



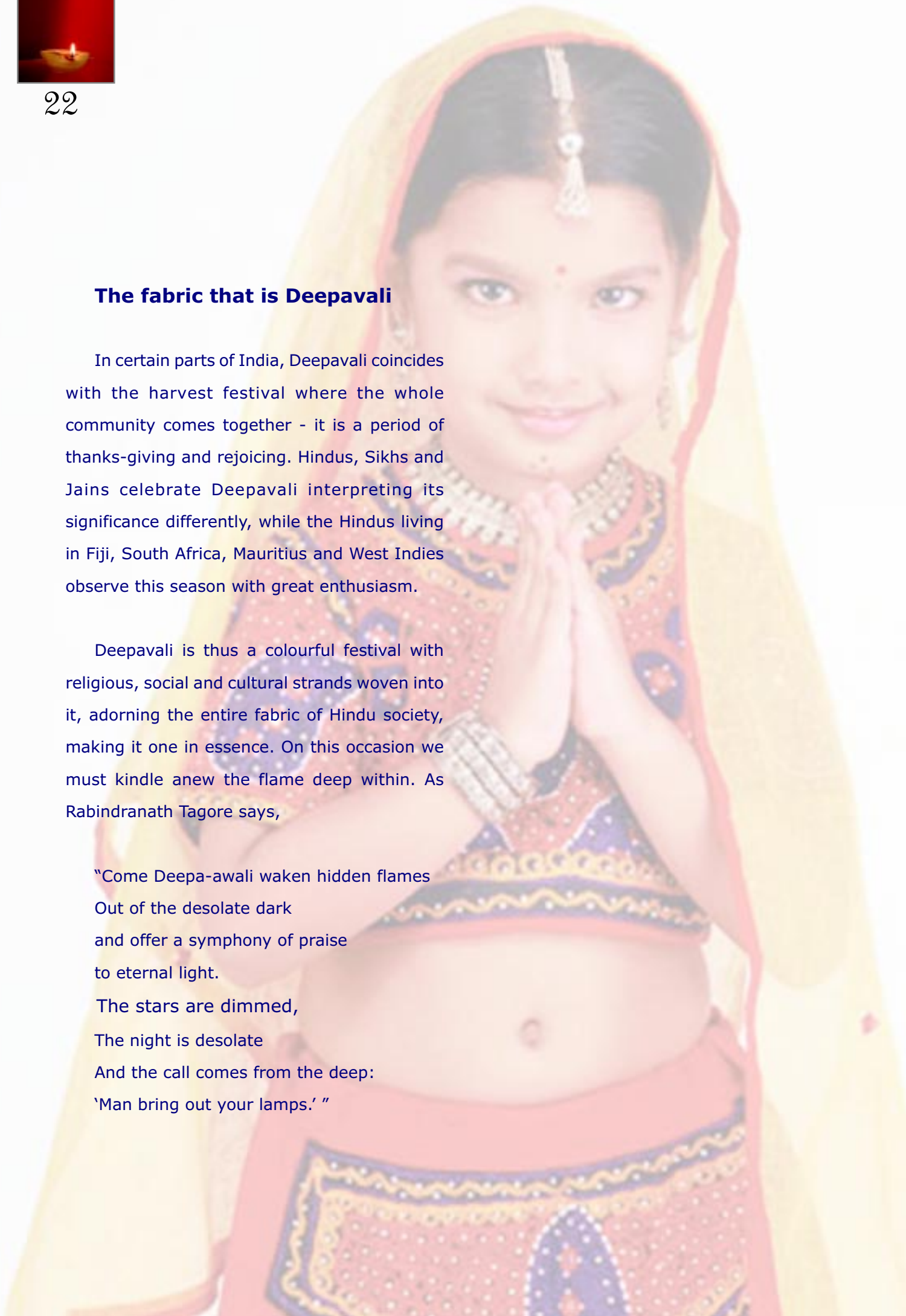
The fabric that is Deepavali

In certain parts of India, Deepavali coincides with the harvest festival where the whole community comes together - it is a period of thanks-giving and rejoicing. Hindus, Sikhs and Jains celebrate Deepavali interpreting its significance differently, while the Hindus living in Fiji, South Africa, Mauritius and West Indies observe this season with great enthusiasm.

Deepavali is thus a colourful festival with religious, social and cultural strands woven into it, adorning the entire fabric of Hindu society, making it one in essence. On this occasion we must kindle anew the flame deep within. As Rabindranath Tagore says,

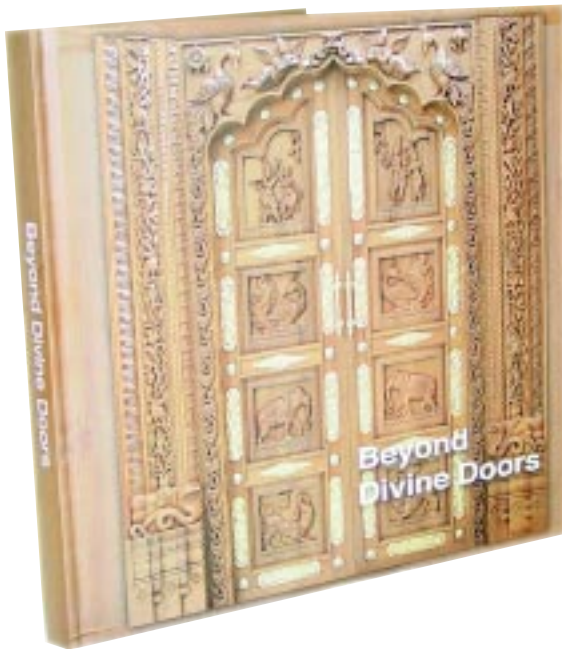
"Come Deepa-awali waken hidden flames
Out of the desolate dark
and offer a symphony of praise
to eternal light.

The stars are dimmed,
The night is desolate
And the call comes from the deep:
'Man bring out your lamps.' "





WHAT LIES BEYOND THESE DOORS?



Beyond Divine Doors

Published by the Hindu Endowments Board
& the Sri Srinivasa Perumal Temple (2005)
132 pages

The book traces the 150 year-old history of the Sri Srinivasa Perumal Temple. In a simple yet delectable style the book takes one on an exciting journey from the time of Raffles to the present day. The reader does feel somewhat insulated, and occasionally superior, seeing through the mind's eye, the difficulties and tribulations the early Indians faced.

The book seeks to address many interesting historical perspectives relating to the building of the temple and the the practice of Vaishnavism by the early Indian settlers in Singapore. For instance, why did the Vaishnavites want a temple of their own? What made these early dwellers lobby so strongly for a temple for Lord Vishnu and then allow Sri Narasimha Perumal Temple (as it was known then) to reach a state of disrepair by the early 1930s?

It appeared that the task of reconstructing the temple had to be carried out by a younger generation (as opposed to the generation of early settlers) who had to contend with legal as well as many other challenges. The book provides interesting insights into what these challenges were and how they were overcome.

It is a must read and the many pictures are candy to the eye.

A book like this can only surface once in, yes, 150 years. It is a worthy collection for every Indian family to keep in their homes and to give to their friends. For the many families featured in the book, it has to be an heirloom for future generations to treasure.