



आर्य पत्रिका

ARYA PATRIKA

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"It is with a great sense of pride, privilege and purpose that we are launching a brand-new magazine. The goals of this endeavor are to promote, and promulgate our culture, core covenants of Arya Samaj and Vedic Science. Let us take a plunge and be true to ourselves"

Swami Dayanand Saraswati

Dr. Om Gandhi

Tw was the night of Shivaratri in March 1838, a 14 years old boy named Mool Shankar went to temple with his parents for Shiva pooja. Everyone fell asleep in the temple but Mool Shankar remained awake past midnight and saw a rat climbing over the Shivalinga (the statue of God) and eating the offerings (sweets and fruits) that had been placed in front of it by the devotees. He thought that if God cannot protect Himself, how can He protect His worshippers? He felt disgusted with the prevalent Hindu rites and beliefs at that time. Mool Shankar was very close to his uncle who taught him Sanskrita and Rig veda at home. He was an intelligent, earnest and hard- working student. At the age of 19 years his younger sister and uncle died from Cholera, which led Mool Shankar to ponder the meaning of life and death. He began asking questions about the birth, life and death from his parents and they thought that he may take Sanyaasa. He was engaged to be married but he decided marriage was not for him and ran away from home in 1846. Mool Shankar was born on February 12, 1824 in a village named Tankara in Kathiawar, Gujarat in a very high- class wealthy and learned orthodox Brahmin family. His father was Karshanji Lalji Kapadi, who was Saam-Vedi Brahmin (scholar of Saam Veda) and his mother was Yashodabai a housewife. After wandering in search of God for over two decades, on November 14, 1860 Dayananda reached the pathshala (school) of Swami Virjananda Dandi who accepted him as his student.



After finishing his education, Virjananda asked him to “destroy the avidya (ignorance) about the Vedas and spread the true Vedic dharma in the world” as his gurudakshina (tuition-dues). Dayananda started lecturing extensively and spreading his thoughts among the masses and traveled all over India to preach the wisdom of the Vedas. Maharishi Dayananda Saraswati founded Arya Samaj (Noble Society) on 10 April 1875 in Girgaon Bombay. Subsequently in 1877 Arya Samaj was started in Lahore in the home of a muslim named Rahim Khan. Thereafter Arya Samaj branches were established in all the big cities of India and all over the world. Members of the Arya Samaj believe in one God and reject idol worship and the first Hindu organization to introduce proselytization in Hindu society. Swami Dayananda Saraswati was the first to proclaim India for Indians and was the first Indian to voice the right for freedom of India from British rule in 1876. He was poisoned and died on the morning of Diwali on 30 October 1883 chanting Vedic mantras.

Editorial Team: Dr. Manju Gupta, Sanjukta Basu, Sonal Dani, Anjali Arya, Sanjeev Goyal



Arya Samaj of New Jersey

Itihaas of Arya Samaj of New Jersey

Dr. Rajinder & Jyoti Gandhi



Page 4 THE SUNDAY NEWS February 14, 1982

Hindu sect plants seeds in Ridgewood

By LINDA LYNWANDER

RIDGEWOOD — Although there are well over 200 East Indian families living in the Ridgewood area according to Raj Gandhi, himself an Indian pediatric surgeon with a practice in Ridgewood, not many belong to an organized temple or even know where to go for worship of their religion. Dr. Gandhi intends to change all that. He has recently formed a New Jersey/Westchester branch of a progressive Hindu sect called Arya Samaj (which translated means 'pure society'), and the group of 15 local families which meet to worship at each other's homes every second Sunday afternoon is looking for new members.

"When I'm in a supermarket or out shopping and I see another Indian, we seek each other out and begin talking even if we're strangers," said Jyoti (pronounced Jo-dy) Gandhi, Raj's wife and the mother of two lively little boys, Vikram, a three-year-old preschooler and Anand, a kindergarten at Ridgewood's Glen School. "We want to reach these people, to make them feel they have a religious and cultural heritage here." Mrs. Gandhi added, though, that the local chapter is close with members really caring about each other, and the group wants to expand slowly to ensure a homogeneous and non-political mix.

The Gandhis actually started Arya Samaj when they lived in Scarsdale with a group of young families who brought their children and their parents to one another's homes to chant mantras out of the Vedas (Bible) around a Yajna (portable altar), sing Bha-jans (hymns) and enjoy a veritable feast afterward with the host family being responsible for the ten dishes for 50-odd guests. The oldest member of the gathering was the president. After the Gandhis moved to Ridgewood and found that except for a Hindu temple in Garfield and one in Queens, NY there was no organized meeting place for the northwest Bergen County Arya Samaj Indians, they formed the present chapter.

Arya Samaj is a liberal Hindu sect where members believe in one god. It was started by Swami Daya Nand in North India in 1875, and its basic principles are to seek an end to social injustice. The group works toward such goals as doing away with the caste system, furthering women's rights such as boycotting veils and opening the door for equal schooling for women. There are Arya Samaj branches all over the world.

Recently, Jyoti and Raj held their first meeting of the New Jersey chapter, and the late model cars parked outside their Kenwood Road home partially showed what their owners were like who had come out to the meeting: young professionals. Jyoti and her mother Shanti, who resides with them, were dressed in their finest saris for the occasion, and they had carefully shopped in Fair Lawn at the only local Indian grocery store in the area for the unique ingredients that would be served.

After an hour of serious worship, the group participated in a cultural hour. Ladies sang and children learned the history of their native land. After a large buffet dinner for all, the group dispersed. Jyoti said afterward that it was "a tremendous amount of work but there was a lot of fun doing it." The Gandhis added that as their group grows bigger and home meetings become unfeasible, they will have to look to open a local temple in which to worship.

Raj and Jyoti are perhaps typical of the

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The family of Dr. Rajinder Gandhi (right) sits below pickkwal, a hand painting on canvas tapestry in their Ridgewood home. From left are Shanti Saberwal, the grandmother; Vikram, 3; Jyoti, his wife, and Anand, 6. (Photo by Stan Godlewski)

The journey began in 1975 in Westchester County, New York, when we joined a group of like-minded young Hindu families who regularly hosted Vedic Havan Satsangs (Vedic worship services) at one another's homes. A few years later, an announcement in India Abroad newspaper beckoned us to the September 15, 1979 meeting with Shri Dharamjit Jigyasu ji, resulting in the establishment of the first Arya Samaj in Queens, New York. In 1980 the Westchester County Havan group decided to form Arya Samaj of Suburban New York (ASNY). In January 1982, a few months after we moved to Ridgewood with our two young sons, we invited ASNY members to the havan satsang at our home to help us start an Arya Samaj chapter in New Jersey. The following day, our neighbor, Linda Lynwander, inquired about the unusually large gathering. Impressed with the message of Maharishi Swami Dayanand Saraswati, the founder of Arya Samaj, she wrote an article in The Sunday Times of The Ridgewood News, dated February 14, 1982, titled "Hindu sect plants seeds in Ridgewood."

Back then, the President of The Unitarian Society of Ridgewood, Mrs. Naomi Yanis, called to ask if we wanted to rent their hall for our biweekly havans. With the help of Hindu families in the area and ASNY friends, the next Arya Samaj Havan Satsang was held on Sunday, August 1, 1982 at The Unitarian Society. Initially called Arya Samaj of Bergen County, this religious organization was renamed Arya Samaj of New Jersey (ASNJ) to welcome members residing in other counties. Community service projects and interfaith dialogue ensued. Interaction with nationwide and global Arya Samajs became easier with the inception of Arya Pratindhi Sabha America in 1991.

Thirty nine years later, the Samaj continues to serve as a welcoming and compassionate extended family, offering weekly havan satsangs as well as children and youth classes. Annual cultural events are held to celebrate Hindu holidays and festivals. While we planted the seeds, the credit for nurturing, sustaining and lifting this venerable and vibrant institution to greater heights, goes to the continuous, selfless and untiring efforts of all volunteers and generous donors. Each succeeding leadership team has brought forth new ideas and special skills to enhance the existing programs, keeping intact the essence of the Vedic teachings and rituals. We are hopeful that future generations will preserve this sacred heritage.



Arya Samaj of New Jersey



Yuvaon Ke Antah Karan Se

How has Arya Samaj influenced me?

Nandita Dani

I joined the Arya Samaj Youth Group in 2019 and have participated in Arya Samaj events ever since we moved to Ridgewood in 2014. Arya Samaj has helped me learn more about our rich culture, religion, and beliefs. We celebrate and learn about all of our festivals: Diwali, Holi, Sankranti, Basant Panchmi. learn about Vedas and the Bhagavad Gita, and recite shlokas and prayers. We get to hear from different speakers in the Youth Group such as speakers from college, people who have experience with different jobs, and people who come to teach us about important topics. Because of this, we have learned about different things that can happen in the future and helpful ways to handle current situations.

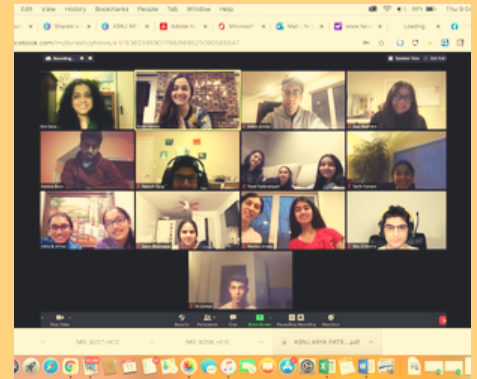
In the Youth Group we debate and talk about our opinions on different topics and events. This helps us learn from others and understand other views. We have done community service projects, which give us a chance to help others in need and become closer with different communities. Doing community service develops our leadership skills and expands our worldview. I'm grateful for being a part of a community like Arya Samaj that can help me develop as a student and an overall human being.

Siya Wadhare

I have been a part of the Arya Samaj Youth Group for several months and I am a sophomore at Watchung Hills Regional High School. Before I joined this youth group, I was not very intact with Hinduism as I did not understand much of it. While in my household we do celebrate several events yearly as well as pray, I was unclear about the basis of Hinduism. The Gita was something that I had just heard of but never really understood until I joined this group. I might not still understand as much as I could, but I do have a deeper understanding of certain aspects of Hinduism in correlation to my life today. Another thing this class taught me is that while we are all virtual currently, there is still a way to stay connected. For us it is spiritually because all of us are interested in learning more about Hinduism. There is a mutual understanding, which makes it an enjoyable class to come back to at the start of every new week. Even though I have been here for the shortest amount of time than others, I can honestly say how this class has slowly changed my understanding of Hinduism and has made me want to learn more about my roots and what I believe in.



Sunday Havan by Dev Ketu Ji



Virtual Youth Group Meeting in session



Arya Samaj of New Jersey



Yuvaon Ke Antah Karan Se

How has Arya Samaj influenced me?

Sachi Kaisare

Every Sunday, Arya Samaj Youth Group is a place to express my thoughts and feelings on religion and culture, where we can present things we have learned over the course of our being in Arya Samaj. An accepting community is hard to find sometimes, but going to Arya Samaj meetings helps me to understand my culture a little bit more every week. The best part of Youth Group is listening to speakers on things like yoga, spirituality, life skills, history, and many other topics. Common ground can also be easily found in the Youth Group, and you meet new friends who are similar to you, while also being different. Not only do we learn about many things, but we try to talk about them to others as well, and listen to other people's points of view at the same time. Being able to be open-minded is a skill that we learn here. Learning at a young age about culture and history can prove very beneficial to everyone! Being accepting and welcoming to one another is a big part of the environment of the Arya Samaj, and that is a very important thing that I and many other people have seen and understood here.

Sanvi Bhatnagar

Arya Samaj has been a part of my life for as long as I can remember. There has never been a time when I felt like I couldn't turn to Arya Samaj for an accepting and loving community. Through these last few years, where I experienced a lot of change, Arya Samaj has kept me grounded. The Samaj acts as an anchor, constantly reminding me who I am and my roots. The community we have built remains strong. The Youth group has become an outlet for self-expression and guidance. Together, the kids in our community have grown to understand and love our religion. I find that the teachings we learn in class apply to many situations where I can use the teachings to better my life. Being able to surround myself with other kids with similar experiences and questions that I have has made navigating through these confusing teen years much more bearable.

Rhea Sadarangani

My family has been going to the Samaj since before I was born so it's definitely a big part of my life. I've grown up with it and have learned a lot of valuable things. In the Youth group, we learn about the Bhagavad Gita, the Ramayana, and many other Hindu teachings. When we learn about these, we also learn life lessons and ways to improve our behavior. We learn about the vedas and we relate it to our everyday lives. These are very important because it helps us stay connected to Hinduism. Youth group not only teaches me about my culture but also about life in general. The Arya Samaj has created a safe environment for me and I have met some of my best friends there. I'm grateful that I had the chance to grow up with it.



Arya Samaj of New Jersey



Yuvaon Ke Antah Karan Se



Basant Panchami

Shriya Dani

Basant Panchami, also known as Vasant Panchami or Saraswati Puja, is celebrated for the coming of spring. It is an extremely auspicious day to start new work, get married, or perform a housewarming ceremony. There are many aspects to the Basant Panchami celebrations. Many conduct a Saraswati Puja, praying to the goddess of music, wisdom, arts, and knowledge, as it is said that she was born on this day. To celebrate the mustard crop's return and to represent Devi Saraswati's favorite color, people's clothing, the food, and the decoration are all yellow themed. In some areas, families choose to have their babies take their first steps towards education by encouraging them to write their first words. Basant Panchami also marks a festive time right before Holi, the festival of colors. Throughout the day, people get together with their community for a day of cultural programs full of music and celebration.



Mustard Flowers in bloom symbolizing the arrival of Basant Panchami

Holi

Sumantra Basu

Holi is an important historical holiday celebrated in India at the start of Spring. Indians celebrate this holiday by meeting up with each other to play by throwing colors at one another and have fun interactions. But the reason why we celebrate it is because of legends and stories. The first day of Holi is called Holika Dahan signifying the triumph of good over evil. It is believed that Hiranyakashipu was Prahlad's father and an egotistical king who demanded that everyone worship him. But Prahlad worshiped Vishnu which enraged Hiranyakashipu and he plotted to kill Prahlad by having him seated on Holika's lap while she sat on a blazing fire. Although Holika had immunity and could not be harmed by fire, she eventually got consumed by the flames due to her bad karma as Lord Vishnu came to protect his devotee, Prahlad. The second day is called Rangwali Holi and that's the day when people play with colors. This day we celebrate the friendship and love of Krishna and Radha. The air is filled with vibrant colors symbolizing new beginnings and the arrival of Spring.



Holi Celebrations



Arya Samaj of New Jersey

Pratham Rigved Mantra



" Aum Agnimile purohitam yajnasya devam rtvijamhotaram ratnadhatamam "

Before the time of origin of the universe, self-effulgent firegod holds the atom. God created the macro universe over and over at the time of origin. According to the first mantra of Rigveda, there is a radiant fire which is the eternal support of all. Self-existed and the leader of all.

THE TEN PRINCIPLES OF THE ARYA SAMAJ

1. God, His Characteristics: The Primordial Root - the Eternal Unseen Sustainer - of all true knowledge and of objects made known by true knowledge - any of all these - is the-Supreme God.
2. His Attributes and Worship: God is Personification of Existence, Intelligence and Bliss. He is Eternal, Formless, Almighty, Just, Benevolent, Unborn, Endless and Infinite, Unchangeable, Incomparable, Support of All, Lord of All, All-pervading, Omniscient and Controller of all from within, Fearless, Holy and Creator of the Universe. To Him alone is worship due.
3. His word, the Vedas: The Vedas are the books of true knowledge. It is the paramount duty of every Arya to learn and teach the Vedas.
4. Truth: We should be ever ready to embrace truth and to forsake untruth.
5. Righteousness: All acts should be done in accordance with Dharma after deliberating what is right and wrong.
6. Benevolence: The prime object of the Arya Samaj is to do good to the world, that is, to promote physical, spiritual and social good of every sentient being.
7. Love and Justice: Our conduct towards all should be guided by love, righteousness and justice.
8. Nescience and Science: We should dispel "avidya" - nescience, and promote "vidya" - science, spiritual and physical.
9. Individualism and Altruism: No one should be content with promoting his good only; on the contrary, he should look for his good in promoting the good of all.
10. Subordination and Liberty: All men should subordinate themselves to the laws of society calculated to promote the well-being of all; they should be free in regard to the laws promoting individual wellbeing

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