



Naamghar Association of America

NEWSLETTER

WWW.NAAMGHAR.ORG

Volume 3/Issues 1/ Jan-Mar 2020

MESSAGE FROM BOR-MEDHI

Hope you all are keeping well and safe with “social distancing” and by the grace of God at this difficult time. It will pass in due course of time.

The subject matter of this issue of the NAAM newsletter is the planned spiritual dialog with the Satradhikar of Sri Sri Auniati Satra and for him to elaborate on the following topic:

“The monk is called a man of steady wisdom when his mind is unperturbed in sorrow, he is free from longing for delights, and has gone beyond attachment, fear and anger.”

Another topic of such spiritual dialog was “The Role of Naamghar and naam in Assamese Society (অসমীয়া সামাজিক জীৱনত নামঘৰৰ ভূমিকা আৰু নামৰ প্ৰাসংগীকতা).” It is being archived in NAAM’s portal, <https://naamghar.org/> and will be available soon (please check back).

Our scheduled audio / video conference call of April 5, 2020 had to be cancelled by the Satradhikar due to COVID 19 dictated travel restriction, as it required him to travel to Dibrugarh. He advised us that he would do it in a month or so; we will keep you posted.

At this time of COVID-19 crisis, the Satradhikar has sent a message to the Assamese diaspora which is reproduced elsewhere in this newsletter.

Assuming travel restrictions will be lifted by later this fall, NAAM is planning a community *naam-proxonga* in an effort to bring together our disparate community members to one place to share and to bond. So, on behalf of NAAM, I am inviting all of you to this event. Please stay tuned.

Finally, NAAM wishes hearty greetings to everyone for the *Bohag Bihu* season and wishes everyone being safe and healthy.

We look forward to your regular feedback and continued cooperation to achieve NAAM’s goals.

Sincerely,

Dr. Binoy K. Bordoloi, *Bor Medhi*

A MESSAGE TO THE PEOPLE OF ASSAM, BOTH HOME AND ABROAD

By Dr. Pitambar Dev Goswami, Satradhikar, Sri Sri Auniati Satra, Majuli, Assam

শৰীৰ মাধ্যম কৰু ধৰ্ম চৰণম্।

অৰ্থাৎ শৰীৰটো বক্ষা হ'লেহে ধৰ্ম সাধন হব পাৰে। ধন, টকা-পইছা, ঐশ্বৰ্য্য বিভূতিৰে মানুহ আত্মবৃত্ত হব পাৰে। যদি শৰীৰটো ঘূণীয়া হয়, তেতিয়াহ'লে তেওঁৰ সেই শক্তি হ্ৰাস হয় আৰু তেওঁ এটা সুন্দৰ জীৱন যাপন কৰিব নোৱাৰে। কেৱল ইমানেই নহয়, ঘূণীয়া শৰীৰটোৰে সুখ শান্তি জীৱনত কেতিয়াও তেওঁ লাভ কৰিব নোৱাৰে। সেয়ে আমাক প্ৰথমতে লাগিব শৰীৰ, স্বাস্থ্য, আৰু এই স্বাস্থ্য বক্ষাৰ কাৰণে আমি সজাগ হ'বই লাগিব।

বৰ্তমান গোটেই বিশ্বজুৰি যি ক'ৰণা ভাইৰাছৰ আতংক আহিছে, এই ক্ষেত্ৰত চৰকাৰে সাৱধান কৰি দিছে। গতিকে এই সাৱধানতা অৱলম্বন কৰাটো আমাৰ বৰ্তমান সময়ৰ কাৰণে অত্যন্ত প্ৰয়োজনীয় কথা আৰু সেইসাৰ কথাকেই ইংৰাজীত কোৱা হৈছে:

“awareness is the panacea to all evils”

যে সাৱধানতাই হৈছে মূল ঔষধ, যি সকলো বেয়া উপাদান ধংস কৰিব পাৰে। গতিকে এতিয়া এই ক'ৰণা ভাইৰাছৰ দৰে মহামাৰী নাশ কৰাৰ মূল মাধ্যমটোৱেই হৈছে সাৱধানতা। এই মূহুৰ্তত আমাৰ অসমতো ইতিমধ্যে ক'ৰণা ভাইৰাছৰ স্পৰ্শ আহিছে; কিন্তু আমেৰিকাত যথেষ্ট প্ৰভাৱ পৰিছে বুলি গম পাইছো। গতিকে আমেৰিকাবাসী লোক সকলে সাৱধানতা অৱলম্বন কৰক আৰু আমাৰ অসমীয়া ভাই ভনী সকলেও সাৱধানতা অৱলম্বন কৰক; আৰু গোৱিন্দৰ ওচৰত প্ৰাৰ্থনা জনাইছো, তেৰাই যাতে এই মহামাৰী ৰোগৰ পৰা আমাৰ সকলো লোককে বক্ষা কৰে।

শ্ৰীশ্ৰী পীতাম্বৰ দেৱগোস্বামী

(Mobile: +917002407442)

শ্ৰীশ্ৰী আউনীআতি সত্ৰ, মাজুলী।

MEDITATION THE WAY TO INNER PEACE: STORIES OF DEVOTION

By Kamalakshi Hazarika

Meditation is a practice to train the mind. It leads to self-surrender. It is a practice done by the Yogis. They are ascetics who have renounced the world to search for truth. In their quest for truth and knowledge they gained many insights. Some of these insights explained metaphysical knowledge, practical life paths to self-realization, and ways to take care of your physical self by exercises such as Asanas. In their search, they concluded that a *Paramatma* higher than all of us exist - the cause of every happening.

The stories of Prahlad and Dhruva, who were Vishnu devotees, are passed on through the ages. These stories tell us how the devotees found Mukti or freedom by their devotion to Lord Vishnu.

The story of Prahlad

Prahlad was the son of *Asur* king Hiranyakashypu. The *Asur* king wanted a boon from Lord Brahma. He wished for a promise where he could not be killed by any human beings, by any weapon, at any place or he could not meet death at any time of day or night. While Hiranyakashypu was meditating for this boon, the devas drove his wife and the Asuras out of their kingdom. In the absence of the *Asur* king, Sage Narada in his kindness looked after his wife and his son Prahlad till the *Asur* king returned. Prahlad became a devotee of Lord Vishnu after learning about *Bhagwan* (God) from Narada Muni.

Hiranyakashypu became very arrogant once Lord Brahma had granted him the wish (boon). He began to oppress innocent people till the world was in darkness. He began to think that he was invincible. He disliked Lord Vishnu. Hiranyakashypu's son, Prahlad, however worshipped Lord Vishnu and always chanted his name. Hiranyakashypu was perturbed by his son's devotion and asked Prahlad to worship him instead. Prahlad replied that Lord Vishnu was the only all-pervading one and whom he worshipped, not his father Hiranyakashypu.

Hiranyakashypu was enraged and tried to kill his own son for his devotion to Lord Vishnu. He tried many ways as throwing him off the cliff, throwing him in a burning pyre, but each time Lord Vishnu heard the prayers of Prahlad and rescued him. When all attempts to kill Prahlad failed, Hiranyakashypu, who was consumed by hatred, asked his son "Where is Vishnu? Is he in this pillar?" as he struck a pillar of his castle and broke it. Immediately Lord Narasimha, a half man, half lion form of Lord Vishnu rose from the pillar and took Hiranyakashypu on his lap, carried the *Asur* King outside the gates of the castle and gave Hiranyakashypu the death he deserved. The time was dawn, a time when it was neither day nor night and Lord Narashimha was neither a man nor an animal.

Thus, the *Asur* king was defeated and killed by Lord Vishnu's avatar in the form of Lord Narasimha. Prahlad paid his obeisance to *Bhagwan* and asked Lord Vishnu to forgive his father. Lord Narasimha then appointed Prahlad to be the king and departed.

The story of Dhruva

Uttam, the son of King Utampada and his wife Suruchi, once sat in his father's lap. Dhruva, his other son by his second wife, Queen Suneeti, also wanted to sit on his father's lap. King Uttampada refused Dhruva and that saddened him. Dhruva went to his mother in tears and told her what happened. His mother told him that Lord Vishnu's lap is the most coveted seat and only those who do good deeds can gain it.

Dhruva believed his mother and retired to do deep penance. Lord Vishnu pleased by the prayers of his devotee appeared before him and wished to grant him a boon. The young devotee paid his obeisance and replied, "*Bhagwan*, I wished for a permanent position on earth, but

seeing you I do not wish for anything." Lord Vishnu being pleased with Dhruva's prayers then granted Dhruva immortality saying that he will be a star in the sky guiding everyone in times of darkness. Dhruva became the North Star which Indians called the *Dhruva Tara*.

The two stories above illustrate how devotees have lived their life with faith in Lord Vishnu. Hinduism has taught a way of life for more than 5000 years, and many great men have followed this dharma of devotion - Sri Sri Shankardeva, Sri Sri Madhavadeva, Sri Mahatma Gandhi, Sri RadhaKrishnan, and Swami Prabhupad to name a few eminent men in the history.

[The author lives with her family in New Jersey, USA]

ACTIVITIES

Naam-proxonga

No naam-proxonga activities have taken place during this quarter because of the corona virus emergency. We will resume regular naam-proxonga when normalcy returns.

A Dialogue with Madhu Pandit from ISKCON

To understand how a Hindu religious organization operates in the United States, several NAAM representatives held an informal meeting in December 2019 with Madhu Pandit from ISKCON in the Washington, D.C. area. Their discussions also focused on NAAM's mission and efforts to build a naamghar. Here is some advice from Madhu Pandit:

- Keep the devotion of Lord Krishna as the center of the Naamghar
- For financial maintenance, the Naamghar should have a gift shop that may carry:

- CD's of Srimanta Sankardev's prayers
- Devotional literature
- Popular tourist items from Assam

- Items like Assamese *Khol*, *Taal*, *Nagara*, and other devotional items used for *Kirtans* should be displayed.
- The Naamghar could be the center point for contacts for the Assamese diaspora residing in North America.
- Agar trees, which grow very well in Assam, are a principal source of essential oils used to produce fragrances ("*atar*") for countries in the Middle-East and elsewhere. If NAAM can secure 60 to 100 acres of land in Assam, including in Majuli, for growing Agar trees to meet this international demand, it could be a considerable source of income for NAAM.

Q&A

Q: What is NAAM?

A: Naamghar Association of America, Inc. (NAAM) is a 501(c)(3) non-profit spiritual and cultural organization formed to construct and manage a Naamghar for the Assamese diaspora to celebrate and perform the spiritual traditions and philosophical teachings of Srimanta Sankardeva. With strong ties with all the *Satras* of Assam, NAAM seek to provide a forum for learned spiritual leaders and traditional artistes to share their knowledge and talent with the current and future generations of the Assamese diaspora.

Q: What are the immediate goals of NAAM?

A: Some of the immediate goals of NAAM include spreading awareness on NAAM initiatives, build a digital media platform, plan for fund raising, and participate regularly in

Naam-proxongo. NAAM seeks volunteers from the large Assamese diaspora across the United States to achieve these goals. Please join us (details at the bottom of this newsletter). In our planning activity, the first priority is to identify what is needed to establish a temporary *Naamghar*. This will make the *Guru Axon*, consecrated by the Sri Sri Auniati Satra Satradhikar, more easily accessible to the public, while we work on the longer-term project of building a permanent *Naamghar*.

Q: Does NAAM collaborate with other organizations?

A: NAAM is actively seeking to collaborate with all community organizations which are willing to help achieve NAAM's mission. NAAM plans to have meaningful discussion with all organizations in our community; please contact us if you would like to be a part of this conversation (contact details at the bottom).

HOW TO GET INVOLVED

JOIN THE NAAM WORKING GROUP

(WG): We need your help in achieving the dream of building a Naamghar in the United States. Therefore, NAAM is open to everyone who is interested in building the Naamghar.

If you are interested in getting involved actively in NAAM's mission, please join the NAAM by sending an email to: Naaminfo@Naamghar.net.

The Working Group meets regularly via teleconference/video conference to discuss various issues that are related to NAAM and its mission and goals.

NAAM TEAM MEMBERS

Following individuals comprise the current NAAM team. *We invite all individuals who are sincerely interested in the Mission and Goals of NAAM to join the NAAM team.* Current members are:

- 
- Dr. Sanjib Bhuyan, NJ
 - Niraj Barbara, PA
 - Lolit Bora, PA
 - Pranab Bora, WI
 - Utpal Borah, VA
 - Dr. Binoy Bordoloi, NJ
(*Bor-medhi*)
 - Manoranjan Bordoloi, NJ
 - Monidipa Bordoloi, CA
 - Susanto Bordoloi, CT
 - Malabika Brahma, NJ
 - Debojit Chowdhury, CA
 - Niren Choudhury, NJ
 - Dr. Pradip Das, MO
 - Shyam DevChoudhury, PA
(Secretary)
 - Hemanga Dutta, NJ
 - Panchali Dutta, NJ
 - Sawmick Dutta, CA
 - Prandeep Gogoi, NJ
 - Kamalakshi Hazarika, NJ
 - Suranjoy Hazarika, NJ
 - Dr. Jukti Kalita, NJ
 - Rashmi Kalita, CA
 - Rachna Nath, AZ
 - Shakhyar Neog, NJ
 - Anu Perlmutter, VA
 - Dr. Purandar Sarmah, NJ
(Treasurer)

Contact Us

Naamghar Association of America, Inc. (NAAM)

Email: Naaminfo@Naamghar.net

Website: www.naamghar.org

Facebook: Naamghar Association of America – NAAM