

Agrawal Association of America; Founded May, 1997

Agrawal Samachar Patrika

A Quaterly Newsletter by the Agrawals and for the Agrawals

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Maharaja Agrasen

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Important Dates to Remember

Diwali Sammelan
at
Sri Radha Krishna Temple
on **December 6, 2008**

1st International Agrawal
Community Cruise
from **Orlando to Bahamas**
on **February 12-15th, 2009**

For more information
call **Devi Rungta**
713-218-0991
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Five Days of Diwali

Diwali is a festival of joy, splendor, brightness and happiness. It is the festival of lights and is celebrated with great enthusiasm by Hindus all over the world. The uniqueness of this festival is its harmony of five varied philosophies, with each day to a special thought or ideal. This festival is celebrated for five continuous days, with the third day being the main Diwali day. Fireworks are always associated with this festival. As people celebrate each of its five days of festivities with a true understanding, it uplifts and enriches their lives.

of taking a bath before sunrise on this day became a tradition. People spend the remaining day restfully in the company of friends and family.



The first day of Diwali: Dhanteras

The word Dhan means wealth. Entrances of homes and businesses are decorated with colorful Rangoli flower designs to welcome the goddess



of wealth and prosperity. To celebrate the goddess Lakshmi's arrival, small footprints are drawn with rice flour and vermilion powder all around the homes. Diyas are kept burning all night. Lakshmi puja (worship/prayer) is performed in the evenings when tiny diyas are lighted to drive away the shadows of evil spirits.

The second day of Diwali: Choti Diwali

The second day of Diwali is also called Narak-Chaturdashi (killing of demon king Narakasur). After defeating lord Indra, Narakasur stole the magnificent earrings of Aditi (mother goddess) and imprisoned sixteen thousand daughters of gods and saints. Lord Krishna killed the demon king, liberated the imprisoned damsels and also recovered Aditi's precious earrings. As a sign of victory Krishna smeared his forehead with the demon king's blood. When the Lord Krishna returned (on Narakchaturdasi), the women massaged his body with scented oil and gave him a bath to cleanse him. Since that time the custom

The third day: Diwali (Lakshmi Puja)

The third day of Diwali is considered the most important day and is entirely devoted to goddess Lakshmi. On the dark new moon night, the entrances to all homes are lit up and decorated with rangoli patterns to welcome Lakshmi, wife of Vishnu. Lakshmi puja is performed on this day on a grander scale. On this day the sun enters his second course and passes Libra which is represented by the balance or scale. Recognizing Libra, this is a day of balancing and closing of old accounts in traditional Hindu business. Business people open new account books for the new financial year and offer prayers for luck and prosperity.

The fourth day of Diwali: Annakut

The fourth day is Padwa, which celebrates the coronation of King Vikramaditya. This day is also observed as Annakut, which means a mountain of food. In temples the



deities are given a milk bath and decorated with diamonds, pearls, rubies and other precious stones. In some places, fifty-six or hundred-and-eight different types of food are offered to Lord Krishna.



The fifth day of Diwali: Bhai Duj

As the legend goes Yamraj, the god of death visited his sister Yami on this day. They ate sweets, talked and enjoyed themselves. When he left, Yamraj gave her a special gift as a token of his love. In return, Yami also gave him a gift, which she had made with her own hands. Since then this day is observed as a symbol of love between sisters and brothers. It has also become a tradition for brothers to go to the houses of their sisters on this day to celebrate Bhai-duj.



AAA Youth Committee

Like most organization the success of the Agrawal Association of America is dependent on the involvement of its members and youth. As such the Agrawal Association Board Members are excited to introduce a new committee dedicated towards engaging the Agrawal Youth. The committee known as, AAA Youth Committee, will be responsible for organizing the Agrawal Youth Camp as well as assisting with the preparation of the Sammelan and Annual Picnic. Neha Agrawal and Mohit Agrawal will be leading up the effort and are currently seeking members. If you are interested in participating please email them at: neha.agra@gmail.com or mohitagrawal7@gmail.com. The Sammelan is right around the corner and we are need of volunteers!

Glory of Namaste

By Uma Aggarwal

A simple gesture of greeting someone with folded hand could have so many beautiful, meaningful and spiritual explanations hidden behind it, that I was pleasantly surprised, when I discovered it.

After coming to the US, I am more interested to learn about our Vedic Culture. Why we do, what we do. I still remember one repairman came to our house and was fascinated by our pooja room and out of curiosity he asked, "How do you greet people in your culture?" I demonstrated the Namaste gesture and I told him that it means, "I bow down to God in you". The man was astonished. He stood there smiling and said that is the most beautiful greeting he had heard. He was more delighted by the explanation of Namaste than the fat check I gave him for repairs in the house.

The deeper meaning of Namaste or Namaskaram is that it has a spoken greeting and a mudra called Anjali from the root word "anj" in Sanskrit that means to adorn, honor celebrate and anoint. The hand held in union signifies the oneness of an apparently dual cosmos, bringing together of spirit and matter. The spoken words Namaste has "namas" means to bow or a reverential salutation. It comes from the root word "nam" means bending bowing or humbly submitting and becoming silent. "Te" means to you. In nutshell it means "I honor or worship the Divinity within you".

When a deeper veneration has to be expressed we bring the fingers of clasped palms to the forehead, where they touch the brow, the site of the mystic third eye of perception.

Third variation of Namaste is to bring the palms completely above the head, a gesture to focus consciousness in the subtle space just above the crown chakra. You also close your eyes when you do

that. This form is full of reverence and usually reserved for God and holiest of satgurus.

Namaste seems to be more an inward journey rather than an outwardly show. It puts you in touch with your center which is your soul and that's what you represent to another person. You represent yourself as a soul and not your outer personality. It almost seems like, when you have your hands folded, and you are bowing the head and shoulders slightly, you will automatically become humble and drop your ego. It would be difficult to offend or feel animosity towards anyone, that you greet as God. Namaste is a gesture of friendship and kindness.

The Namaste gesture recognizes the sacredness of all beings; it reminds us that we can see God in everyone. You could do Namaste to individuals or to a group of people. You could greet a large crowd with just one gesture of Namaste.

Even modern science will concur that, we could transmit germs if we shake hands, but Namaste is much more hygienic way to greet, as there is no physical contact with another person.

There are other mystical meanings behind Namaste also. The Psychic energy leaves the body from hands and feet. To ground the energy and balance the flow of pranas, the yogis sit in lotus position and bring their hands together. The anjali mudra acts like a yogic asana, balancing and harmonizing our energies, keeping us centered, inwardly poised and mentally protected. It keeps us close to our intuitive nature the consciousness. Namaste also centers one's energy within the spine.

In short just look at two people in Namaste mudra which is so lovely, so graceful that it will remind you of the human beauty and refinement and will elevate you toward divinity which is your own nature. ★

What Is Irritable Bowel Syndrome and What Can You Do About It?

Manish Rungta, MD

Irritable bowel syndrome (IBS) is a "syndrome," meaning a group of symptoms. The most common symptoms of IBS are abdominal pain or discomfort often reported as cramping, bloating, gas, diarrhea, and/or constipation. IBS affects the colon, which is the part of the digestive tract that stores stool. IBS is not a disease. It's a functional disorder, meaning that the bowel doesn't work, or function, properly.

The cause IBS is not known. It is thought that the nerves and muscles in the bowel appear to be extra sensitive in people with IBS. Muscles may contract too much when eating. These contractions can cause cramping and diarrhea during or shortly after a meal. Also, the nerves may react when the bowel stretches, causing cramping or pain. IBS may cause pain; however, it does not damage the colon or other parts of the digestive system.

The main symptoms of IBS are abdominal pain or discomfort in the abdomen, often relieved by or associated with a bowel movement, chronic diarrhea, constipation, or alternating bouts of diarrhea and constipation. Other symptoms include mucus in the stool, bloating sensation of the abdomen, and a sense of incomplete evacuation of stool. Women with IBS may have more symptoms during menstrual periods.

IBS is suspected based on symptoms. Specific symptoms, called the Rome criteria, can be used to more accurately make this diagnosis. Medical tests may also be done to make sure that other health problems do not cause the same symptoms. Medical tests for IBS include a physical exam, blood tests, and a colonoscopy (a long, thin tube, inserted into the anus and the colon is examined) to exclude other problems.

IBS has no cure, but one can do things to relieve symptoms. Treatment may involve dietary changes, medicines, and stress relief. One may have to try a few things to see what works best. A gastroenterologist can help find the right treatment plan.

Some foods and drinks make IBS worse. Foods and drinks that may cause or worsen symptoms include fatty foods, milk products, alcohol, coffee, tea, and sodas. To find out which foods is a problem, keep a diary that tracks what is eaten during the day, what symptoms and when symptoms occur, and what foods always cause the symptoms. At the next doctor's visit, one should bring the diary to go over with him or her to see if certain foods trigger your symptoms or make them worse. If so, one should avoid eating these foods or eat less of them.

Some foods make IBS better. Fiber may reduce the constipation associated with IBS because it makes stool soft and easier to pass; however, some people with IBS who have more sensitive nerves may feel a bit more abdominal discomfort after adding more fiber to their diet. Fiber is found in foods such as breads, cereals, beans, fruits, and vegetables. Add foods with fiber to your diet a little at a time to let your body get used to them. Too much fiber at once can cause gas, which can trigger symptoms in a person with IBS. Your doctor may ask you to add more fiber to your diet by taking a fiber pill or drinking water mixed with a special high-fiber powder. Eat small meals. Large meals can cause cramping and diarrhea in people with IBS. If this happens to you, try eating four or five small meals a day instead of less-frequent big meals.

Sometimes medicines may be necessary to help relieve symptoms. Laxatives treat constipation. Antispasmodics control spasms in the colon and help ease abdominal pain. Antidepressants, even in lower doses than are used for treating depression, can help people with IBS. They can help reduce the abdominal discomfort or pain associated with IBS and, depending on the type chosen, may help the diarrhea or constipation.

Emotional stress does not cause IBS. But people with IBS may have their bowels react more to stress. So, if you already have IBS, stress can make your symptoms worse. Learning to reduce stress can help with IBS. With less stress, you may find you have less cramping and pain. You may also find it easier to manage your symptoms. Yoga (meditation), exercise, hypnosis, and counseling may help. You may need to try different activities to see what works best for you.

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Due to unforeseen events, AAA Family Camp had to be cancelled for this year. We will resume the fun and festivities next year!

Important Dates in History

| | |
|---|---------------|
| Vedas (Rig, Yajur, Sama, Atharva; 100,000 verses) | 6500 BCE |
| Krishna | ~3000 BCE |
| Torah | 1200 BCE |
| Zend Avesta | 600 BCE |
| Mahavir | ~650 BCE |
| Gautam Buddha | ~600 BCE |
| Confucius (Chinese philosopher) | 551-479 BCE |
| Hippocrates | 460 BC-370 BC |
| Socrates (Greek Philosopher) | 470-300 BCE |
| Chanakya (Politician, Strategist and Writer) | 350-275 BCE |
| Maurayan Empire | 300 BCE |
| Ashoka | 273-236 BCE |
| Patanjali (Yoga Sutra) | 150 BC |
| Jesus (Christianity) | 0 |
| Bible New Testament | 100 |
| Guptas | 400 |
| Harshavardhana | 606-647 |
| Muhammad (Islam) | 570-632 |
| Quran | 630 |
| Jagatguru Adi Shankracharya | 788-820 |
| Chandella rulers | 900-1130 |
| Khajurao temples | 1022 |
| Mahmud Ghazani | 1100 |
| Meera bhai (Poet) | 1499 |
| Sant Kabir | 1440-1518 |
| Narsingh Mehta (Mystic) | 1470-1544 |
| Guru Nanak dev | 1469-1539 |
| Vasco De Gama | 1498 |
| Goswami Tulsidas (Poet) | 1497-1623 |
| Guru Gobind Singh | ~1630 |
| Ralph Waldo Emerson (Philosopher) | 1803-1881 |
| Seren Kierkegaard (Danish Philosopher) | 1813-1855 |
| Henry David Thoreau (American Philosopher) | 1817-1862 |
| Maharishi Dayanand Saraswati | 1825-1883 |
| Sri Ramakrishna Paramhansa | 1836-1886 |
| Rabindranath Tagore | 1861-1941 |
| Swami Vivekananda | 1863-1902 |
| Mahatma Gandhi | 1869-1948 |
| Aurobindo Ghose | 1872-1950 |
| Satguru Yogaswami | 1872-1964 |
| Saint Jalaram Bapa | 1799-1881 |
| Ramana Maharishi Mystic | 1879-1950 |
| Khalil Gibran (Lebanese American Mystic, poet and writer) | 1883-1931 |
| Swami Sivananda | 1887-1963 |
| Groucho Marx (American Comedian) | 1890-1977 |
| Paramhansa Yogananda | 1893-1952 |
| Jagatguru Sri Chandrasekhar Bharti | 1912-1954 |
| Dada JP Vaswani | 1918- |
| Maharishi Mahesh Yogi | 1920-2008 |
| Swami Omkarananda | 1930-2000 |
| Swami Tejomayananda | 1950- |
| Sri Chinmoy | 1931-2007 |

Your Own Vakil!

Did you know that we have our very own lawyer? His name is Dinesh Singhal. His background is in civil business and commercial litigation along with corporate, bankruptcy and business issues. He will be happy to answer your questions concerning business issue or regarding litigation. You can also write us or directly to him at dineshsinghal@gmail.com.

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Did you know you can stop cancer?

Bharat B. Aggarwal, Ph.D.

- Cancer is a preventable disease (90-95%) that requires major change in life style.
- Almost 30% of all cancers are due to smoking.
- Almost 35% of all cancers are due to bad diet (high fat and low fiber).
- Almost 15% of all cancers are due to infections (such as HPV for cervical cancer and HBV for liver cancer).
- Almost 10% of all cancers are due to environmental pollution.
- Only 5-10% of all cancer are due to inheritance of bad genes.
- Most cancers are diagnosed at the age around 50 (when hormonal changes occur), steadily increase till around age 80 and decline thereafter. Cancer has 20-30 years of incubation time.
- Human body is made up of 54-62% water; 15-17% protein, 14-25% fat, 5-6% minerals and 1% carbohydrates
- Human body is made up of 60 trillion cells
- Body makes trillion cells for a few weeks; taste buds replaced every few hours; white blood cells every 10 days and muscle cells every 3 months
- About 1% of cells are replaced everyday
- Human gets a whole new body every three months

Indian gooseberry –the new superfruit, Berry Popular?

Bharat B. Aggarwal, Ph.D.

A plant extract based on the Indian gooseberry has an antioxidant capacity higher than scores of other fruits, including blueberries and strawberries, the manufacturers claim.

Based on the *Phyllanthus emblica*, manufacturers Natreon Inc say its patented Capros extract has an Oxygen Radical Absorbance Capacity (ORAC) value of 1770 - twice that of acai and about 17 times that of pomegranate, Natreon said. Antioxidants have the ability to neutralize free radicals that can damage the body's cells. Free radicals can build up in the body and cause oxidative stress, which is thought to contribute to the aging process and several diseases. If Natreon's claims stack up, then the Indian gooseberry could become one of the hottest new superfruits of 2008. Chief executive Lucien Hernandez said: "Our ORAC value speaks for itself," and added that the extract is available for the functional foods, beverage and supplement markets. Clinical studies by the firm are said to have shown potential to improve liver and digestive health. Natreon, which has a research centre based in India, extracts *Phyllanthus emblica* through a patented water based process. The firm boasts that the bioactive tannins in the gooseberry extract are guaranteed to be over 60 per cent. The secret to the Capros antioxidant effect is the tannins - bitter-tasting plant polyphenols that bind and precipitate proteins - which give a "cascading effect". This leads to a longer-lasting antioxidant activity, Natreon said.

"...Dharmo Rakshati Rakshitah ..." (Protect your Dharma and It will protect you)