



Hindu Heritage Month

November 2020

ॐ शान्तिः शान्तिः शान्तिः ।
om śāntiḥ śāntiḥ śāntiḥ

What is Hindu Heritage Month?

Namaste, and welcome to Hindu Heritage Month! Celebrated every November, we recognize the important contributions that Hindu Canadians have made to Ontario's social, economic, political and cultural fabric. Hindu Heritage Month is an opportunity to remember, celebrate and educate future generations about Hindu Canadians and the important role they have played and continue to play in communities across Ontario.



Hindu Heritage Month in TDSB

TDSB began recognizing this Heritage Month in November 2018. Every year our themes have introduced the TDSB community to the core tenets and teachings of Hinduism.

The theme for November 2020 is **OM Shanti: Living together in Peace.**

The Sanskrit word Shanti means peace. Like Namaste, OM Shanti is used as a greeting or parting salutation.

OM Shanti is chanted aloud when you begin to meditate, to relax and still the mind and body. It is chanted aloud as a peace invocation after all Hindu prayers

Namaste

Hindus greet each other by saying Namaste. Palms are held together in prayer position in front of the heart area while bowing the head down slightly. Namaste is a Sanskrit word which means, the divine in me bows to the divine in you. The bowing down of the head is to show love, respect and humility.



Hinduism

Hinduism is said to be the oldest living religion in the world and is India's spiritual and cultural heritage. Hinduism teaches spirituality.

Hindus believe that all humans are the embodiment of truth, consciousness and bliss, and that they are born as divine beings.

Sanātana dharma ([Devanagari](#): सनातन धर्म meaning "eternal [dharma](#)" or "eternal order") is another name for Hinduism.



Gods in Hinduism

Hindus believe in one God known as Paramatma or Brahman: a supreme consciousness which is formless, omnipotent and omnipresent. Since nothing is outside God, Hindus are free to worship God in any form – cows, plants, rivers, mountains and deities (divine energies).



Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam: The World is One Family

Hindus believe in the oneness of all living beings and everything in creation and the universe. All is One.

Hindus often follow a spiritual Guru, a living saint, who can guide them on the spiritual path and answer questions about life and the religion.



Core Values

Hinduism is better known as Sanatana Dharma or eternal natural law. Hindus believe in the law of karma (cause and effect) and reincarnation (cycles of rebirth). Hindus strive to attain Moksha, the freedom from cycle of rebirth, through the pursuit of truth and, as divine beings, to perform seva or selfless service.

Holy Books

While Hindus do not have one holy book, the Vedas and Upanishads, penned over 10,000 years ago, teach the core spiritual knowledge and philosophy.

In addition, the Bhagavad Gita and the Ramayana are the most loved sacred texts. The avatars, Sri Krishna and Sri Ram, embody the divine qualities Hindus aspire to emulate.



“Om” or “Aum” is the most sacred sound and symbol of Hinduism. It is known as the sound of the universe, and means universal consciousness. OM appears at the beginning and end of most Sanskrit prayers. It has a profound effect on the body and mind of those who chant it.

Om/Aum



Sanskrit-one of the oldest languages

Sanskrit is the language of Hindu sacred texts. Sanskrit is known to be the root of many languages, including English.

Sanskrit words are known to have a vibrational quality and the sacred chants are cosmic sounds known to have healing effect on the body and mind.

Sanskrit-one of the oldest languages



Puja/Pooja

Puja refers to rituals and prayers done at home or at a temple. The Puja ceremony usually involves the lighting of a diya (candle or oil lamp), chanting of mantras (sacred cosmic sounds) to express gratitude and seek blessings. Puja is way for Hindus to connect with the divine spark within and with the personal deities they love, referred to as Satchitananda.



Guru

Guru (*Sanskrit: गुरु*) from **gu** (darkness), and **ru** (light) — is a person who is regarded as having great knowledge, wisdom and authority in a certain area, and uses it to guide others. Literally a preceptor who shows others knowledge (light) and destroys ignorance (darkness). The guru is seen as a sacred conduit for wisdom and guidance.

Being a **Teacher** is one of the great attributes of a **Guru!**



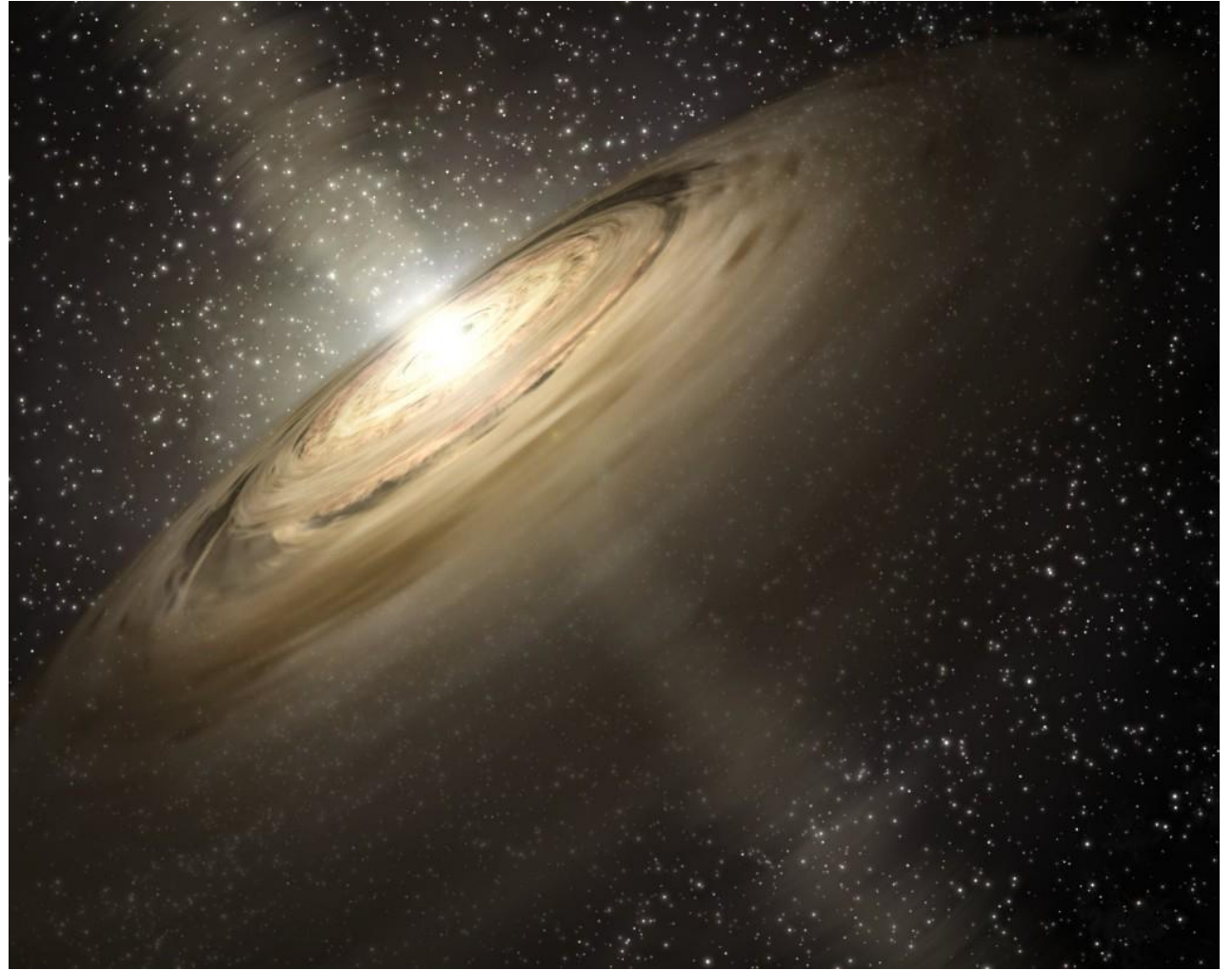
Happy Guru Purnima!
A day dedicated to respecting teachers.

Eternity

Did you know that thousands of years ago, ancient Hindu sages discovered the idea of infinity known as **Ananta**?

They also had the idea of **Shunya** or void which refers to space.

Hindus believe that there is no beginning or end to the universe - only endless cycles of its creation and dissolution.



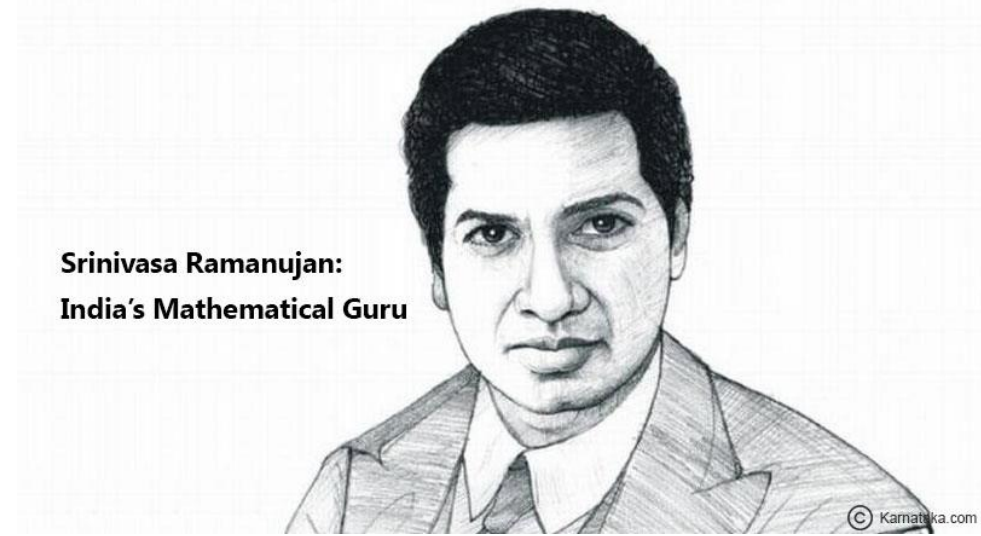
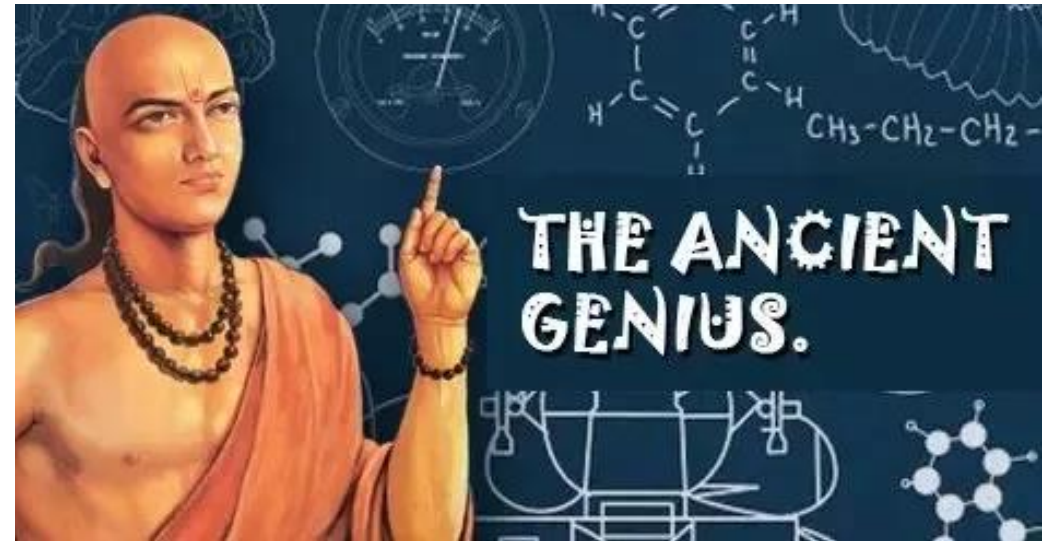
Where do Hindus live?

Hindus live all over the world, but 95% of Hindus live in India. They speak over 22 different languages, such as Hindi, Tamil, Gujarati, Punjabi, Bengali and so many more. As a result of this diversity of languages and cultures, there are many differences in how customs or traditions are celebrated among Hindus.



Math

Can you imagine science or technology without the discovery of zero as a mathematical place marker? We can thank Hindu mathematicians who not only discovered the zero but also Algebra, square root and cube root, Geometry, Trigonometry, and calculus. Famous Hindu mathematicians include Aryabhata, Brahmagupta, Ramanujan and Bose.



Wellness & Medicine

Ayurveda is known as mother of indigenous health knowledge. It is a holistic health system discovered by Hindus to bring harmony in the body, mind and emotions. Ayurveda created a body of knowledge about plants now called botany. Medicinal plants and herbs were catalogued for their healing qualities.



Games

Did you know that games like, Chess, Snakes and Ladders, Playing Cards and Polo originated by ancient Hindus and were later adapted to other countries?



R Praggnanandhaa-The Chess
Champion from India

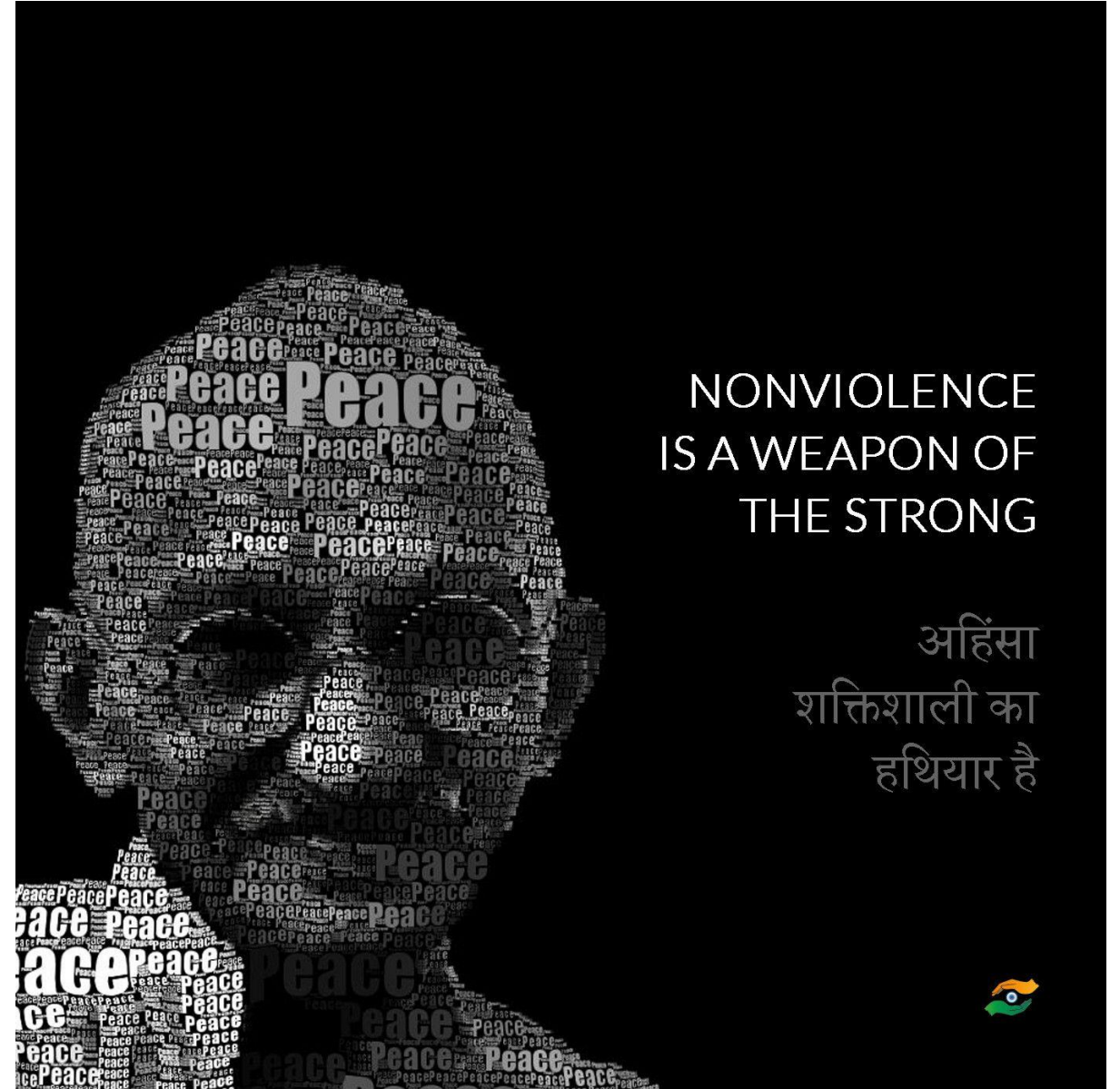
Did You Know?

An estimated 3.8 million Hindu soldiers volunteered and fought valiantly in the two World Wars as part of the British Empire.

To commemorate the thousands of lives lost, a single memorial named Chattri can be found in Brighton, England, the site where many Hindu soldiers were cremated.



Hindus brought the idea of **Ahimsa** or **Nonviolence** to the world. Ahimsa means doing least harm. The beautiful message of peace and non-violence is embraced by people all over the world. Mahatma Gandhi was one such figure who advocated for world peace. He inspired great world leaders such as Martin Luther King in the US and Nelson Mandela in South Africa.



Hindu Festival: Diwali

Hindus around the world celebrate Diwali, also known as the festival of lights, which celebrates the victory of good over evil. People light oil lamps called diyas to invite the light of peace and knowledge into their lives and homes. They wear new clothes, share sweets with friends and family and offer prayers to Lakshmi Devi, the Goddess of Wealth.

Hindus offer prayers to Lakshmi Devi for blessings of wealth, and celebrate Sri Ram and his wife Sita's return from exile. Diwali also celebrates the killing of tyrant demon-king Naraksura by Satyabhama, Sri Krishna's wife.



Hindu Festival: Holi

Holi is celebrated every spring and is also known as the festival of colours. This ancient tradition marks the end of winter and honors the triumph of good over evil, as told in the story of Prahlad. Celebrants light bonfires, throw colorful powder called *gulal*, eat sweets, and dance to traditional folk music. It's a day to forgive and forget past grievances and renew old friendships.



Hindu Festival: Navaratri

Navratri, a Sanskrit word for nine nights, celebrates the nine forms of Devi Shakti or feminine divinity. The first 3 days honour Durga, who embodies valour and self-confidence. The next 3 days honour Lakshmi, who embodies wealth and the last 3 days honour Saraswati, who embodies knowledge. Navratri reminds Hindus to imbibe these good qualities.



Yoga

Yoga and meditation is of Hinduism's important contributions to world civilization. Today Yoga poses and meditation are practiced by millions of people worldwide. Yoga is known to help calm the mind and body, and to discover the peace that lies within.



Rangoli Art

Rangoli is an art form, that originated in India and they are usually made during Diwali and other auspicious occasions. These beautiful patterns are created on the floor using different materials such as coloured sand, quartz powder or flower petals. Traditionally rangoli powder was made of rice in order to feed ants and birds as part of expressing unity with nature.



Bindi

A “bindi” is a coloured dot worn on the centre of the forehead, which represents the third eye of spirituality. A “bindi” is worn by women; however, a similar mark on men is called a “Tilak”.

“Bindi” stems from the Sanskrit word “bindu”, which means drop or particle. It signifies piety as well as serves as a constant reminder to keep God at the centre of one’s thoughts.

It traditionally serves as a constant reminder of one’s own divinity.



- Thank you for your attention



OM SHANTI, SHANTI, SHANTIHI