

Diwali at Arya Samaj Houston

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Added by Indo American News on November 20, 2018.



HOUSTON: Arya Samaj Houston celebrated Diwali on Saturday, November 10, evening in a grand manner as a fitting tribute to its founder Maharshi Dayanand Sarasvati who breathed his last on the Diwali evening of 1883 – one light faded into oblivion to ignite millions of lights. The evening began with a Havan followed by a brief message from Acharya Surya Nanda. He mentioned the age-old tradition of Nava-Sasyeshti Yajnya when the new harvest was first offered to Agni (the fire) in Havan to spread its nourishment to all the beings breathing air. The importance of bringing light in the homes of underprivileged was highlighted and that sense of nobility is possible if we dispel inner darkness by the light of wisdom – Tamaso Ma JyotirGamaya.



The children of the DAV Montessori School and the Sunday School (DAV Sanskriti School) presented an array of songs and dance to celebrate the festive occasion. Arya Samaj Houston takes pride in being bold enough to serve the community with the only Indian elementary school.

DAV Montessori & Elementary students Architha, Nirav and Shivani talked about the importance of the five-day celebration of Diwali and its celebrations in different parts of India. Sanskriti Sunday School was not to be left behind; its Eesha Kumar talked about

Festivity of New Harvest, Dhruv Thacker on *Tamaso Ma JyotirGamaya*, and Aanya Pant on What Do I Enjoy Most in Diwali. DAV Montessori Preschool, KG and 1st grade students sang a melodious song: “*Deepon ka tyohar Diwali*”. DAV Elementary KG to 5th grade students recited the Taittiriyaopanisad Mantras under the guidance of Acharya Surya Nandaji in complete unison with precise Sanskrit enunciation followed by a song “*Aaj diye se diye jalakar ghar jagmag kar jaayenge*”.



The Sanskrit School dance was displayed by about 25 children in perfect harmony and it brought the sense of awe from all in audience, particularly because the children attend the school for mere two hours a week. The chorus song by the Sanskriti School has become the signature to sign off special events of Arya Samaj Houston. The song *Prabhuji, Daya Karo; Man men Aan Baso ...* touched everybody, tears reeling down several cheeks in the audience. Little children rendering the song, accompanied by teachers and volunteers displayed pure virgin spirituality.

True to the holistic Vedic values imparted by Arya Samaj Houston and its two schools, there was much more in store besides spirituality. All in the audience, particularly the children rushed outside of the main hall for another couple of hours of fun-filled Diwali Mela in open air with food stalls, play area, raffle, face painting and fireworks.



A new addition was the exhibition of art paintings recently made by the school children. All activities and food were prepared by the volunteers of Arya Samaj and its schools, logistic help provided by the youth wing of Arya Samaj called Arya Yuva Mandal (AYM). The overall decoration was eye catching. As usual, the event that holds everyone until the last moment was display of fireworks.

-Acharya Dr. Harish Chandra Ved-Ratna