u>
Charchaa	Vidhyarthi Vistarak Yojana	10
Baudhik	Migration of Hindus around the World	11
Baudhik	Hindu – Mayan Similarities	14
Baudhik	Hindu Sangathan Diwas	16

April Week 1: Hindu Dharma and Sewa

In Hindu scriptures 'Dharma' has been defined as that which sustains (“*Dharayata iti Dharmaha*”). It encompasses all those systems and values which are instrumental and necessary in maintaining harmonious relationships between the individual, his family, society, and the universe. Dharma can also be translated as duty. It is the Dharma of a parent to take care of his child. It is the dharma of governments to serve, guide, and protect their citizens and lead to their prosperity. The conduct and actions of the Hindus must be guided at every level and in every sphere by Dharma.

On the universal plane, the precept of *Vasudhev Kutumbhkam* ('The Universe is One Family') teaches us tolerance and empathy for one another. When we accept that the universe is our family, we realize that part of our Dharma is unity and brotherhood to all and to serve all. One must not only help others in society; one must also fulfill one's duty and obligations to the Universal family.

Sarve bhavantu sukhinah, sarve santu niraamayaah

Sarve bhadraani pashyant, maa kashchid dukkhabhaag bhavet

This slokah means “May all be happy; may all be free from afflictions; may all see the goodness of others and in everything; may no one's lot suffer sorrow.” For a society to prosper and be happy, it's physical well-being must be maintained. To sustain Dharma, it is the duty of all human beings to make sure everyone has adequate food and shelter.

Swami Vivekananda once said that “service to humanity is service to God.” Service to society and other living beings should be done in a selfless manner. Service should not be performed without expectation of any return, but treated as a service to God. Service should be carried out with love and regard, with compassion and understanding, and without hurting the dignity or self-respect of the beneficiary. There are three ways that one can give:

Tan – Body

This is physically giving your body to service. This can entail many things, such as volunteering to clean temples as well as cooking meals for the homeless. This would entail taking a more active role in Shakra in order to serve the Hindu Society and the society-at-large.

Man – Mind

‘*Sarveshameva Dananam Brahdadanam Vishishyate*’ (Manu Smruti) means charity of any kind is good but the best is that of imparting knowledge. Real charity is that which provides a permanent source of honest earning to the poor person, enabling him to stand on his own feet in the future. Teaching, tutoring, or mentoring are some effective methods of sharing knowledge with others.

Dhan – Money

If someone keeps all that he accumulates for himself and does not give it to others, the hoarded wealth will eventually prove to be the cause of ruin (Rig Veda, 10-117-6). Money or the giving of material goods is the most recognized form of providing service. Unfortunately, wealth in today's world is unequally distributed. One should not consider oneself as the owner of God-given wealth but only as a trustee. "***Shatahasta samahara sahasrahasta sankira***" (Atharva Veda, 3-24-5), which means one may amass wealth with hundreds of hands but should distribute it with thousands of hands.

Since there can be no argument for the need of Seva, why is it hard for one to perform it? Volunteering to clean a temple means missing a football game. Writing a check for the Sewa International, a non-profit organization dedicated to providing economic support and relief in India, means missing dinner at a fancy restaurant. Teaching someone to read means less free time for yourself. While not all people feel this way, many people feel performing Seva is a sacrifice. This, in fact, is true. Seva is a sacrifice in the sense that something is given such as time or money for the sake of something else. However, one should not feel they are suffering materialistically or personally by giving away time or money to a worthy cause. Since Seva is performing one's dharma, one should not suffer when one is doing one's duty. Dharmic actions should always be performed with a pure heart with no expectations of the fruits of the actions. In the long run, this will bring more benefits than one can possibly imagine.

April Week 2: P.P Guruji and Spiritual Nature of Sangh Work

First, quickly go over the key facts of P.P. Shri Guruji's life (everyone should know but just check just in case). Then, go to this week's focus would be P.P. Shri Guruji and spiritual nature of sangh work.

Basic facts abt P.P. Shri Guruji's life;

- Very brilliant even as a child
- Came into contact with sangh while a lecturer in BHU.
- Constant tussle between going to Himalayas & working for society. In 1936, went to Saragachi to serve Akhandananda; also ordained thru "mantra deeksha"
- Identified closely with sangh from 1938 onwards.
- Became S-sanghachalak upon Doctor ji's death in 1940
- Pracharak institution become more solid starting in the 40's
- Lead sangh thru trying times of partition, ban on sangh after Gandhi hatya.
- Articulated many positions of sangh with respect to linguistic basis of states, predicting Chinese aggression.
- Worked hard amongst sants to bring them together on 1 platform and speak out in unison against Untouchability.
- Died in 1973, having nurtured the sapling planted by Doctor ji into a big banyan tree.

Swami Akhandananda had ordained P.P. Shri Guruji in mantra deeksha. This means that P.P. Shri Guruji was as good as a Swamiji. However, he decided that his true mission was for the Sangh, which in itself is a spiritual goal. (Now, we can ask whether the kishor see Sangh work in a spiritual light or not.)

Kanchi Shankaracharya was doing his daily pooja. P.P. Shri Guruji happened to be visiting the area. He requested to have darshan to one of the disciples. Kanchi Shankaracharya who was inside the inner sanctum of the prayer hall, requested P.P. Shri Guruji to be brought over to the inner sanctum without having to take his shirt off. Typically in many S Indian temples, men are supposed to take off the shirt as a symbolic sign of inner purity, lack of self-consciousness, etc. After the meeting, a disciple asked Shankaracharya how he could exempt P.P. Shri Guruji from such a sacred rule. Shankaracharya said that such rules are only for normal folks and P.P. Shri Guruji is beyond such trivialities. Indeed it showed how much respect P.P. Shri Guruji commanded from one of the most regarded sants of Hindu Dharma.

It can be said that doing spiritual sadhana such as pooja, fasting, reading puranas, etc. are different activities that constitute trying to live a Hindu way of life. Ultimately these are means to achieve higher qualities such as selflessness, equanimity, compassion for all, etc. It is in the field of working for the Samaj that an individual is truly put to test as to how well he/she is succeeding in adopting these qualities in his/her life. Similarly, one swami ji once remarked that while Sangh was a great organization, it needed to add some spiritual practices to its routine. P.P. Shri Guruji then responded that following the ideals

mentioned in the Sangh Prarthana and becoming an ideal Swayamsevak is the ultimate spiritual act.

After the ban on sangh (we can give brief history of the ban if time permits), P.P. Shri Guruji took nationwide tour. In many places, there was name-calling and in fact his own house had to be protected from goondas. It would have been easy to take a “Durvasa attitude” (quick to give curses) but instead he took the attitude that the teeth shouldn’t bite the tongue. How many sadhus, let alone human beings have such magnanimity? After all, it is ultimately the manifestation of values that makes one spiritual.

While we all know that the Bhagavad Gita talks comprehensively about the different paths to reach God such as jnaana yoga, Bhakti yoga, karma yoga, and Raja yoga. It is considered a spiritual text. Yet, what incident is the Gita centered on? It is centered on Arjuna becoming ready to fight the Kauravas since at that point in time, that was true spirituality. Similarly, it is said, “sanghe shakti kalou yuge” ie unity is strength. Sangh is involved in “Dharma Samsthaapanarthaya” (establishing Dharma).

April Week 3: Hindu Dharma and Women

Women are the Divine Treasures in every Family: Dharma towards Women

Respect for women is one of the most cherished values of our culture. Not only is one's own mother to be regarded as equal to God (Matru Devo Bhava), every girl/woman is regarded as the incarnation of motherhood. This value was evolved as the most powerful antidote against baser instincts in males to make sexual onslaught on a woman, which would ruin her life. This value is still acting as the greatest safeguard against offences against women, despite the adverse impact of Western civilization which regards women as the mere physical pleasure of males. There must be a rejection of such animal instincts and protect and preserve one of the most human and divine eternal values.

There is much criticism surrounding a verse in the Manusmriti in which it is said that a woman requires protection throughout her life. Most of the criticism is centered around the idea that this verse is intended to rob the freedom of women. In response to this criticism, Kerry Brown, a woman British author, has expounded its real meaning:

“In Hinduism a woman is looked after not because she is inferior or incapable but, on the contrary, because she is treasured. She is the pride and power of the society. Just as the crown jewels should not be left unguarded, neither should a woman be left unprotected. No extra burden of earning a living should be placed on women who already bear huge responsibilities in society: childbirth, childcare, domestic well-being and spiritual growth. She is the transmitter of culture to her children.”

The Hand that Rocks the Cradle Rules the World: Dharma of Women

It is undisputable that the child's first guru is the mother. Therefore, the mother possesses the power to change the course of history by properly molding the mind and character of her children. Satguru Sivyaya Subramaniaswami writes:

“It is a proven fact that most of the people in prison were neglected or beaten as children. It is also a proven fact that nearly all parents who mistreat their children were themselves mistreated by their parents. Unless mothers care and love their children, society will inherit an entire generation of frustrated adults who were once frustrated children. These will later be the people who rule the World.”

Furthermore, an in-depth study of the family system in India is sure to show that it is the women who by playing their role in the capacity of wife, mother, sister, sister-in-law, grandmother, etc. was able to protect and preserve our cultural values despite the many invasions and acts of destruction that went through India.

April Week 4: Ramnavami

The birth of a hero:

Ram Navami is a festival that celebrates the birth of Lord Rama, the son of King Dasharath. It was a joyous occasion in Ayodhya all those centuries ago when King Dasharath's heir was finally born. It was like a dream come true for the king as the lack of an heir had troubled him sorely for many years.

Lord Rama is an avatar of Lord Vishnu who came down to earth to battle the invincible Ravana in human form. Lord Brahma had been receiving complaints from all the gods about the havoc that Ravana was wreaking on earth, but because Lord Brahma had granted Ravana so many boons, he could not be killed by a god. But Ravana had become so overconfident that he would never expect an attack from a human being. So Lord Vishnu agreed to go to earth in the guise of Prince Ram, the son of King Dasharath and Queen Kaushalya.

The story of Lord Rama as told in the great epic Ramayana is one that most Indians know irrespective of caste, creed and religion. Lord Rama is a legendary figure, the epitome of all that is good and true, the man who vanquished the demon king Ravana. Lord Rama is not just a hero, but has been given the status of a god by the Hindus. Therefore, it comes as no surprise that his birth is celebrated year after year with great pomp and enjoyment on the ninth day after the new moon in Sukul Paksh (the waxing moon), which falls sometime in the month of April.

The festivities:

So how is Ram Navami celebrated? Some people choose to fast on this day. The diet of such a person would include potatoes made in any form without haldi (turmeric), garlic, ginger or onion. He can also eat fruit and root vegetables of any kind. Curd, tea, coffee, milk, and water are also permitted.

Bhajans praising the exploits of Lord Rama, his loyal brother Lakshman and his devoted wife Sita are sung. The house is swept clean and pictures of Lord Rama, Lakshman, Sita and Hanuman are put on a dais in preparation for the puja. Flowers and incense are kept before the deities. There are two thaalis kept ready in the puja area. One contains the prasad and the other the items necessary for the puja like roli, aipun, rice, water, flowers, a bell and a conch.

First, the youngest female member of the family applies teeka to all the male members of the family. A red bindi is applied on the foreheads of all the female members. Everyone participates in the puja by first sprinkling the water, roli, and aipun on the gods and then showering handfuls of rice on the deities. Then everybody stands up to perform the arti at the end of which ganga jal or plain water is sprinkled over the gathering. The singing of bhajans goes on for the entire puja. Finally, the prasad is distributed among all the people who have gathered for worship.

April Week 5: Spirituality and Sangh Work

What is spirituality and what makes sangh spiritual or perhaps make it seem not spiritual?

What is the real meaning of spiritual and does sangh work qualify as spiritual?

Spirituality could be seen as progress towards realizing the divine nature of the soul. It could also be thought of as the path of the spiral going from focusing simply on oneself to one's family and then beyond family to the society, nation, and whole world. After all, for a sanyasi, the whole world is 1 big family and sanyasis are automatically connected with the word "spiritual". Many associate spirituality with various religious practices as religious rituals are supposed to help us on our inner path. It is worth examining how various swayamsevaks/sevikas define spirituality. Then, we can see that spirituality can be defined in many different ways.

One of the dictionary definitions is "of or relating to the soul." Another definition is "of or relating to God." One commonality is likely to be that it relates to something "otherworldly" or else something to do with one's inner journey and happiness. So, even the dictionary does not have 1 exact definition. Thus for the sake of the charcha, we'll have to assume that it has something to do with an inner journey towards inner peace/god realization/etc. Religion and rituals are a seemingly obvious manifestation of spirituality. Some people do 10-minute poojas. Other people do daily 1 or 2-hour poojas. As long as the basic principles are remembered, rituals are meaningful. It adds to the diversity of society, which helps us learn to live together. It also reflects the ancient saying of "ekam sat viprah bahudaah vadanti" meaning that truth is one and sages call it by many names. As a practical example, we see various spiritual organizations and paths be it Swaminarayan, Swadhyay, Chinmaya mission, some Vaishnav path, Shaiva path, etc.

All this being said, can we consider shakha as a spiritual activity?

Reasons why Sangh may not be seen as spiritual

- 1-There are no swami ji's in Sangh
- 2-We don't have any obvious religious ritual in sangh
- 3-We often have utsavs in ganavesh and not in dhoti/kurtha/sari, etc.
- 4-We take stances on some political issues
- 5-Not all swayamsevaks are well versed in religious rituals or precepts

Replies to the above potential reasons sangh may not be seen as spiritual. (First let them think about the response before we hand out some of the key points).

1-There are no swami's in sangh because our work is not vyakti nisht but tatwa nisht (principle based rather than person based). Sangh creates karyakarthis who dress just like ordinary human beings so people can relate to them. No individual however perfect can become an object of unity for the whole society.

2-We have sangh prarthana so in effect that spiritual element of prayer still exists. An elaborate ritual is not there simply because the diversity in Bharat is so much that it's not possible to do justice to all of them; Nonetheless, HSS does do some festivals like Ganesh pooja in a religious manner. However, our organization encompasses religious/cultural/social/political all in one.

3-ganavesh symbolizes a certain commonness of purpose. It is also a samskar just like obeying one's elders, praying to god, etc. The inner transformation is what matters. There are already enough mangal vesh occasions in the society and sangh too has occasions for mangal vesh

4-Sangh is established to unite Hindu society and establish Dharma. Sangh will oppose anything, which is standing in the way. Krishna after all told Arjuna to fight and yet Hindus consider Gita a holy book. This is because protection of Dharma is supreme. Thus sangh is absolutely entitled to voice its opposition to factors like conversions by fraud, terrorism, corruption, etc.

5-Swayamsevaks too are human beings and thus come in a variety of forms. We indeed hope that more and more swayamsevaks/sevikas do some minimum scriptural reading and are conversant with the basics of Hindu Dharma but not all will have the same aptitude for any given pooja paddhati. Like there is jnaana yoga, bhakti yoga, karma yoga, etc. swayamsevaks/sevikas are free to choose their path of sadhana.

Reasons why sangh is spiritual

- 1 - We are working for the welfare of humanity
 - 2 - We are building up each individual's character
 - 3 - We are putting into practice those values, which our scriptures hold dear
 - 4 - We have a living model "Shakha" which embodies what an ideal society ought to be like.
 - 5 - We are applying "Sanghe shakti kalou yuge" principle and thus, we are bringing people together for a higher purpose apart from just providing individual samskars.
 - 6 - We approach shakha work as a sadhana and not just as a hobby, therefore we are applying the principles of the Bhagavad Gita i.e. karma yoga, nishkaama karma, etc.
- (We can see what other reasons come up as to why sangh is spiritual)

Last but not least, it is up to us to see sangh work as spiritual and as a sadhana. Otherwise, today it is shakha and tomorrow I will get bored of sangh work and try out another hobby. Thus, let us approach sangh as a sadhana, which uplifts us and helps us uplift others in the process, which will help us to remain as lifelong karyakarthis.

May Week 1: Vidhyarathi Vistarak Yojana

Vidhyarathi Vistarak Yojana for the Kishor should be discussed during the Shakha to see how many Kishor can give some time during the summer. Following are the four broad categories for the Vidhyarathi Vistarak Yojana, the last two are mainly applicable to Kishor.

Vistarak giving 3 weeks or more:

1. Mainly University students or Kishors
2. Can go out of state/Sambhag
3. Out of home all the time.

Vistaraks giving 4-6 or more weekends at a stretch:

1. Mainly young professionals
2. Can go to satellite towns, if possible out of state.
3. Out of home for 2 nights a week.

Vistaraks giving 7-21 days at a stretch:

1. Mainly Kishors
2. Can go to satellite towns,different area of same city
3. Out of home all the time.

Vistaraks at home(at least 7+ days at a stretch):

1. Kishor & University students
2. Group is Preferable & effective
3. Stay at home. Come at a common place together & spend eve for sampark in different areas
4. Suitable for a Biginner Kishor group in Metro cities like Bay area,Boston etc..

May Week 2: Migration of Hindus Around the World

One of the primary reasons for the migration of Hindus throughout different parts of the world was due to the expansion and colonization by Europeans. After the abolition of slavery in the 19th century there was a great need for workers to fill the role of the newly freed slaves and eventually the laborious tasks performed by Africans were taken over by Indians. Under the guise of false promises, Indians were taken as indentured servants to several colonies in other countries including the Caribbean Islands and a number of colonies in Africa. There these indentured servants endured similar conditions that the slaves before them had to endure.

On the long voyages across the oceans, Hindus were allowed to take next to nothing with them. In the Caribbean for example, the two main texts that indentured servants were able to bring were the Bhagavad Gita and the Tulsidas Ramayan because of this, these are still the prime two texts that can be found in this part of the world. Although they weren't able to bring physical belongings, Hindus brought with them something else—their culture and strong values. Examples of these would be things such as their language and family structure. Faced with different circumstances in each region, Hindus outside of Bharat developed a unique culture over time as they thrived in their new homes.

The unique culture of each area of the world where Hindus were taken can not be generalized, so to understand some of the facets of exactly what happened, we'll use Guyana as an example. As previously stated, the Bhagavad Gita and the Tulsidas Ramayan were the two texts that were brought to this country. Because of this, Hindus from this part of the world would have a good amount of knowledge on the story of Rama, but on the other hand usually don't know much about something as common as the Mahabharat. This simple example demonstrates a powerful point that the analysis of the Ramayan is what shaped the lives of Hindus there compared to the other great texts. One outside element that affected the people here was the constant conversion initiatives from Christian missionaries. As Hindus ended their indenture ship in time, to obtain a government job or to even attend certain schools, one had to be a Christian to do so. As they worked on plantations, many Hindus weren't even allowed to practice their religion as freely as they were used to. All of these factors caused the Hindu community in this country to practice Hinduism in a more active form compared to other areas. Coordinated satsanghs and pujas became a major part in the life of these Hindus.

As the culture evolved, certain aspects were lost over time as well. The languages of Hindi and Bhojpuri that were brought here eventually faded through the generations. Pandits and a few others were the only ones who could understand it in the end. The great philosophies of Bharat became lost as well, contributing to the prominence of satsanghs and pujas. But the values of these Hindus were never lost as can be seen in the strong family structure that still exists today. Even the foods prepared today are similar to those in Bharat, although prepared slightly different and different spices are utilized. One key example that can help demonstrate how the society affected the growth of the Hindus here compared to Bharat was that something as common as the caste system, which took on a prominent role in Bharat due to certain factors deteriorated in Guyana.

One thing that did not change however was the constant effort to flourish and improve one's society which is something that every Hindu around the world continues to do today. It can be credited that if Indians weren't present in the plantations of Guyana, the sugar industry that existed in this country might have ceased to thrive. A major contribution the Indians in Guyana made was the development of the rice industry. Guyana today still depends heavily on its agricultural economy.

As unique factors affected the Hindus of Guyana, Hindus in other parts of the world faced their own problems. Similar to how the cultures in one state of Bharat isn't the same as in another state, so have the cultures of Hindus in other countries evolved in the generations since they left their homeland. Followers of Sanathan Dharma have never conformed to just one generic belief and the diversity of the Hindu people today only helps to add to the richness of this great culture.

This chart helps to illustrate the migration patterns in some of the colonies around the world. The site <http://caribbeanhindu.net> can also be utilized to gain other historical facts from primarily Hindus in the Caribbean countries.

Table 1: Indians taken to overseas European territories (except those of Southeast Asia) in the 19th and 20th centuries.

Colony (Country)	Period	Indian Immigrants	Indian population 1980 est.
Mauritius	1834-1912	453,063	623,000
Guyana	1838-1917	238,909	424,400
Natal (South Africa)	1860-1911	152,184	750,000
Trinidad	1845-1917	143,939	421,000
Reunion	1829-1924	118,000	125,000
Fiji	1879-1916	60,969	300,700
Guadeloupe	1854-1885	42,326	23,165
Kenya	1895-1901	39,771	79,000
Jamica	1854-1885	36,420	50,300
Surinam	1873-1916	34,000	124,900
Martinique	1854-1889	25,509	16,450
Seychelles	1899-1916	6,319	
St. Lucia	1858-1895	4,350	3,700
Grenada	1856-1885	3,200	3,900
St. Vincent	1861-1880	2,472	5,000
TOTAL		1,361,431	2,950,515

(Quoted in Swami Aksharananda: Hinduism in Guyana: A study in traditions of worship. PhD Thesis, 1993). Note: Table 1 excludes those who were taken to Burma (2.5 million), Malaysia (2 million), and Sri Lanka (1.5 million).

May Week 3: Hindu – Mayan Similarities

The Mayan culture flourished in Mesoamerica during the early Christian era, before being completely wiped out by the Spanish conquest. Astronomy played a significant role in Mayan culture. Venus in particular had a preeminent status. Testimony to this rich tradition is borne out by Mayan temple art and the few available Codices, or sacred books, of the Mayans. Great strides have been made recently in deciphering the Mayan script and in understanding the concepts of Mayan astronomy. Western scholars have attempted to relate the Mayan concepts to those of Greek astronomy. The sidereal Mayan astronomy is more akin to the Hindu system and does not easily fit into the Greek model.

Striking similarity is found between certain **Mayan and Puranic stories**, and their related astronomical interpretation. In the Puranas, Lord Vishnu is represented as resting on the serpent Ananta or Sesa, after having dissolved all creation. The serpent represents the eternity of time (Ananta), and the "remainder"(Sesa) in subtle form, of prakriti, the germ of all that has been and will be. After waking up from the yoganidra, Vishnu rides on the eagle Garuda. Both Garuda and Sesa are shown in association with Vishnu in the temples of India. It is said that Garuda represents the Vedas and the solar deities, and Sesa represents the watery deities. The serpent is of great significance in the Mayan culture also. A supreme example is the serpent of sunlight and shadow seen at Chichén Itzá. At the time of the equinoxes, as the Sun moves from east to west, a pattern of light and shadow appears on the west balustrade of the north stairway of the Castillo at Chichén Itzá. This display resembles a descending snake whose head is the monumental serpent head carved out of stone at the foot of the stairs. The feathered serpent represents the Mayan God Kukulcan, who is associated with rain water and new life, among other things. Kukulcan appears to be Sesa and Garuda combined into one.

The devas and the asuras churned the Milky Ocean in search of amrita. Vishnu assumed the form of a tortoise and dived to the bottom of the cosmic ocean. On his back, the devas and asuras placed the mount Mandara as the churn and used the serpent Vasuki as the rope. From the churned Milky Ocean emerged all planets, poisonous Halahala, many treasures, and finally, amrita. The devas wanted the nectar only for themselves. However, a serpent asura named Rahu, disguised as a deva, was able to get a share of amrita. The Sun and the Moon discovered him. Rahu's head was instantly cut off. However, as he had already ingested amrita, he could not be killed. To this day, the head of Rahu attempts to swallow the Sun and the Moon. Rahu represents the ascending node of the moon's orbit, and swallowing of the Sun and the Moon represent symbolically the occurrence of the eclipses. There is a picture from the Maya Codex Tro-Cortesianus. It shows a tortoise, a central churning rod and a serpent being used as a rope by figures of dark and light shade. The western scholars have found it difficult to interpret this picture, but the similarity of the picture to the churning of the Milky Ocean of the Puranas is remarkable. In the Dresden Codex there are glyphs representing eclipses, depicting the Sun or the Moon as being devoured by a serpent. The similarity to the Hindu representation in which Rahu tries to devour the luminary object is unmistakable.

Finally, according to tradition, Lord Surya himself taught the science of astronomy, Surya Siddhanta, to Mayasura (perhaps the same famed architect of the Pandavas in the Mahabharata). Could it be that the Mayans are the descendants of Maya and this story could explain the importance of Venus in the Mayan astronomy? Maybe this is stretching it too far, for "Maya" means the "chosen people" in the Mayan language.

Similarities in the yagya.

Elizabeth Araujo, an elder Mayan woman explained, "We believe in the uniqueness and the infiniteness of the almighty but still believe in its thousand aspects that are tangible. We believe that the almighty pervades in all creations; plants, animals, the sun, and the moon are all touched by its existence. We believe fire to be a source of purifications and therefore in the yagna we offer our homage through fire."

While, they date back thousands of years; they believe in One God with manifestations in different forms. Both believe in philosophy for human being in totality and total humanity

Mayan Gods & Counterparts:

Ah Kinchil: the Sun god.	Surya Dev
Ah Puch: the god of Death.	Yama
Chac: the god of Rain	Indra

Mayan Information:

<http://www.civilization.ca/civil/maya/mmc03eng.html>

Similarities In Structure:

<http://www.tributetohinduism.com/Pacific.htm#Master%20Builder%20Uncovers%20Striking%20similarities%20in%20Indian%20and%20Incan/Mayan%20Sacred%20Structures>

"Sri V. Ganapati Sthapati," read Deva Rajan's fax to our Hawaii editorial office from Machu Picchu high in the rugged Andes Mountains of Peru, South America, "has just measured with tape, compass and a lay-out story pole, **two ancient Incan structures at Machu Picchu:** a temple and a residence. He has confirmed that the layout of these

structures, locations for doors, windows, proportions of width to length, roof styles, degree of slopes for roofs, column sizes, wall thicknesses, etc., all conform completely to the principles and guidelines as prescribed in the Vastu Shastras of India. Residential layouts are identical to those found in Mohenjodaro. **The temple layouts are identical to those that he is building today and that can be found all over India."**

The fundamental principle of Mayan's architecture and town planning is the "module." Buildings and towns are to be laid out according to certain multiples of a standard unit. Floor plans, door locations and sizes, wall heights and roofs, all are determined by the modular plan. More specifically, Mayan advocated the use of an eight-by-eight square, for a total of 64 units, which is known as the Vastu Purusha Mandala.

He could see other details of the stone working were identical to what is practiced in India, such as the method of quarrying stones by splitting off slabs

Sources:

<http://www.hinduismtoday.com/archives/1995/11/1995-11-08.shtml>

<http://www.iccsus.org/PastConferences/Maya.html>

http://www.hindustantimes.com/news/5967_1378427,001600060001.htm

May Week 4: Hindu Sanghatan Diwas

What is Hindu Sanghatan Diwas? It is derived from Hindu Samrajya Dynasty in Bharat, which is the day that Chhatrapati Shivaji was coronated as the king of the Hindavi Swaraj. This took place in 1674 so why is this relevant for today?

Hindu society is full of heroes who have contributed to the growth of Hindu Society. Shivaji's story is unique in the midst of thousands of years of slavery, he not only established an independent Hindu kingdom but he laid such strong foundations that even after his death, the Maratha empire sustained until the early 19th century. Shivaji's far-sightedness for the times is noteworthy and relevant for our times even today.

Shivaji's childhood was shaped by Jijabai. She inspired Shivaji with stories from Ramayan and Mahabharat. She made him dream about being freed from foreign rule. Shivaji's father himself was in the service of the sultan of Bijapur. One day, when Shahaji Raje took Shivaji with him to the Sultan of Bijapur, he bowed down to the Sultan. It was expected that Shivaji would do the same. After all, he was not even a teenager yet. However, Shivaji refused to bow and walked out of the court. Such was the steel resolve of Shivaji. Shahaji lived around the Bangalore area since the Sultans didn't want Shahaji to be in Pune since he might be more inclined to become independent. However, Jijabai and Shivaji were allowed to stay back to look after some land holdings.

With a strong upbringing as well as military training, Shivaji started planning as to how to go about capturing forts. His sense of justice had earned him a good name around parts of Pune. With a dedicated following, Shivaji captured his first fort in 1646 (Torna fort). Within a year, he had captured more forts and had effective control of the Pune region. As Shivaji continued to expand his domain, the Sultan of Bijapur sent Afzal Khan to defeat Shivaji. Afzal Khan set out first to destroy the Tulzapur Bhavani Temple. This was the family deity of Shivaji. Afzal Khan hoped that Shivaji in a fit of rage would come out on to the plains to fight. This would be to the advantage of Afzal Khan because he had a much larger army than Shivaji. For a few days, Afzal Khan engaged in plunder and loot hoping for Shivaji to come out. Shivaji instead proceeded to a fort called Pratapgadh, which was located deeper in the forest. He hoped to bring Afzal Khan there. Afzal Khan then sent a messenger who told Shivaji that Afzal Khan is a great friend of Shahaji and would like to meet Shivaji. Shivaji too acted tactfully upon hearing this and sent his own messenger to Afzal Khan. The messenger mentioned how Shivaji looked at Afzal Khan like an uncle and how his might is no match for Afzal Khan and thus, Afzal Khan should take Shivaji to the Sultan of Bijapur. So finally, it was decided that Shivaji and Afzal Khan would meet at a pre-assigned place without any weapons and only a few bodyguards stationed at some pre-determined distance from Shivaji and Afzal Khan respectively. As both of the 2 men met, Afzal Khan invited Shivaji for an embrace. Shivaji was well prepared and as the 2 embraced, Afzal Khan tried to stab Shivaji on the back. Shivaji was well prepared for such a type of deceit. He had armed himself with artificial tiger claws attached to his nails. He immediately tore Afzal Khan's stomach and then took out a sword to cut off Afzal Khan as the latter tried to run away. Thus, the

people rejoiced at Shivaji's victory. Thus, there are many such incidents of Shivaji's heroism.

Later on, when Shivaji challenged much of Aurangzeb's territories, Aurangzeb sent Raja Jai Singh to subdue Shivaji. Shivaji then wrote Jai Singh a letter saying that being a Hindu, the 2 of them should join hands to subdue a foreign ruler. Shivaji would even be willing to fight under the leadership of Raja Jai Singh. In fact, Jai Singh was a religious person in his personal life but he just did not see the damage that was being done to Hindu society by serving under a tyrant like Aurangzeb. Thus, he did not agree to Shivaji's letter. In the battle, Shivaji was captured and many of his forts were lost. Ultimately Shivaji escaped from Aurangzeb and managed to re-establish control.

In the present day, what we can learn from Shivaji's life is that he was able to inspire a generation of warriors to fight for a cause. In the present day, we can learn from his selflessness that he saw the larger picture and did not fight only for a selfish cause. Sangh also wants to organize Hindu society. It is not just looking for name and fame but instead is working for the betterment of Hindu Society. Shivaji's strategic nature is another aspect, which we as Hindus can emulate. Shivaji did not immediately try and fight Afzal Khan when he was destroying the Tulzapur Bhavani mandir. He waited for the right time and then decided to strike. Similarly, we too in Sangh should not get overly emotional at any instance of negativity towards Sangh. We need to make sure that we're focused on shakha work and respond to the challenges as and when it is truly necessary. (It is worth asking what other lessons people can learn from the life of Shivaji).