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*With Best Wishes for the success of the  
2008 Hindu Mandir Executives' Conference*



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*Focus on Faith and Family*

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# 3rd HINDU MANDIR EXECUTIVES' CONFERENCE

*Romulus, Michigan  
September 26-28, 2008*

## *Convention Souvenir*

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## EDITORIAL

### ***The Role of Mandirs in Sustaining Dharma in America***

The third Hindu Mandir Executives' Conference (HMEC), like the previous two conferences, seeks to develop and strengthen the networking among the executives of all Hindu mandirs of America. The theme of the Conference is *"The Role of Mandirs in Sustaining Hindu Dharma in America"*. You are well aware that the growth of Hindu Dharma in America critically depends to what extent our children remain anchored in our timeless traditions. Ensuring this will require collective thought, and action. The mandir executives are the natural leader of Hindu society by virtue of these intense motivation, deep experience, and selfless service they have rendered. They understand Hindu-American needs and challenges.

The third Hindu Mandir Executives' Conference brings all the mandirs together for this purpose. At the upcoming Conference, Hindu leaders representing mandirs and Hindu organizations from over two dozen US states, Canada and the Caribbean will converge in Romulus, Mich., and deliberate on the needs of the Hindu-American. They will be representing over 106 mandirs and Hindu organizations. We will all come together from different walks of life, carrying different experiences and view points; it is this diversity which makes these conferences as successful as they are. We join together as one and listen to each other's stories and opinions; we learn from each other and try to help when we can. In the end we hope we can all take away at least one positive concept from this conference that we can apply to our own temple.

Several articles in this souvenir address the issues faced by the young generation in understanding Hinduism and its relevance to their life. What comes through all the articles is the concern of the writers for sustaining Hinduism, need for its better understanding and opportunities for addressing issues of the young who will carry the torch of Hinduism.

Whilst there is concern to help the young to be better educated and involved, there is also great optimism in being able to meet this challenge. It is a tribute to the work of the mandirs that everyone looks to them to help achieve this goal.

With all the sincerity, we commend you for being inspired and involved to sustain and expand the understanding of the greatest gift of Bharat to mankind.

Sat Sanatana-dharma ki jai!  
Om tat sat

#### **Editorial Committee Members:**

Kalpita Abhyankar, Surendra Pandey, Tej Pandey, Umesh Shukla, T. V. Srinivasan, Neela Waghmare

For Information on Hindu Mandir Executives' Conference initiative, contact Dr. Nachiketa Tiwari, VP Mandir Liaison, VHPA at [mandirsangam@vhp-america.org](mailto:mandirsangam@vhp-america.org), Tel.: 508-261-1274; web sites: [www.vhp-America.org](http://www.vhp-America.org), <http://mandirsangam.vhp-america.org>

#### **Disclaimer**

*Views expressed in this Souvenir are of authors and do not necessarily represent the views or policies of the organizers of HMEC. They are meant to generate awareness about the needs of Hindu society as viewed by the authors.*



## THIRD HINDU MANDIR EXECUTIVES CONFERENCE

Sept 26-28, 2008, Romulus, Michigan

### PROGRAM DETAILS

#### FRIDAY

9/26/2008

| Session No. | Time    | Topic   | Chair & Speakers   |
|-------------|---------|---|--|
|             | 6:00 PM | Dinner  |  |
| Session 1   | 7:30 PM | <b>Inaugural Session</b><br><i>Deep prajjwalan</i><br><i>Invocation through dance &amp; music</i><br><i>About the Bharatiya Temple</i><br><i>Learning from Chinmaya Mission Bala Vihar Programs</i><br><i>Message from Art of Living (AOL)</i><br><i>Role of Mandirs in Influencing Policy Making in Trinidad</i><br><i>Hindu Pride and Identity: Vedic Foundations</i> | <b>Dr. Sujatha Reddy</b><br>NY/NJ Mandir Executives<br><br>Shri Shyam Maheswari<br>Acharya Sharadaji<br>Swami Sukhchaitanya<br>Shri Chandresh Sharma<br>Dr. Kumar Nochur |
|             | 9:00 PM | Closure   |  |

#### SATURDAY PRE-LUNCH PROGRAM

9/27/2008

|           |          |   |   |
|-----------|----------|---|---|
| Yoga      | 6:30 AM  | Yoga  | Smt. Preeti Sharma  |
|           | 7:00 AM  | Yoga ends   |   |
| Breakfast | 7:15 AM  | Breakfast   |   |
| Session 2 | 7:50 AM  | <b>Welcome Session</b><br><i>Ekta Mantra &amp; Bhavageet</i><br><i>Deep Prajjwalan</i><br><i>Opening Remarks</i><br><i>Inaugural address: Engaging Youth with Dharma Through Mandirs</i>  | <b>Dr. Sharad Parikh</b><br><br>Michigan Mandir Executives<br>Shri Jyotish Parekh<br>Swami Dayananda Saraswati          |
| Session 3 | 9:00 AM  | <b>Taking Stock</b><br><i>Vision of HMEC</i><br><i>Health Shared Pool Overview</i><br><i>Anthyeshli Samskar Book</i>  | <b>Dr. Nachiketa Tiwari</b><br>Dr. Pawan Rattan<br>Shri Lalit Goel<br>Shri V. Venkataraman & Shri K. Dave               |
| Session 4 | 10:00 AM | <b>Mandir: Providing Leadership Through Networking</b><br><i>Securing a Site for Ash Immersion in Canada - Case Study</i><br><i>Endowment Act and Hindu Mandirs: Conspiracy to destroy Hindu Dharma</i><br><i>International Hindu Mandir Delegation</i><br><i>Role of Hindu Mandirs on the Global Scene</i> | <b>Shri Suresh Gupta</b><br>Shri Dwarka Persaud<br>Dr. Prakasrao Velagapudi<br>Shri Vinaya Vardhana<br>Dr. Mahesh Mehta |
| Session 5 | 11:15 AM | <b>Mandirs: Integrated Resource Center for Hindu-Americans</b><br><i>Role of Media in Positioning &amp; Strengthening Hindu Dharma</i><br><i>Vedic Temples: Making Them More Effective</i><br><i>Sustaining Hindu Dharma: Case Hindu Radio in Dallas</i>  | <b>Shri Suresh Shah</b><br>Dr. Budhendra Doobay<br>Shri Srinandan Das<br>Shri Kalyan Vishwanathan                       |
| Break     | 12:15 AM | Lunch   |   |

HMEC Program cont'd

## SATURDAY POST-LUNCH PROGRAM

9/27/2008

|            |         |  |   |
|------------|---------|--|---|
| Session 6A | 1:00 PM | <b>HMEC Initiatives: Tools for Efficiency &amp; Networking</b><br><i>Keeping the Operations in Order: A Software Tool</i><br><i>Planning a Secure Future: Endowment for Mandirs</i><br><i>Guideline for Mandirs Operations</i>   | Shri Kaushik Joshi<br>Shri Ravi Kunduru<br>Shri Easan Katir<br>Dr. Sharma Tadeipalli                          |
| Session 6B | 1:00 PM | <b>Learning by Sharing</b><br><i>Saraswati Mandiram's expanding role in main stream education</i><br><i>Children can be your Guru</i><br><i>Richmond Hill Hindu Temple</i>   | Shri Dahyabhai Patel<br>Pt. Ramadheen Ramsamooj<br>Dr. Manmohan Nayyar<br>Shri Ramalingam Rajadurai           |
| Session 6C | 1:00 PM | <b>Youth Discussion</b>  |   |
| Session 7A | 2:10 PM | <b>Mandirs: Bridging Past and Future</b><br><i>Hindu Sabha School</i><br><i>SVBF: Anchoring our future</i><br><i>25 Years of Experience at Balaji Temple, Chicago</i><br><i>SV Temple: Sharing 25 Years of Experience</i>  | Dr. Ram Belgaje<br>Shri Mahendra Gupta<br>Dr. S. Yegnasubramanian<br>Dr N.S. Rao<br>Shri Makum Ramesh         |
| Session 7B | 2:10 PM | <b>Role of Mandirs in Interfaith Dialog</b><br><i>OM Center: Getting a place at the table</i><br><i>Role of Hindu Mandirs in a Multifaith Discussion Environment</i><br><i>Role of Hindu Mandirs in Interfaith Dialog</i>  | Smt. Padma Kuppaa<br>Dr. Subhash Agrawal<br>Shri Ravi Joshi<br>Shri Sudhir Parikh                             |
| Break      | 3:20 PM | Tea  |   |
| Session 8A | 3:45 PM | <b>Engaging Youth and Families Through Mandirs</b><br><i>Operational Model of Rama Mandir</i><br><i>How Temples Can Benefit From Yoga Classes</i><br><i>Need for Hindu-Sanskriti-Yoga: Can Mandir Play This Role?</i>  | Dr. D. Prakash<br>Pt. Roopnauth Sharma<br>Shri Mitesh Kapadia<br>Dr. Shive Chaturvedi                         |
| Session 8B | 3:45 PM | <b>Networking &amp; Reaching Out to the Community</b><br><i>Programs at Datta Yoga Center of Canada</i><br><i>Speedy and Widespread Communication Among Hindus</i><br><i>Mandir Networking</i>   | Shri Nandi Shetty<br>Shri Ram Vakkalanka<br>Shri Vijay Shertukde<br>Shri Amitabh Sharma                       |
| Session 9A | 5:00 PM | <b>Seva – The Binding Glue of a Community</b><br><i>Preserving Sites of Religious Importance at Vrindavan and Braj</i><br><i>About Seva Organizations</i><br><i>Setting up a Priest Referral Service</i>   | Shri Navin Kadakia<br>Dr. Animesh Sinha<br>Shri Darshan Soni<br>Pt. Anant Dixit                               |
| Session 9B | 5:00 PM | <b>Nourishing Hindu Dharma</b><br><i>Comfort and Challenges in Creating a Temple</i><br><i>Science &amp; Dharma</i><br><i>Geeta Classes at the Mandirs</i><br><i>Vedas: Purity of relationship &amp; corruption of all three levels</i>                                      | Smt. Manju Srivastava<br>Dr. Vinod Patel<br>Shri Tej Tanden<br>Shri Ashvin Shah<br>Smt. Rajya Laxmi Saha      |
| Break      | 6:10 PM | Dinner   |   |
|            | 7:30 PM | <b>Cultural Program</b><br><i>Bhavgeet</i><br><i>Welcome Remarks</i><br><i>My Idea of a Hindu Wedding</i><br><i>Sripuram Temple - A video presentation</i><br><i>HMEC - Challenges Ahead</i><br><i>Keynote address</i><br><i>Cultural Program</i><br><i>A Note of Thanks</i> | Dr. Rajender Kapoor<br>Sushri Preya Dave<br>Smt. Cathy Wenuk<br><br>Shri Sat Maharaj<br><br>Dr. Yashpal Lakra |



SUNDAY

9/28/2008

|            |          |  |  |
|------------|----------|--|--|
| Yoga       | 6:30 AM  | Yoga   | Smt. Preeti Sharma   |
|            | 7:00 AM  | Yoga ends  |  |
| Breakfast  | 7:15 AM  | Breakfast  |  |
| Session 10 | 8:00 AM  | Connecting with Youth<br>Connecting with Youth<br>Engaging the mandir & community for benefit of the youth<br>Vraj Youth: The Development of Youth Activities Over the Last 20 Years<br>Summary of Youth Session   | Shri Sayone Arasratnam<br>Bhakta Priyananda<br>Shri Deven Patel<br>Shri Ojus Patel<br>Shri Sayone Arasratnam |
| Session 11 | 9:15 AM  | Education - The Challenge of Accurate Depiction of Hindu Dharma<br>Age Appropriate Potrayal of Hindu Tradition<br>Strategies to Change the Curriculum in Schools covering Hinduism & India<br>Text Book Supplement | Shri Brahmaswarup Varma<br>Dr. Deepak Kotecha<br>Dr. Sant Gupta<br>Shri Raj Manickam                         |
| Session 12 | 10:30 AM | Closure<br>Parting Thoughts<br>Resolutions & Next Steps<br>2009 HMEC Host's Acceptance Speech<br>Vote of Thanks<br>Prarthana   | Shri Sanjay Mehta<br>Swamini Janeshwari Devi<br>Shri Jyotish Parekh<br><br>Shri Arjun Soorya                 |
| Lunch      | 12:00 PM | Lunch  |  |

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Message from the President,  
VHP International



“AUM”  
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Ref.#38/2008

Dated: Bhaadra Krishna 11, 2065 V.S., i.e., August 27, 2008 CE

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**Shri Gaurang G. Vaishnav, General Secretary, VHPA.**

*Aatmiiya Gaurang Bhai,*

*Jai Sri Ram!*

It is heartening to know that you are in the process of putting together a souvenir to mark the Third Hindu Mandir Executives' Conference scheduled in Detroit, Michigan, USA on September 26-28, 2008. Hope, the souvenir would recount the activities and inspiring stories of success and difficulties faced so far towards achieving the aims & objects of the HMEC and it will prove to be a preservable one.

*Sant, Shaashtra and Mandir* are the secrets of the enduring nature of our “*Mrityunjay*” (immortal) Hindu society as the world history teaches us that many other ancient civilizations disappeared into the limbo of history because instead of appreciating, they discounted these factors. Our temples are our *Sanskars Kendras* and play a key role in triggering and consolidating the holistic worldview, culture (*Kulaachaar*), core competence (*Swadharma*), *Seva Bhaav*, co-operative and co-creative abilities, integrity, humility, high self-esteem, appreciation and identity in the individuality and personality of our new generations that would make them potential achievers, brilliant and responsible citizens.

I congratulate you on your success so far and send hereby my best wishes for the targeted success of the Third Conference. This Conference is another significant milestone for further development of our temple network, religio-cultural-social-educational-*Sanskars*-health and mutual interface activities. Millions of our Hindu brethren and like-minded people will be its beneficiaries.

Kindly convey my heartiest greetings to the hardworking team of organizers, hosts, Hindu Mandir Executives and other participants in the HMEC-2008 that is another important step in the progress of our *Mandir* consolidation work in the Western Hemisphere.

I wish Hindu Mandir Executives in every country and continent of the world should emulate your success story.

I wish all success for the Third Conference and the HMEC vision & mission!

In the service of *Dharma*,

**ASHOK SINGHAL**

*President*





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02-09-2008

Shri Gaurang G Vaishnav  
General Secretary, VHP, America

Aatmeeya Gaurang Bhai,  
Jai Shriram.

I am happy to note that VHP America is in the process of publishing a Souvenir to mark the Third Hindu Mandir Executives Conference scheduled to be held on September 26-28 at Detroit, Michigan, USA.

Hindu Temples are not just a prayer centre. It is a nucleus of Hindu civilization and a vibrant centre of Hindu learning and activities.

Sabha Mandap, Nritya Mandap and Garbha Griha of temples symbolize all activities i.e. Sabha Mandap is for discussion, seminar and meeting, Nritya Mandap for art and learning and Garbha Griha for spiritual worship.

I hope this conference will be another significant milestone for our temple network and millions of our Hindu brethren and like-minded people will be its beneficiaries.

With Best wishes,

Yours in Dharma

विश्वनाथ

(Swami Vigyananand)

*Message from Pujya Swami Dayananda Saraswati*



The annual conference of Hindu temple executives is gaining strength in terms of number and commitment with every passing year. I congratulate the organizers for bringing all these important volunteer executives together to protect and promote Hindu Dharma.

I request the attendees to pass a resolution expressing their shock of knowing that a learned Swami Lakshmananada Saraswati was killed, along with four of his disciples, by communal forces. The Swami was doing Seva in remote districts of Orissa, and he was totally non-political. In fact, he was my Guru-Bhai while I was studying in-depth Vedanta Shastra with Swami Tarananda Giri in Rishikesh.

Also, I want a resolution urging the Orissa Government to see that these communal forces which attacked a Hindu saint do not continue the activities stemming from hatred of Hindu Dharma.

With best wishes and love,

Swami Dayananda Saraswati

---

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**Dr. Pranav Pandya M.D.**

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**MESSAGE TO HMEC-2008**

I am truly delighted to learn that Heads and Executives of Hindu Temples and other institutions of USA and Canada are coming together at the HMEC-2008 conference under the leadership of Pujya Swami Dayananda Saraswati.

During my recent visits to USA and Canada for conducting youth camps, I have felt that the need of the our is "Training of the Trainers". At present, the role of Pujaris in our temples is limited only to conduct rituals and a large number of them do not have the communication skills and the depth of knowledge to cater the curiosity and needs of our young generation.

During this conference we need to find ways to provide training to the pujaris and teachers of our temples so that they become more effective at reaching out to the hearts and minds of our next generation who only understand the language of love and logic. If religion has to be inculcated in their lives, it must be based on scientific reasoning and progressive ideology. In addition, the interest in Yog, Meditation and Vegetarianism is increasing drastically in the West and temples must prepare themselves to become the "lighthouses" for the Westerner seekers also.

Gayatri Pariwar established Dev Sanskriti Viswa Vidyalaya several years ago on the education pattern of Nalanda and Takshila for Revival of Rishi Traditions. It now spans over 200 acres of land and have programs that range from six month certificate courses to Ph.D in vedic sciences. Dev Sanskriti Viswa Vidyalaya will be glad to support any initiatives that are taken by HMEC in the area of "Training of the Trainers".

With Blessings

Pranav Pandya





## Vishwa Hindu Parishad of America Inc. (World Hindu Council of America)

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It is a great pleasure to welcome you all to HMEC 2008. Overwhelming participation of the Mandir executives once again in this 3<sup>rd</sup> HMEC signifies that you all are feeling the same urgency to deliberate on the issues faced by Hindus in general and Mandirs in particular in North America.

In the last HMEC 2007 in NJ, we had listed a number of action items. We had formed various committees to look into the solutions. They have worked hard during the past year and you will see some concrete results during this HMEC. Launching of the Health Share Pool (HSP), release of the *Antyesthi sanskar* book are some of the examples. I urge many more Mandir Executives to participate whole heartedly in new committees and keep this process going with greater speed. This is the forum for Mandir executives and together we can bring great synergy to achieve many things.

Information on the HSP is given in this souvenir, and presentation will be made during the HMEC. HSP is an important initiative and can be successful only if Mandirs participate in large numbers. It will definitely save you some expense on the health care cost for the Mandir employees. But the greater outcome will be the experience of pooling Mandir resources together and working together for a common goal.

Working together harmoniously on many programs for a divine cause will gradually instill in us confidence to find solutions for many of our problems and pave the way for overall enrichment of the community. Mandirs will have to play a significant role in the growth of Hindu community in terms of its capacity to uphold Hindu Dharma. Towards this we all have decided to be the instrument of the divine - *nimitta*

On a related subject, weak youth participation in Mandirs is a concern that has been raised by many Mandir executives. The reasons are many and we do recognize that there are no quick solutions. In this HMEC we have made special efforts for youth participation. We have not only invited youths to participate in the main sessions, but also arranged for separate youth sessions. Their input will be very significant to arrive at the solutions. After all they will be the ones running the Mandirs and other religious and spiritual organization 10 - 20 years from today or sooner. I request all of you to work with the youths in your area during next year and encourage them to come to HMEC 2009.

We sincerely thank Bharatiya Temple of Troy, MI for being a wonderful host for HMEC 2008.

Jyotish Parekh, President  
VHP of America.

*Message from H. H. Pujya Chidanand Saraswatiji*

*A temple is not a building. It is the abode of the Lord.  
A temple's strength is not in its bricks.  
Its fortitude comes from the dedication of its members.  
A temple is not held together by plaster and mud.  
Its glue is the piety and devotion of the community.  
A temple is not simply a place we visit.  
It should be the axis around which our lives revolve.*



August 30, 2008

Dear Divine Souls of the HMEC,

I hope that —by God's grace —this finds you all in the best of health and happiness. It is wonderful to know about the Hindu Mandir Executives Committee meeting on the 26-28, September in Detroit. This is such a wonderful, divine, and auspicious occasion.

You are all achieving so much and providing so much for your individual Hindu communities through your individual mandirs. I am so impressed by your commitment and dedication to God, your culture and your community. Now, by joining together into the Executive Committee and working together you are bringing even greater benefit to all the Hindus living in USA and Canada.

Carrying on Pujya Swami Vivekanandaji's dream & message is divine seva and it is crucially needed. Creating an environment where the youth understand, appreciate and love their Hindu culture is a crucial need today. When we are all united in the name of Sanatan Dharma we can bring the messages of peace, harmony and universal brotherhood to the world.

I pray to the Lord Almighty to infuse your temples, the HMEC and your lives with even more piety, even more devotion and even more divinity.

When are you all coming to India? Whenever you come, it would be wonderful if you came to Rishikesh. The holy waters of Mother Ganga and the sacred Himalayas are calling you. Please know that Parmarth Niketan is your ashram and you are always welcome.

I send you all and all your loved ones my deepest blessings and prayers.

In the service of God and humanity,

Swami Chidanand Saraswati

---

HH Pujya Swami Chidanand Saraswatiji  
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 लयावत लीन हिंदुत्व माहे लया  
 मजुत धन्यवाद - लया हाडु  
 पसरे - लया ली लया लया  
 लया लया परिषदना लयावत  
 लीन जयश्री स्वामिनारायण



आदरणीय सोढाणी साहेब और विश्वहिंदु परिषद के सभी कार्यकर्ताओंकी सेवामें...

विश्वहिंदु परिषद के सभी कार्यकरो को हमारी और से कोटी कोटी धन्यवाद के साथ हृदय पूर्वक  
 जय श्री स्वामिनारायण ।

हिंदुत्वको जाग्रत एवं जिवंत रखने हेतु से जो सेवा कर रहे हैं वे सभी कार्यकर्ता भगवान श्री राम और  
 भगवान श्री कीशन की ही सेवा कर रहे हैं.... । अब हम सबको हिंदुत्वके लीए ज्यादा जाग्रत होना ही पड़ेगा  
 और दौटना ही होगा... ।

बस, सभी प्रसन्न रहे ।

सेवक साधु हरिप्रसाद का अंतर से सभीको

जयश्री स्वामिनारायण



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॥ Sri Chandramouleeswaraya Namaha: ॥

Sri Sankara Bhagavadpadacharya Paramparagatha Moolamnaya Sarvagnapeeta :

His Holiness Sri Kanchi Kamakoli Peetadhipathi

**JAGADGURU SRI SANKARACHARYA SWAMIGAL**  
**Srimatam Samasthanam**

No. 1, Salai Street, KANCHIPURAM - 631 502.



The Sanatana Dharma or the Vedic way of life, followed from the days of yore. It leads one from the spiritual blindness to self enlightenment. Dharma includes karma enjoined by the scriptures. The Sanatana Dharma is immortal and those who adopt this Dharma become immortal.

Dharanat dharma mityahu: Dharma dharayati praja, it is called Dharma because it sustains all. The teachings of the Vedas and smritis, otherwise called as dharma shastras, are Dharma. They are the laws of life for mundane and spiritual welfare.

Our Sanatana Dharma, more commonly referred to as Hindu Religion, was a most followed way of life all over the world. This way of life has dwindled in current times. We are very happy to learn that Vishwa Hindu Parishad of America Inc. is conducting the Third Hindu Mandir Executives' Conference during September 2008 at Romulus, Michigan with the central theme **The Role of Mandirs in Sustaining Dharma**. This is not only the need of the hour to protect Dharma but also a noble endeavour to firmly maintain the traditional values among younger Hindu Americans.

It is imperative for Vishwa Hindu Parishad of America Inc. to ensure unity of thought and execution in the newly proposed net work of cultural and religious activities that aims to bring numerous Hindu mandirs and organizations under one banner. The mandir sangam must work as a cohesive unit to implement the developed strategies.

We pray Sri Mahatripurasundari Sametha Sri Chandramouleeswar Swami to shower Their blessings on Vishwa Hindu Parishad of America Inc. and its co-ordinators and participants who render their services to promote the aims and objectives of Sanatana Dharma successfully. Our blessings for their active continuance of their selfless and enduring Divine service.

Narayanasmriti:

Bhadrapada Sukla Dwitiya

Sri Sankara Samvatsara: 2518

# Avadhoota Datta Peetham

## Sri Ganapati Sachchidananda Ashrama

Datta Nagar, Ooty Road, Mysore 570025 India Tel: 0821-2486486 Fax: 2487487  
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Jaya Guru Datta

श्री दत्त शरणं मम

Jai Shri Datta

**Yaśśivō Nāmarūpābhyām Yā Dēvī Sarvamaṅgalā.  
Tayōssaṁsmaraṇāt Puṁsām Sarvatō Jayamaṅgalam.**

Benedictory Message of  
Avadhoota Datta Peethadhipati Jagadguru Parama Pujya  
**Sri Sri Ganapati Sachchidananda Swamiji**

धर्मो विश्वस्य जगतः प्रतिष्ठा । Dharmo Visvasya Jagatah Pratistha.  
(Dharma is the basis of a stable and blissful world.)

This commandment from Upanishat is the bedrock of the Great Indian Religion and Culture. In other words, Bhaarateeya Sanaatana Dharma flourished with the basic tenets of Dharma, since time immemorial. Though, this great doctrine might have been subject to few superficial changes to suit times and region (D@ḡa & K;la) core values remain the same. The changes based on the practitioners' maturity and ability to understand the philosophical aspect of the Dharma and practical convenience to carry out the practices.

In the contemporary ages, Sanaatana Dharma more known as Hinduism, has manifested in the system of temples, replacing the age old Acharya - Guru Kula Parampara as the principal medium of Dharmik Instruction, especially in the western hemisphere. Thus, these temple institutions, the vibrant epicentres of the Hindu Society are vested with responsibilities to protect the fabric of Cultural Identity, Spiritual Affinity and Dharmik Duty. Hence, the Temple system is expected to work for the renaissance of value based Dharmik practices and to cater to the Dharmik needs of the society.

It is heartening to note that more than 700 Temples are established in USA and that the administrators of these institutions, based in North American Continent have acknowledged the worth of cohesion and network of like minded Dharmik organisations and are congregating for the third conference to deliberate upon issues relevant to current day management. In this way, they have surpassed their brethren back home,

by taking lead in connecting like minded Dharmik organisations and putting into practice, our eternal principle of *Sangachhadhwam - Samvadadhwam*. (You shall walk & talk together.)

In the contemporary scenario, the organisers may deliberate upon the under mentioned issues and resolve to initiate remedial measures:

1. Decline in the quality of skilled persons to run the temples - The bane of Temple System:

Construction of new temples is a priority among the community; but efforts to establish facilities to educate persons (to cater to the needs of existing and new Temples) are parsimonious; resulting in shortage of qualified persons such as Archaka, Purohita, Paachaka (Cook) and Temple Managers. It should be the priority of organisations to collectively establish and support educational institutions; imparting theoretical and practical training to the above mentioned categories both in North America and India.

2. Institution of Marriage:

As Successful marriage is the hall mark of a healthy Hindu Society, it is imperative to disseminate knowledge about the sanctity and importance of the institution called marriage, detailing rights and duties of both the partners. Short video/ audio albums and booklets explaining various vows, prayers in marriage ceremony; shall be published and distributed to people after or before betrothal & marriage.

3. Nitya Puja & Naama Smarana

Nitya Puja is the duty of every house holder (Gruhastha) and Sankeertana is the duty of entire family. To promote Dharmik lifestyle and to reduce stress of routine life Nitya Puja, Sankeertana & Dhyana; Weekly training programs (beginner, advanced level) shall be introduced and gradually expanded to other temples. Curriculum, consisting of Nitya Puja, Prayers for all the occasions, Bhajans, Code of Conduct & Introduction of Sanskrit language/ Mother tongue) suitable to all sections of the society shall be published in a common series of books. This could serve as hand book of practice for every home, practising Sanaatana Dharma.

We pray to the almighty Sri Dattatreya Swamy, (the embodiment of Trinity) to bestow incessant grace on all the participants of HMEC to take articulate decisions for the welfare of society.

Sunday, September 07, 2008  
Camp: Vijayawada, AP

Jaya Guru Datta





## THE OFFICE OF HIS HOLINESS SRI SRI RAVI SHANKAR

### Message for the Hindu Mandir Executives' Conference



The Sanatana Dharma has always stood for equality, liberty, justice, diversity and a sense of belongingness with the whole world.

I am very happy that all the members of the Hindu executive committee are coming together to discuss plans and programs concerning the community. I feel the Hindu management committee should not only just immerse itself in rituals but also bring in the practical and philosophical aspect of our religion.

There are a number of references to the origin of creation like 'Nasadiya Sukta' in Rigveda which comes so close to the 'dark matter and dark energy' theory of modern physics. Many such scientific aspects of Yoga and Vedanta philosophy which when brought to light among the young generation not only will increase their self-image but also renew their faith in the Sanatana Dharma.

Study classes for texts like Yoga Vasistha, the Puranas, Bhagavat Gita should be encouraged more. I wish the members along with managing temple affairs will also play a more proactive role and start an outreach program of Dharma.

'Sanghe shakti kaliyuge' -In this age, the Hindu community can develop and grow strong only when there is a united effort by all its members. Only a strong community can contribute better to a nation they live in. We need to bring in a lot of reforms within the community and these meetings I am sure would prove immensely productive.

With love and blessings,

Sri Sri Ravi Shankar

# Two Decades of Hindu Jain Temple Youth Camps

*Pankaj Aggarwal, Youth Counselor  
Mahima Chablani, Youth Counselor  
Sanjay Mehta, Camp Director*

Hindu Jain Temple, Monroeville, PA  
[www.hindujaintemple.org](http://www.hindujaintemple.org) email: mehtassm@gmail.com

At the end of the school year, kids have countdowns for summer- the season of licking ice cream, attending carnivals, sipping lemonade, swimming, lying out by the pool, and making s'mores. Campers of Hindu Jain Temple Camp, however, have countdowns for the one-week in August that they get to spend in cabins right off Lake Erie, with members of the widespread, yet close-knit, Pittsburgh community.

Hindu Jain Temple Camp (HJTC) is no doubt an amazing experience for all those who attend. People of all ages enjoy this week-long camp. There, all of us enjoy and survive the whole week without TV, phone, or internet, a truly difficult task for some kids. Actually, there is no space for these items while busy with Shivender Nagar Ji and Dr. Abhaya Asthana (Tau Ji) and other respected volunteers to strengthen our knowledge of Hinduism through yoga, bhajans, and interactive discussions.

## CAMP OBJECTIVES

- ❖ Nurture Hindu-Jain spiritual values and the cultural heritage of Bharat.
- ❖ Provide opportunity to the campers to explore aspects of Hinduism, Jainism, Indian history, and culture.
- ❖ Provide opportunity for developing leadership skills, team building, and camaraderie among campers through various cultural, religious, craft and athletic programs.

Throughout the six days of camp, campers participate in a myriad of planned activities, ultimately creating the perfect balance between learning and playing. Whether it is camper, counselor or volunteer the day starts very early. The counselors must wake up the campers by 6 AM every day. An early start enforces a sense of discipline and punctuality that everyone will carry throughout their lives. Each day kicks off at 7:30 AM with refreshing morning

prayers, followed by an interactive and stimulating lecture with Nagarji, generally regarding positive thoughts. Before breakfast, all campers perform yoga, allowing all to have a fresh start for the day's activities. After breakfast, campers split up into their respective age groups and learn about Hindu history, recite the essays they wrote before camp, and learn various shlokas and bhajans, along with their meanings. After lunch, campers anxiously wait for a counselor to sound the siren on the megaphone, indicating the start of the day's main activity. They run outside, excited and enthused. Main activities include the ultimate scavenger hunt, water day, a capture the flag tournament, and sports competitions. During these activities, all campers are divided into groups to promote unity among all ages. Various campers dress up in similar team outfits, paint their face, and create team cheers, thus creating a spirited atmosphere. Campers also participate in nightly activities, including a dance competition, talent show, saraswati pooja, campfire, cooking classes, trivia sessions, and arts and crafts. During free time, campers are spotted playing games of volleyball, kabaddi, ultimate Frisbee, basketball, practicing for the last day's cultural program, and more. Counselors, aunties, and uncles all try to create an organized, fun, disciplined environment among the campers.

The 8:00 PM puja is highly anticipated. Here, everyone recites the Hanuman Chalisa, accompanied by the harmonium and tabla. After, everyone stands up, claps, snaps their fingers, feels the music, and enthusiastically sings to bhajans, ultimately creating a sublime environment. Once aarti is completed, campers are graciously served milk and cookies, bid their friends goodnight, and return to their cabins, ready to rest after a day of wonderful adventures.

At night, counselors and staff members stay up preparing for the following day's activities, to ensure operation runs smoothly. Being a counselor entertains a lot of stress: running from place to place, trying to organize activities for campers, as well as telling their campers to join the

next activity punctually. However, counselors take this responsibility head-on, and do a great job. The counselors act like older siblings, rather than parents, at camp. The counselors help the campers by guiding them, but still have lots of fun with their campers.

Hindu Jain Temple Camp is a great opportunity for kids to enjoy the summer, meet new people, learn Hindu value, and have immense fun at the same time. At Hindu Jain Temple Camp, we unite through taco eating contests and

shaving cream fights. We unite by running away from skunks and grasshoppers. We unite by pouring ice down counselors' backs, only to be chased around the campsite by them. We unite by singing the ever so famous bhajan, "Don't touch my gagari Mohan rasiya!" We unite by playing volleyball with uncles. We unite by helping aunts serve their delicious snacks. We unite through competitive games of kabaddi. Most importantly, we unite through awareness of our strong culture, religion, and community!

## HMEC 2008 LAUNCHES HEALTH SHARE POOL (HSP)

I am sure all of us are familiar with the old saying 'Health is Wealth'. Any amount of wealth is not of much help if it does not bring us good health or allow us maintaining healthy life style. Those of us, who are employed, are offered private health plans by our employers with employees and employers sharing the premiums. Many of our Mandirs do not have the luxury to have insurance plans of their own because of fewer employees. Keeping this in mind, The Second Hindu Mandir Executive Conference held in August 2007, appointed a committee to explore the concept of shared health pool for the priests and other employees of Mandirs and other related organizations. This decision was based on the presentation made by Shri Lalit Goel in that conference about Health Share Pool (HSP).

HSP is not an insurance generally offered by big insurance companies for a fixed premium for a set of defined benefits. Mostly the premiums are high for the benefits offered. The average yearly premiums in 2008 for most insurance plans exceed \$4200/- for a single person and \$11,000/- for a family. Also there are Deductibles, Co-Pays, Out of pocket maximum, Out of Network, In Network and many other limitations imposed.

Health Share Pool (HSP) brings together all members as one large pool and let patrons leverage the benefit of pooling and risk sharing. HSP offers healthcare benefits to members at much lower cost than the insurer. Similar pools are successfully run by other religious groups. With HSP the cost to provide majority of health benefits will be reduced by more than 50% as shown below.

|                         | Annual Premiums |             |
|-------------------------|-----------------|-------------|
|                         | Single person   | Family      |
| Private Insurance Plans | \$4000/-*       | \$11,000/-* |
| HSP                     | \$1900/-*       | \$5,200/-*  |

\* The premiums are for members 35 years of age or below.

Since HSP is not an insurance company, the benefits are paid as the funds are available in the pool. The greater the participation, more stable is the HSP. An estimated Break Even Point is 200 participants. If we far exceed this number, we may see further reduction in costs and that will benefit all participants. Please register for HSP coverage in Detroit at HMEC 2008 to be held from September 26-28, 2008 and wait for a Green Signal from HSP to start the coverage. The green signal will be given as soon as we cross 200 members. **KEEP YOUR CURRENT INSURANCE COVERAGE TILL YOU ARE NOTIFIED ABOUT HSP COVERAGE.**

To conduct the operations of HSP, Benefit Board Members will be selected from the Mandir Executives. For further information, you can go to website [www.mandirhealthpool.org](http://www.mandirhealthpool.org) or pick up literature at HMEC 2008.

Please remember that HSP is 'our program' and the benefits are offered at modest cost compared to traditional health insurance plans. Your participation in large numbers will allow us to make this very important initiative successful.

If the participation does not exceed 200 members by HMEC 2009, the premiums shall be refunded after deducting nominal administration fees. For further information, please visit [www.mandirhealthpool.org](http://www.mandirhealthpool.org) or pick up the literature at HMEC 2008



# MANDIR is a Platform for Speedy and Widespread Communication

Vijay Shertukde  
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*Mandir* is a place to perform:

- Puja, Aarti, worship, upasana,
- Religious discussion,
- Place for an individual to communicate with the almighty,
- Do Yoga and meditation,
- Place where we can educate our children about Hindu faith, and
- Pass Hindu heritage to them.

However, one should not forget that *Mandir* is also a platform for speedy and widespread communication. The Hindus abroad should take advantage of this fact.

During 1930's Lokmanya Tilak used Ganesh Chaturthi event to awaken Hindus to fight for freedom. The platform of *Mandir* has this latent power. Although it is not a platform for political agenda, it certainly can be used to promote:

- Awareness of Hindu cause,
- Awakening of Hindu mind,
- Better understanding of the Hindu faith,
- To help reduce blind faith,
- Unite Hindu community from different regions,
- Alleviate regional differences and social differences

*Mandir* can also be used as a platform to educate Hindus about:

- Day to day reality of conversion,
- Attacks on Hinduism from Christianity and Islam,
- Government control of *Mandirs* in India,
- Interference of outside forces on Indian politics that directly affects the Hindu cause,
- Grave situation around the Northern Border states of India and probability of subjugation that could arise due to the carelessness of our politicians and indifference of Hindus. Most of us leaving abroad may not be Indian citizens; however, I believe *Bharat Mata* is in our heart and is part of our life.

The question that may arise in the minds of many of you is that why *Mandir* should do this? *Mandir* is not a platform to pursue political agenda. However, one should realize that *Mandir* is one of the strongest platforms available to all of us, to unite Hindus, to awaken Hindus, to bring awareness about the current situation, to educate Hindus on many of these issues effectively and expeditiously. Although the Hindus going to *Mandir* every week may be less than 20%,

the knowledge, the information, and the news shared to these limited attendees will permeate through remaining 70 to 80% of the Hindu community very fast. And that is where the power resides. Swami Vivekananda, Lokmanya Tilak realized this latent power. They realized the hold that the Hindu religion and the *Mandirs* have on people's mind. Let us not forget that.

The tasks such as Puja, Aarti, youth classes to teach Hindu faith, Yoga and meditation are already in progress. Many *Mandir* organizations are also working on the logistics of temple construction, about priests, their health insurance, immigration and similar legal problems.

However, it is my observation that Hindu population living abroad is not aware and also carry to certain extent indifferent attitude about verbal, intellectual, and political attacks on Hinduism from Christianity and Islam, day to day reality of conversion to other faith, the government control of *Mandirs* in India, interference of outside forces on Indian politics that could directly affect the Hindu cause, the pathetic condition and the indifference by the general Indian population towards the people staying in the Northern Border states of India and probability of subjugation that could arise in those states due to the carelessness of our politicians and indifference of Hindus.

We need a coordinated effort to inform the people living outside India that will bring the rude awakening. This awareness will help us unite and to mitigate the regional differences that we have in our community. And this awareness will eventually permeate to general population back home. It is like a cascading effect, the intricate mechanism of this infection of awareness that could migrate from outside India to inside India will be difficult to analyze. But it will happen. I am not suggesting any action. That is not the task of the *Mandir* organization. To bring awareness and awakening is the responsibility. This will also help Hindu community resolve many other problems. Various *Mandir* organizations abroad should think how they can impart the information through *Mandir* media on regular basis.

If you go to churches and mosques, you will find that through their weekly sermons the mullahs and priests discuss and pass the information of national importance or social importance to general public without hinting any actions or suggestions. But these sermons are very effective. It is a very strong media, much stronger than TV, Internet, and newspaper put together.

# Nature of God in Prophetic Faiths and Hinduism

*Bhagawandas Lathi, Ph.D.*

In our world, there are two major visions of spirituality today; the prophetic and the mystic. The prophetic faiths (Judaism, Christianity, and Islam) are monotheistic meaning they have only one God who is portrayed as having human attributes and emotions; He is jealous, wrathful, vindictive, vengeful, loving, just, etc. He entrusts his knowledge and commands exclusively to few privileged persons, the prophets. No other human can aspire to get God's knowledge or vision first-hand. He must accept it from prophets who put all this information in one holy book. God, the creator, and his creation, the humans, are distinct. For a human to claim any equality with God or even to aspire to get God's vision is a deadly heresy and many people have been killed for this offence. The holy book also makes it clear that its message is the sole truth and there is no truth besides it. The believers are the 'Chosen People' of God and unbelievers are accursed who are thwarting the will of God and must be punished if, even after given a chance to accept the message, they refuse to follow the Book<sup>1</sup>. Such infidels must be destroyed. It declares all the accursed people or non-believers going to Hell. Prophetic faiths divide humanity in two hostile camps; believers and non-believers leading to ideology of power, hegemony with the singular goal of dominance by the believers of non-believers. Their Scriptures command them to convert the whole world to their one faith either by missionary and evangelical activities or force. It inevitably leads to violence<sup>2</sup>. These faiths are responsible for the brutal killing of hundreds of millions of innocent infidels in the last 2000 years.

In these faiths, God creates the world and governs it with omniscience, omnipotence and perfect love. Prophetic faiths believe that God is the agency that rewards or punishes humans according to whether they obeyed or transgressed God's commands (in the holy book) during this one and only life on earth. All the natural disasters like earthquakes, floods, storms, fires, even political decline of a State, etc. are God's punishment for transgression of his command(s). A person is sent either to eternal heaven or eternal hell-fire depending upon the balance of his compliance and transgressions of God's commands. With this vision, it is problematic to answer how this God allows the suffering of the innocent and the prosperity of the guilty.

Mystical vision of spirituality is the diametrically opposite to the vision of prophetic faiths. Hinduism is the most ancient among the mystic faith. Mystics are people who have had an experience or realization of the presence of divine Reality in oneself and also in all living (and also non-living) things in the world. They personally experience that human soul is similar or even identical with the divine Reality.

Mystic gets an overwhelming experience of the 'Oneness' of himself with God and the entire universe and everything in it. This is the 'unitive' experience that joins the knower with the eternal ground or Godhead. During the unitive experience, the mystic feels that the whole universe is made of one subtle principle (the *first principle*), *Brahman*, and that he is the same as *Brahman* or God. Perception of multiplicity ceases. He loses the sense of separation from the world. There is no longer any sense of "mine" and "thine." *Atman*, his transcendental Self (not the personal ego *ahamkar*) is experienced as pure bliss and pure intelligence, one with the divine Ground (*Brahman*). The experience is so far beyond ordinary human experience that the mystics are often unable to describe it since nothing in our daily life can characterize it adequately.

This kind of unitive experience, that makes mystic feel one with everyone leads to the most exalted ethics, far superior even to the Golden Rule. The ethics of mystics teaches not just to 'treat other as you would like to be treated', but that there is no difference between oneself and the others. Hence, hurting others (even animals) hurts you. Hindu Gurus often preach their flock to see themselves in others and see others in you (or to see God in each other and in all). It is this ethics that is the source of viewing nonviolence as a cardinal virtue. The nonviolence is to be extended even to animals. This is the reason for widespread prevalence of vegetarianism in India. This ethics is also responsible Hindu's tolerance of other faiths.

Mystical phenomenon is natural and inherent to all humans. That is why mystics have been born since early days of humanity. They are born in all parts of the world at all times and in all faiths, even in the prophetic faiths which

consider mystical experience of seeing God's vision as a deadly heresy. Prophetic faiths view the creation as distinct from creator (God or ultimate reality) and a creature can never be one with the creator. Hence, for a man to claim to have union with God is a deadly heresy. Mystics like Meister Eckhart, Swedenborg, al Hallaj in prophetic tradition were persecuted and some, like al Hallaj, were burned alive for mystical beliefs.

The nature of God is also diametric in the two visions. The Old Testament part of the Bible is the foundation of all the three major prophetic faiths; Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. The God is portrayed as the most capricious and brutal dictator. He has divided mankind into two hostile groups; his favorite, the Chosen People (believers) and the accursed (nonbelievers). The division is not based on ethical and non-ethical behavior but on arbitrary and very flimsy external grounds such as that accursed people worship images or that they do not worship the God (and follow the prophet) of the believers and so on.

Historian/philosopher Will Durant observes: "Like the Old and the New Testament of Bible, ethics of Quran rests on the fear of punishment, and the hope of reward, beyond the grave. "The true believers are the ones whose hearts tremble with fear at the mention of Allah<sup>3</sup>." Intolerance of other faiths and worship and brutality towards unbelievers are built in prophetic faiths. Jehovah commands that any believer, even your family member, caught worshipping other gods (besides Jehovah) must be killed by stoning and should not be shown any pity<sup>4</sup>.

Unlike, prophetic faiths, God of Hindus rarely talks to humans face to face. Sages receive divine revelations during their meditation not through face-to-face talk as depicted in prophetic faiths. There is however, one outstanding example where God, in the form of Krishna, as an *Avatar* of God, lives and walks among humans. The difference between God of Hindus and that of prophetic faiths is very effectively portrayed through the pages of the epic Mahabharat and the sacred book Bhagawat Geeta.

The epic is about the saga of the rivalry of two royal clans, Kauravas and Pandavas, who are the first cousins. Pandavas were challenged to a game of dice by Kauravas who were expert players. As per warrior code, Pandavas dare not refuse a challenge. So, even with the knowledge that they are weak players, they accepted the challenge. In the game they end up losing their entire kingdom to Kauravas with the condition that the kingdom will be returned to them after 13 years of exile of which the last

year must be lived in disguise. If they are discovered, the whole exile is to begin again. Pandavas, after a great hardship, complete successfully the thirteen years of exile and demand their kingdom back. Kauravas refuse to comply. Krishna is related to both clans. So he accepts to be a mediator. But Kauravas are adamant and refuse all compromises. Krishna finally makes a last desperate bid that Pandavas would forsake their claim to their entire kingdom for mere five villages. Kaurava chief haughtily rejects even this paltry demand, saying that he will cede not even a land that fits on a tip of a needle. Hence, all attempts at reconciliation and compromise proved futile.

Pandavas had no recourse but to fight a war. Both sides beseech Krishna to be their ally. Krishna, being relative of both, remains neutral by offering a choice of his army to one side and offers himself as an advisor to the other side. However, he would not take a weapon in war but remain strictly as an advisor. Kauravas chose his army, and Pandavas gladly accepted Krishna in the strict role of advisor. Krishna grants Arjuna's requests to be his charioteer and advisor.

In the battleground, Arjuna faces dilemma of having to kill the opposing army in which he sees his relatives, friends, past teachers, even his venerable grandfather arrayed in war against him. A sudden despondency overtakes Arjuna, his body goes limp, his bow falls from his hands, his throat become dry, body shakes and he wonders if the war is worth killing all those whom he respected and loved at one time. He tells Krishna that he will abandon battlefield since his kingdom is not worth the lives of so many. What advice Krishna, as his advisor, should give? Agree with Arjuna's decision to leave the battlefield or to dissuade him from his resolve?

Arjuna was bound by his duty to uphold justice, righteousness and punish wrongdoers (*adharmis*). Kauravas were clearly the most egregious wrong-doers. So by abandoning the battlefield, he would forsake his sacred obligation. If a prince does not set a proper example of upholding the social order and justice, and punish the wicked, there will be far greater violence in the society at large due to the resulting anarchy. On the other hand, fighting would result in the bloodshed that militated against the cardinal Hindu ethical principle of non-violence.

So, here a fundamental question arises; does one practice one-sided nonviolence at any cost, in every situation? Is the ethics of nonviolence superior to upholding justice and punishing the wicked? What we do know so far is

that historically nonviolence has a limited utility and works only when the opponent is civilized. But in facing a barbarian or a person without much conscience, it fails utterly. It may in fact increase bloodshed as the barbarian is encouraged by his opponent's inaction. So Krishna uses various arguments from philosophy, theology, psychology, sociology, logic and reason to convince Arjuna to stand his ground and fight. Arjuna has several doubts and counterarguments. But in the end Krishna with his patient reasoning prevails and Arjuna is convinced that his best course of action is to fight against *adharma*.

The entire narrative may be viewed as a metaphor that depicts Hindu view of God. Consider the fact that Krishna offers Kauravas his army and he joins the opposing side of Pandavas. This appears bizarre because God is distributing his power equally to both sides which will needlessly prolong the war and make it bloodier. Why could he not have offered himself and his forces exclusively to Pandava, the good guys, and shorten the bloodshed and uncertainty of war? Actually, this seemingly irrational behavior of God, depicted in Geeta, effectively demonstrates the contrast between the God's vision in Hinduism and that in prophetic faiths.

If God helped Pandavas exclusively and left Kauravas high and dry, what will be the difference between him and the God of prophetic faiths who has 'chosen' and 'accursed' people? For Him, there are no 'chosen' people and no 'accursed' people. To show this, the epic's author portrays God as a relative of both adversaries, the evil Kauravas as well as blameless Pandavas. It shows that everybody is God's child, treated equally by Him. God, in the form of Krishna, offers equal terms to both sides.

In this metaphor, Krishna as an advisor stands for divine wisdom and his army stands for worldly power and wealth. Arjuna made a wise choice of wisdom over power and material wealth. Kaurava's, in contrast, preferred power to wisdom.

Moreover, Krishna himself never wields a weapon in the battlefield; He only advises. This too may appear bizarre on the surface. Why should not God use his Sudarshan Chakra and kill all the bad guys in one stroke and avoid bloodbath of the entire army? In the view of Hinduism, God does not act as a judge. He himself does not reward or punish humans, unlike prophetic faiths. He can only inspire if humans walk in the path of wisdom and make proper choices in this world. The *karma* is responsible for rewards and punishment according to one's past and present actions and choices.

Note also that throughout the 18 chapters of Geeta, Krishna, the God, reasons with Arjuna patiently through various arguments until Arjuna is convinced. Unlike the Bible or Quran God, Krishna neither commands through stern orders to do certain things nor threatens Arjuna with punishment for not acting on His commands. This insightful depiction of God in the Hindu literature stands in stark contrast to the portrayal of God of prophetic faiths.

#### (Footnotes)

1 The exception in Jewish faith, where there is no compulsion for non-Jews to accept Judaism. In fact, rightly speaking, those not born Jews could not become Jews because Jews are special (chosen) people.

2 Judaism generally does not practice conversion since being a Jew, God's Chosen Person, is a privilege only of those born among Jews. Moreover, destruction of nonbelievers was required only in the Promised Land.

3 Qur'an, 8:2

4 Deuteronomy, 13:6-10, 17:3-5; Exodus, 22:20, 23:13

## ***Hindus of Greater Houston***

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# Patanjali Yoga Sutra : Kaivalya

*Mahesh C. Mangalick, Ph.D.*

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Mind remains bound to this world, because of afflictions, or Klesh. The basic affliction is the ever present avidya, or ignorance, because of which the deluded mind considers the changeful world to be eternal, the impure body to be pure, sorrowful experiences as pleasant and egotist mind to be the SELF.

Aatmaa, the SELF, is the eternal knower, with total detachment. It experiences the world through its image into the Buddhi, taking the shape of whatever Buddhi experiences. All world experiences are for the view of the Aatmaa in this manner.

Avidya leads to union of the image of the Aatmaa and the Buddhi, which causes the mental affliction Asmita or "I am", the incipient consciousness. Other klesh, namely Raag, Dvesh and Abhinevesh also develop from the basic affliction, Avidya.

Purpose of the Union of the image of the Aatmaa and the Buddhi, and the resulting consciousness of the mind, is (1) to experience the world and (2) to realize the SELF.

When the mind is afflicted with klesh, the actions in this world create karmic impressions or Sanskaars. These sanskaars are stored in the Karmashay, in the unconscious mind. Karmashay fructifies as (1) life in specific species, (2) age of life and (3) world experiences. Actions again form Sanskaars and in this manner, the person with klesh of mind, remains bound to the Life and Death cycles.

There are other mental impressions, Vasanaas, created by enjoyment of the world. Vasanas create memory of experiences and like memory, vasanas have been part of the unconscious mind from times without beginning.

Klesh are weakened by intense practice of Ashtanga Yoga, the eight rungs practice of Yama, Niyama, Asana, Pranayama, Pratyahar, Dharana, Dhyana and Samadhi.

Yama and Niyama are the personal restraints and discipline. Non violence, or Ahinsa, is the basic and the most effective restraint. Painless cross legged posture is Asana. Optimization of the energy in the body is the goal of Pranayama. Withdrawal of senses from the world is

Pratyahara. These five practices of yoga are External Practices.

The next three practices are the Internal Practices. Concentration of mind on a single point or object is Dharana, and long time mental focus without distraction, is Dhyana.

Samadhi is that state of mind when the mind perceives the object of concentration in its entirety, without any mental judgement. The mind is illuminated by the object only.

Successively concentrating on Gross matter, Subtle matter, Bliss and Asmita, and discarding each of them as un-real transitory products of the Prakriti, ultimately the Yogi attains Sampragyat Samadhi, or Samadhi accomplished with the help of Buddhi.

True knowledge of Aatmaa is gradually gained through persistent Yoga practice. Mental purification and enlightenment continues.

All eight rungs of Ashtanga yoga have to be practiced to purify the distracted mind of an untrained person who is beginning this spiritual journey.

For a mediocre person with some prior yoga practice, Kriya Yoga is the way to purify the mind. The three practices of Kriya Yoga are (1) Ascetic Discipline, (2) Study of spiritual scriptures and chanting of holy sound OM, and (3) total surrender to the Lord.

For the yogi who has already purified the mind with long time practice of Yoga, as long as several life times, upon further practice of meditation and dispassion, instant concentration in meditation and Samadhi are possible. He can control mental Vrittis with practice of meditation and dispassion towards the world phenomena.

Eventually, Special Discriminating Faculty, Vivek Khyati, dawns in the purified mind. The mind is cured of the afflictions by unwavering Vivek Khyati. Purpose of Vivek Khyati is to gain true knowledge of Aatmaa, or the SELF, and the non self.



Yogi realizes that this "Knowledge of Everything" is also not the truth that he is searching. Accordingly he develops dispassion even towards this knowledge. This further strengthens his knowledge of the SELF. He gains what is known as "Dharm Megh Samadhi", with rain cloud of virtues and boundless knowledge.

Desiring nothing from The Dharm Megh Samadhi and dispassion towards the "all knowing" capability cures all afflictions of mind. The homogeneously purified mind of the yogi has nothing else to be accomplished any more.

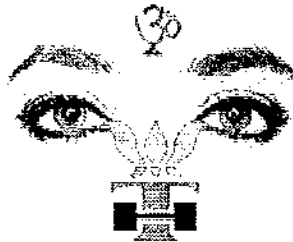
No more duties remain for such a yogi. The mutations of the three basic Guna, the forces of nature, stop for such a yogi. There are no more Vrittis in the mind of such a Yogi.

Having fulfilled his duties, the forces of nature making up the mind of such a yogi, dissolve into the original unmanifest Nature, leaving the SELF all alone in itself, a state known as Kaivalya. Kaivalya is the establishment of the SELF in its own Pure Consciousness.

पुरुषार्थशून्यानां गुणानां पतिर्पसवः कैवल्यं, स्वरूपपतिष्ठा वा चितिशक्तिरिति ॥ ४.३४ ॥

व्यक्तित्व वैरागी का वापिस ले लेती है पकृति ।  
कृतकृत्य योगी के गुणों को भी ले लेती है पकृति ॥  
ये ही है कैवल्य रह जाती अकेली आत्मा ।  
चैतन्यता स्वरूप में रह जाती अकेली आत्मा ॥

## Hindu Temple of The Woodlands



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# Vedic Temples: Making Them More Effective

Focussing on the temples in North America

By Stephen Knapp

Vedic or Hindu temples are sprouting up all over North America and in the Western world in general. Though such an increase is happening, they are still divided into two basic categories: Those that cater mostly to the Indian immigrants and their cultural needs, and those that truly open their doors in a way wherein people of all kinds can benefit, learn, and participate in the Vedic culture and its traditions.

In a time when such things as globalization, interfaith, and cross-cultural relations are increasingly important, it is also a time when we should try all the harder to allow others to understand the dynamic and profound nature of the Vedic tradition and philosophy. We have seen in years past when many Western philosophers and historians, such as Emerson, Henry Thoreau, Will Durant, Aldous Huxley, Schopenhauer, Augustus Schlegel, and others, have appreciated and benefited from the study of the Vedic texts, such as *Bhagavad-gita*. The 1960s saw a great rise in the interest of the philosophy and practice of the Vedic and Eastern ways. Similarly, today many people are increasing their interest in Yoga, Ayurveda, Jyotish, Vastu, as well as Indian dance and music. In fact, many people are using principles found in Yoga or even Kautilya's *Artha Shastra* for perfecting various business practices. But how many places, except in special yoga studios or small schools that provide classes in Eastern thought, offer facilities where everyone can apply and practice the traditions of Vedic culture? There are more interested people out there than most people realize. All it takes is the means to invite them, both to enter the temples and then to make them feel welcomed.

First, it may be better to view temples in the right perspective. Naturally, the temple should be the center of the Vedic or Dharmic community, and main preserver of our traditions.

Temples are considered part of the spiritual atmosphere, maintained by *sadhana*, ritual, service, mantras, and presence of the devotees and deities. It is here where Ishwara, Bhagavan, is more easily accessible for the spiritually focused devotee, like a launching pad for a space-bound rocket. It is the temple and through the deity

where we especially have *darshan*, the act of not only seeing the Lord but being seen by the Lord. But temples should also be the embassies of the spiritual world, the domain of the Supreme Lord, open for fulfilling the spiritual needs of everyone. They should help bring the spiritual world and its vibration, energy, and atmosphere into this material creation, and help bring all others back into the spiritual domain by awakening them to their spiritual identity.

In this way, most of the Vedic/Hindu temples in America are not as effective as they could be to gather a wider audience for both support of the local Vedic community, and the participation in the ways of Vedic knowledge and tradition. So what can we do about this? How can we utilize the temples to more effectively help increase the ways we can preserve, protect, and share the Vedic culture for the benefit of all?

## It's all in the Presentation

Nowadays in America, most people will accept what may be new ideas to them if it is presented in a logical way. How many times have we seen Hindus, or anyone for that matter, who is challenged with a critical question or condescending comment about their culture and then react with an emotional response? This is often an immediate turn-off for those who hear this kind of reply. However, if someone witnesses or hears a logical, common sense or even scientific explanation of our traditions, they will often accept it. They may or may not at first follow it, but we don't expect that if we are only sharing our culture. But there are many people looking for a philosophy that helps them make sense of this life, of this existence in which we find ourselves, and if they understand the dynamics of the Vedic explanations, they may indeed begin to utilize it in their life.

## Using the Universal Language

One of the strongest methods of sharing anything is through a universal language. Is there a universal language that we can all share? Is there a means of expression that can inspire us all?

What comes closest to a universal form of communication is music. It is the one form of expression that has always touched the hearts and minds of innumerable people, whether they are young or old, from different races or ethnic groups, or whether the meaning of the words are understood or not. The feeling and emotion can still penetrate and inspire a person's heart with its mood and message.

It has been seen time and time again wherein if a temple program uses this type of method, such as *kirtanas* to allow everyone to participate and become inspired, that we all can lose our differences and become increasingly united in the unique experience. This needs to be a constant part of any and every program or celebration that the temples present.

This is why temples must have a hall for collective participation in chanting and singing prayers and observing *puja*, worship. It brings a sense of community and strength when the Dharmic or devotee community can do this together in large groups, both men and women, young and old, adults and children. This creates deep *samskaras* or impressions in the mind that help purify and strengthen us.

### Temple Classes

One of the most important functions of any temple is having regular classes for both Indian Dharmists and Western students. The problem is that Hindus generally go to the temple for *puja*, worship or rituals, and *darshan* at different times. And many temples do not have regularly scheduled classes in which groups of people can attend for continuous study of the sacred texts. Most Indians always say, "Oh, yes, I know *Bhagavad-gita*." And maybe they do, until they realize how much they do not know when asked to explain it. But this is also something I've encountered while traveling in India, that many Hindus are not really educated in their own tradition, and, thus, lack the ability to explain or defend their own unique culture. Or they even become more susceptible to the conversion tactics used by other religions because of their lack of understanding the depths of their own Vedic traditions. Or here in America, because of this lack of comprehension, when they are criticized in the workplace for being Hindu or from India, they do not know how to respond. Thus, in these situations, they sometimes would simply prefer that no one know that they are from India or follow Vedic Dharma. And sometimes they want to fit in to such a degree that they even give up basic Dharmic

standards and take up the Western ways, such as going to bars, eating meat, flirting with women, etc.

So how we correct this is to have regular group classes for the whole congregation at the temple so everyone can get a better understanding of the Vedic tradition and its philosophy.

### Educating the Youth

The growth and continuation of Vedic Dharma in America, and India as well, especially depends on how well our children are educated and remain fixed in the timeless traditions of our culture. The temples naturally have to provide the means to educate and also involve the children, youngsters, and teenagers in the temple in learning and upholding the tradition. Therefore, temples should support programs like *gurukulas*, or Bal Gokulam and Bal Vihars for training the youth in Vedic philosophy and values, Vedic scripture, yoga, rituals, and the Indian Vedic heritage. And there are many ways to do this.

### Training the Temple Members in Service

All those who attend the temple should be trained in service, or *seva*. God or Ishwara is present everywhere but especially in the temple, which magnifies our concentration and focus on serving the Supreme, especially in the form of the deity on the altar. Thus, the temple belongs to the Lord and all service at the temple is directly linked to the deity of the Lord.

### Temple Ashramas

Another consideration is to have ashramas for training as opposed to joining. Often we see people think that they enter an ashrama once they join an organization or faith. But many times people easily pay money to enter a retreat for a time in order to gain peace of mind, or engage in a course of study, meditation, yoga practice, or means of learning about the Self by realization and practice, etc. This may be for a month, three months or longer. For this purpose, if a temple does not have facility to have its own designated ashrama area, it is good if it can connect with another temple or country retreat that does have such facility so if anyone is interested, it can be recommended so temple members can go for retreats.

### Temples Must be Well Kept

There are many large and beautiful temples being built, but temples of all sizes must be clean, well kept, organized, and nicely maintained. We should be proud of our temples, and nothing makes for a poorer impression than one that is dirty or ill-maintained.

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### **Festivals & Programs for the Local Community**

There are so many holidays that are celebrated in the Vedic tradition, and these should be done as part of the joy and celebration of the tradition for all Hindus and Dharmists. However, there can easily be some that can be open to the general public. Special holy days like Krishna Janmasthan, RamaNavami, Holi, and others, can be arranged in a way wherein the local non-Vedic community can come to watch, participate, and enjoy. And there are many examples of this which I could relate.

### **Book Distribution**

Temples must have books to offer or sell. This is extremely important for the philosophical and cultural education of the members, and also for other guests who are looking for books that they may not be able to find anywhere else.

### **Cultural Presentations**

Besides festivals, special cultural presentations are also ways of attracting people to the temple, and ways for the temple to be more effective and useful. I go to the local Bharatiya Temple regularly for its cultural programs, whether they are fundraisers for the temple, or the local VHP chapter, or a presentation by a traveling spiritual teacher. So everyone can be invited to such a presentation, and invitations can also be sent to the local community in order to share the culture, which also creates good public relations for the neighbors. And everyone feels satisfied after seeing such culture and talent.

### **Outreach Programs**

Every temple can also have outreach programs where they cater to different types of people in the community. One is to have college or school programs to let students understand more about India and the ancient Vedic tradition. Schools especially are interested in culture.

### **Temple Tours & Cultural Programs for Local Students**

As we are speaking about cultural programs at schools, school classes can also come to the temple. This gives the students a great taste of what the temple is like. Some students like it very much. And some of them come back regularly after that first visit. So when teachers know they can come to the temple, they can make arrangements to do so.

### **Temple Exhibits**

When considering these kinds of tours or cultural programs at the temple, it is also nice when the temple has exhibits, such as dioramas, that help explain and show the

philosophy in action. When I was invited to speak at a Swadhyaya group convention at Madison Square Garden in New York City several years ago, there was one floor dedicated to various exhibits of diorama dolls and placards, computer based presentations and others that helped show the philosophy of *Bhagavad-gita* and the work of the organization in action.

### **Temple Gift Shops**

Temples must also have gift shops where people can purchase items that will help their spiritual practice and development. The most effective temples have gift shops for books, *japa* beads, maybe some musical instruments like *karatalas* and *mridanga* drums, photos and prints of the Vedic divinities and the temple deities, recordings of *bhajans* and *kirtans* or lectures by noteworthy personalities, deities, packaged *prasada*, and other paraphernalia. This will also facilitate Westerners and help draw them to the temple, especially if the gift shops have particular hours in which they are open.

### **Temple Restaurants**

Another enterprise an effective temple can use is a nice vegetarian restaurant, or at least a buffet where people can come to take *prasada*.

### **Support Groups**

The importance of support groups that are established or assisted by the temple, or by temple members, cannot be stressed enough. It is a way of assisting and providing the means for the Dharmic or devotee community to come together, help one another in both spiritual and other aspects of life.

The fact is that the Indian and Dharmic community in America has become developed enough that, besides going to the usual government agencies for assistance, there is no reason why we should go outside our own group for support. We have a broad latitude of professionals and educated people to provide a wide variety of advice and cooperative enterprises and assistance. Some of these can include:

- A. Grief counseling—when there is a death in the family.
- B. Health assistance—doctors or nurses who can assist those in need.
- C. Mental health—like depression.
- D. Seniors care & support network—especially for those with no family.
- E. Domestic violence & assistance in family disputes.

- F. Chaplain service—such as visiting hospitals, nursing homes and family homes for prayers and counseling.
- G. Additional Community service for both inside and outside the Indian or devotee community.
- H. Blood drives are an example.
- I. Driving Service—giving seniors or those who need rides to the temple.
- J. Communication skills workshops.
- K. Youth support & conferences—like dealing with their issues of leading a Dharmic life in a changing world.
- L. Educational assistance.
- M. Lessons in English.
- N. Confidence building.
- O. Problem solving teams—dealings on all levels of challenges.
- P. Youth executive development—to encourage and provide association centered on the temple for future executive trainees.
- Q. Social issues—like dealing with violence on television and its affects on our children.
- R. Vanaprastha support—workshops and seminars to help those who are retiring to plan the years ahead.
- S. Support a Child—especially for children in India, supporting lodging, healthcare, books, and clothing to eradicate illiteracy.
- T. Support a Mataji—for supporting the elder ladies who may be without family but want to live in a simple way for spiritual success, possibly in an ashrama setting.
- U. Ekavidyalaya—support for the one teacher schools in rural India.
- V. Serving in homeless shelters.
- W. Providing facility for food distribution to the hungry, like Iskcon's "Food for Life".
- X. Overcoming addictions—emphasizing Dharmic values to gain strength over additions, like alcohol or drugs.

- Y. Agrarianism—supporting temple gardens or farms to grow our own food, and promoting the Vedic lifestyle in the mode of goodness, and for self-sufficiency.

These are some of the support groups for activities, workshops or fundraising that can help temple members and others through life while keeping their focus on the Dharmic values that every temple should promote.

#### **Promotion**

In spite of whatever you have to offer, you must let people know that you exist and what are your facilities. Otherwise, you will be overlooked. So what are some of the ways we can do this? A website is mandatory for a temple. Then there are newsletters, various ways of advertising, calendars, and other avenues.

#### **Temples Must Share Methods That Work**

If temples develop new and effective ways to teach and uphold Vedic spiritual knowledge, then they should network with other temples and share their techniques and ideas. There must be whole-hearted cooperation, knowing that we all need to work together to do something great and have a positive influence in this world. The more we work together in this way, the easier it becomes.

\* \* \*

If every temple could apply these principles for the preservation, protection, and promotion of Vedic culture here in North America, we would see a tremendous growth of this spiritual knowledge and its values for the betterment of all people, not only on this continent but all over the world.

[For the full article, read it on my website at: [www.stephen-knapp.com](http://www.stephen-knapp.com)]

## ***Hindu Mandir Executive Conference Committee***

***Cordially Welcomes all the Participants  
to the  
2008 Conference***

# Science and Sanatan Dharma

Tej Tanden  
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Many contributors of articles and lectures at the HMEC 2007 conference had expressed concerns about our youth facing difficulty and frustration in getting convincing answers about the Hindu Dharma. Shri Vijay S. Shertukde very succinctly explained the situation in his contribution to the souvenir publication of that conference, in RE-POSITIONING MANDIRS article, as follows:

*"We accepted what was told to us by our elders with blind faith. We accepted our religious beliefs and practices without questions. But this may not be acceptable in the present environment" and further that "The Mandir is also a platform where ideology of Hindu System of beliefs will come face to face with the reality of the contemporary situation that is challenging and threatening the very existence of this system of beliefs, specially with our youth who also face the other systems of beliefs. Our youth are growing up in an environment where they tend to question what we followed for so many years. For them it is very difficult to accept our system of beliefs just based on faith. They need answers."*

Shri Raman Misra, a senior at Curtis High School, Staten Island, expressed similar sentiments, "A problem plaguing the youth today is that they do not know much about their heritage" and further, "In order to keep our faith strong, temples need to attract the youth."

Other speakers and writers have been expressing their concerns regarding state of mind of millions of Hindu's all across America, if not the world. That is the unfortunate state to which our brilliant and radiant system of philosophy has been reduced to, just a faith based religion. It indeed is an irony, that the Sanatan Dharma, based upon highly analytical Vedic Philosophy, a system based upon the principal of questions and answers aimed at the search for truth, where intellectual challenges are honored and encouraged, seems to have been reduced to a mere faith based compendium of rituals in the eyes of millions of Hindus. Instead, our young and old, in these far off lands, being the carriers of guiding torches of the Vedic Philosophy, in the religious chambers of these civilizations of faith based systems, cannot understand what they have—an invaluable diamond in the hand of blind.

Now let's take a glimpse of what others think about what you have. Science writers **Carl Sagan** and **Fritjof Capra** have pointed out similarities between the latest scientific understanding of the age of the universe, and the Hindu concept of a "day and night of Brahma", which is much closer to the current known age of the universe than other creation myths. The days and nights of Brahma project a view of the universe that is divinely created, and is not strictly evolutionary, but an ongoing cycle of birth, death, and rebirth of the universe. According to Sagan: The Hindu religion is the only one of the world's great faiths dedicated to the idea that the Cosmos itself undergoes an immense, indeed an infinite, number of deaths and rebirths. It is the only religion in which time scales correspond to those of modern scientific cosmology. Its cycles run from our ordinary day and night to a day and night of Brahma, 8.64 billion years long, longer than the age of the Earth or the Sun and about half the time since the Big Bang.

Capra, in his popular book *The Tao of Physics*, wrote that: This idea of a periodically expanding and contracting universe, which involves a scale of time and space of vast proportions, has arisen not only in modern cosmology, but also in ancient Indian mythology. Experiencing the universe as an organic and rhythmically moving cosmos, the Hindus were able to develop evolutionary cosmologies which come very close to our modern scientific models. One of these cosmologies is based on the Hindu myth of *lila*—the divine play—in which Brahman transforms himself into the world. What Capra called mythology, was a highly developed system of analytical cosmology of Sanatan Hindu philosophers, and scientific thinkers. What those sages could do with their mental flight of imagination, the modern scientists needed the crutches of instrumentations.

In contrast for the Western and Mid-eastern religions, **Rev Roger Bertschausen** of Fox Valley Unitarian Universalist Fellowship stated: "We in the West have long had trouble with time. Early Judaism, Christianity and Islam had no inkling of the long age of the universe. Cosmologies from these religions were based on the notion that the universe started at a finite point in the recent past. St. Augustine set the beginning of the universe at 5000 BCE. For centuries, this figure was embraced



by most Westerners." Some continue to believe it, in spite of the fact that it has become the biggest embarrassment between the faiths and the established facts.

#### **Vishnu's Avatars and Darwin's theory of evolution:**

There has also been some comparison between the avatars of Lord Vishnu and Darwin's Theory of Evolution, as the incarnations generally mirror increasing phylogenetic sophistication in keeping with the theory's proposal of terrestrial reptiles and mammals evolving from aquatic and amphibian life. Accordingly, the list of the avatars goes as follows- *Matsya-the fish, Kurma-the turtle, Varah-the boar, Narsingh-the half man-half lion being, Vaman-the dwarf man, Parshuram-the forest dweller, Rama-the ideal man, Krishna-the Divine man, Buddha-the spiritual man and Kalki-the tech-savvy avatar which is yet to take birth, or is already in his prime.* (Wiki)

Here again it needs to be noted that the Hindu philosophers had written about the evolutionary concepts millenniums before the Western civilizations got the wind of the Eastern ideas.

Apart from the concept of Cosmological times and cycles, evolutionary nature of beings, Hindu philosophers, had a pretty good idea of the relationship of the Creator and the Creation, in comparison. They knew the concept of the un-manifest and the manifest form of the Creator, the relationship of energy and matter, and IT's all pervasive power, presence and knowledge.

While all major religions of the world believe in the three fundamental characteristics of GOD, i.e. Om or Brahma, namely Omnipresent, Omnipotent, and Omniscient, ask them, "what is the basis of that belief?" Almost all reply that they do not know, except that it is based on faith. Whereas, once you read Gita and understand it well what Krishna explained to Arjun up to chapter 10, and showed it in chapter 11, then you will readily understand where the world got that idea to start with.

For the appreciation of these amazing concepts, of our Sanatan Philosophers, let us take a trip to an experimental site in New Mexico, where first atomic bomb was tested. It was a test of conversion of matter into energy. At the time of detonation, the surrounding mountains were illuminated "brighter than daytime" for a few seconds, and the heat was reported as "being as hot as an oven" at the base camp. The roar of the shock wave took 40 seconds to reach the observers. The shock wave was felt over 100 miles (160 km) away, and the mushroom cloud

reached 7.5 miles (12 km) in height. A phenomenon never before witnessed by the human beings.

As Los Alamos, the father of the Atom Bomb, J. Robert Oppenheimer watched the demonstration from a distance of 5 miles. He was awed, and the explosion reminded him of two pages from the Bhagavad-Gita; the sacred Hindu poems flashed through Oppenheimer's mind: (1) "If the radiance of a thousand of suns...were to burst into the sky....that would be like....the splendor of the Mighty One" and (2) "I am become Death, the shatterer of worlds".

J. Robert Oppenheimer was well versed in Sanskrit. He had read Gita and understood it well, and thus found these two verses of the book to best describe his awe and understanding of the most advanced scientific phenomena he was witnessing.

दिवि सूर्यसहस्रस्य भवेद्युगपदुत्थिता ।  
यदि भाः सदृशी सा स्याद्भासस्तस्य महात्मनः ॥

(Chapter 11, Verse 12)

*divi surya-sahasrasya bhaved yugapad utthita  
yadi bhah sadrsi sa syadbhasas tasya  
mahatmanah*

#### **SYNONYMS**

*divi*—in the sky; *surya*—sun; *sahasrasya*—of many thousands; *bhavet*—there were; *yugapat*—simultaneously; *utthita*—present; *yadi*—if; *bhah*—light; *sadrsi*—like that; *sa*—that; *syat*—may be; *bhasah*—effulgence; *tasya*—there is; *maha-atmanah*—of the great Lord.

#### **TRANSLATION**

If hundreds of thousands of suns rose up at once into the sky, they might resemble the effulgence of the Supreme Person in that universal form.

कालोऽस्मि लोकक्षयकृत्प्रवृद्धो-  
लोकान्समाहर्तुमिह प्रवृत्तः ।  
ऋतेऽपि त्वां न भविष्यन्ति सर्वे  
येऽवस्थिताः प्रत्यनीकेषु योधाः ॥

(Chapter 11, Verse 32)

*kalo 'smi loka-ksaya-krt pravrdhholoka  
samahartum iha pravrttah  
rte 'pi tvam na bhavisyanti sarveye 'vasthitah  
pratyanyikesu yodhah*

### SYNONYMS

*sri-bhagavan uvaca*—the Personality of Godhead said; *kalah*—time; *asmi*—I am; *loka*—the worlds; *ksaya-krt*—destroyer; *pravrdhah*—to engage; *lokan*—all people; *samahartum*—to destroy; *iha*—in this world; *pravrttah*—to engage; *rte api*—without even; *tvam*—you; *na*—never; *bhavisyanti*—will be; *sarve*—all; *ye*—who; *avasthitah*—situated; *prati-anikesu*—on the opposite side; *yodhah*—the soldiers.

### TRANSLATION

**The Lord said: Time I am, destroyer of the worlds, and I have come to engage all people. With the exception of you, all the soldiers here on both sides will be slain.**

Why did he not quote Quran, or Bible, or modern scientific writings? Perhaps nothing came close to describing the moment, for none could conceive the power of that transformation phenomenon, what Gita described it best.

Granted that, Vedas' and Puranas' are too complicated, enormous and hard to read. But there

is no excuse, for not owing to the jewels of Gita, where Krishna has laid bare the Vedic Truths, in a simple format for all to understand.

Granted that, none has the 'Divya Drishti' (the divine vision) to see the real form of that Brahma Arjun saw. But today we have the scientific 'Divya Drishti' (the Einstein's E,M equality) with the help of which almost all can visualize what Arjun saw.

Our Temples, Trustees, Managements and the parents must create an environment to help our younger generation to learn that ours is the Sanatan Dharma, a FACT based philosophy that promotes analytical thinking and the freedom of questioning. In contrast, it is not a religion of FAITH based dogmatic compulsions, penalizing the freedom of thinking and any questioning.

Let's understand well the scientific values of what we have. Then let us help our young to be the torch bearers of our Philosophy in the dialogs with the surrounding diversities. You will be proud to see that this generation just might end up uniting the diverse faiths of the world by helping them to become morally stronger in their own religions, through the concepts of Sanatan Dharma, and thus become loving and appreciative friends and neighbors of a stronger society.



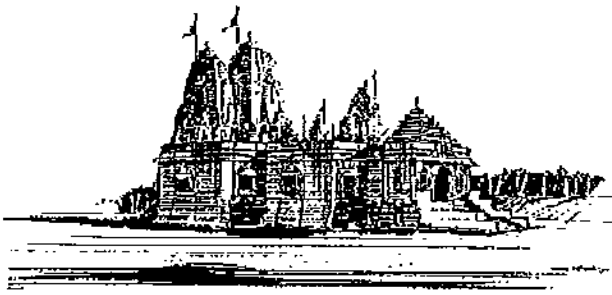
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Inspired and Guided by Pujya Bhaishri Rameshbhai Oza

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Bhajan is sung by Jiva not only by tongue.  
Bhajan transforms mortal world into Ocean of Bliss.  
-- Pujya Bhai Shri

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# Hindu Jain Temple

615 Illini Drive

Monroeville, PA 15146

Phone: 724-325-2073 Fax: 724-733-7475

[www.hindujaintemple.org](http://www.hindujaintemple.org)

The Hindu Jain Temple (HJT) is a non-profit organization providing services to tri-state communities around Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. The HJT promotes religious, cultural, educational, social and humanitarian needs and commitments of its members. The HJT is non-sectarian and broad based and tries to meet the needs of all interested persons.

The following is a summary of temple activities and services provided to the community:

## 1. RELIGIOUS

- Temple is a place for worship for all hindus and jains
- Temple employs three priests
- Temple celebrates major religious occasions such as New Year Havan (January) Shivratri, Mahavir Jayanti, Sthapana Celebration, Janmashtami, Dipavali, Mahavir Nirvan etc.
- Additionally temple celebrates all other religious occasions
- Temple performs Havan first Sunday of the month
- Priests provide services at temple or at outside the temple, various religious services, such as wedding, engagement, baby shower, birthday havan, anniversary havan, death ceremony, puja and aarti for all occasions
- Temple organizes kathas and religious seminars

## 2. CULTURAL

- Temple owns and maintains well equipped community hall. The hall is available to community for rent at nominal charge
- Temple celebrates holi, navratri, etc.
- Temple celebrates sthapana day children program, and participates in tri-state folk festival, promoting children dances, Indian food booth, Indian Cultural booth, etc.
- Temple celebrates Dipavali for children – firework, rangoli etc.
- Temple celebrates India's Independence Day.
- Temple organizes Annual Dipavali dinner
- Temple organizes activities for youth and Senior citizens

## 3. EDUCATIONAL

- Temple organizes one of the largest "Sunday School" Vidhya Mandir for Children. School teaches, languages, history, culture, dances, and music of India
- Temple awards Scholarship to deserving students. Organizes graduation Puja.
- Temple organizes youth camp for children during summer
- Temple organizes youth camp
- Temple runs a gift shop, which includes, books, music CDs, Video DVDs etc.

## 4. SOCIAL AND HUMANITARIAN

- Temple publishes monthly magazine –Temple Times.
- Temple publishes annual calendar listing major Temple activities throughout the year.
- Temple maintains website
- Temple Publishes Sampark – Community directory
- Temple participates in Monroeville area faith based organization Thanks Giving prayer.
- Temple participates in Thanksgiving food program
- Occasionally Temple conducts Health Camps
- Temple participates and fund raising for national and international disaster events
- Temple's Humanitarian Committee addresses community humanitarian needs

# Hindu Mandir in 2020 – Issues of Dharmic Productivity

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**Abstract:** This deliberation is on the role and relevance of Hindu Mandirs in 2020. Though the primary address is on the north American Hindu mandirs, the issues are of global relevance. Hindu Prayer-worship-ritual places in the form of Mandirs also need to function as (a) hindu spiritual care (b) Hindu religious Identity education (c) Community speaking platform for religious issues. The related challenges are to be addressed analyzed in the following perspectives: What is global Hindu Religious identity, Who do we cater in a Mandir? For whom do we exist? Priest, Moorthi, Ritual services, Traditions, Mandir management – Dos and Don'ts- Guiding future, Society- litigations and law of land, religious terrorism, vandalism and violence.

## Hindu Mandir :

*Devalaya* is the traditional Sanskrit name for a Hindu Mandir. Depending upon the point of view, the functional description of Hindu Mandir has been given as: Gods home, Place of Hindu community prayer, Hindu church, Place of congregation of Hindus, Hindu school, Place where Hindu rituals and services are mediated through a priest. In the historic perspective, this is an institutional system of vedic path connecting the individual with the God-Supreme. Mandirs have served as the anchors – centers – guards – check points - evaluation centers for excellences of vedic religious education, ritual services, religious arts and crafts, community judiciary adjudication and counseling. Mandirs have been the largest public pool of religious community resources.

When a mandir is consecrated and declared open to the public, the moorthy in the mandir is prayed to stay in this place as long as sun and moon stay in the sky. The structure of the mandir, around this life-seed of power, ritually activated by well trained vedic priests, in each of the *moorthi* consecrated, has a life of at least some fifty years. This period covers almost three member generations in the surrounding community. What would this mandir be experienced as in the year 2020, some twelve years down the time line, when many of today's kids, attending mandirs today under the wraps of parents, will be in their teens and twenties, an age group when they are highly inquisitive? Many of the seniors present here would still be frequenting this mandir, probably in their advancing age, probably with their grand children. What would they like to explain about the mandir heritage, its history and purpose, services, and relevance? What needs to be carried

on for mandir to survive and progress in this time span as a prospective productive *Dharmic* investment? What relevance and purpose should this *community-religious-resource* aim as its track record and social services rating? This deliberation needs to be made by today's mandir builders –planners-trustees on how to meet the needs of this mandir going community in 2020.

This is a *Dharmic responsibility*. Because the mandir trustees of today decided in all their wisdom to invest community resources of today in this form of: (a) Mandir as an institutional means of planning for the socio-religious welfare of the upcoming next generations, connecting to the future (b) Mandir as a modality of transmitting the baton of ritual and spiritual traditions for benefit of aging seniors especially connecting to the past (c) Mandir as a wrapped gifting of the cultural community identity-pride of belongingness for integration of families.

This call for a deliberation: What makes the mandir a resource of relevance and significance for each community in the current period and for the future period? The corollary question is: How are we looking at – utilizing – getting benefited at the current mandirs as a community resource that was gifted to us by our past generations; how have they helped us to be what we are, in terms of our identities.

The responses, depending upon how the mandir is perceived as, can be grouped under several headings: mandir as an institution serving community as a religious resource, a congregation, an umbrella / nodal axis point of excellences and outreach of several aspects of Vedic traditions, arts, languages and performance - services.

Hindu Mandir has been one traditional model of community invested resource to *protect, benefit and safe-continue the gifting of vedic indic religious traditions inheritance* to the successive generations. History endorses that mandirs have been the center of attraction and anchor of Hinduism both in Bharath and beyond. The performance of the mandir is measured with respect to the standards of excellence and continuity of *Dharmic* traditions given in the sacred religious traditional documents.

The following are additional considerations for evaluations of Hindu mandirs in 2020: How to ensure that the congregation strength does not dwindle, leading to crisis in terms of economic management of the institution. Plans need to be thought of in advance in the expansion of mandir to address the question: what will make the members to be continuously returning members to this place, in an environment of plurality of faiths and competitive diversity? What will retain the interest of the younger generation at the mandir? What would make these people continue to volunteer-share and support the cause of the mandir with their resources?

It is important that each mandir have an upfront clear information on the following aspects:

About the Hindu Mandir: A declaratory display on what a Hindu Mandir is and how it serves the community, The central *pradhana* devataa and other moorthi's in the mandir to identify the main religious faith affiliation, The mode of worship (-smartha, aagama, shakta, shaiva, vaishnava / south indian -north indian), the spiritual leader (Guru) lineage, The philosophical lineage of affiliation.

About the Priestly services: The specialty of the chief priest and associates by their training, the clarification on the mandir services, family related religious services, the spiritual guidance, the education part, the counseling services, the mystic aspects of yoga-meditation traditions ending in initiation and the like. This clarity of thought would help to understand the mandir traditions in a better way.

The emerging role of priests from traditional ritual-service providing to that of counselors-educators-spiritual care givers – community spokes person with a religious leadership are also to be deliberated.

This clarity will help in framing the guidelines for training Hindu priests for 2020 in various roles as ritual masters, scholars of religion, counselors, religious health care

providers, family service providers, educators, scholars of religious languages and the like. It is not possible to equate the terms 'Hindu Mandir Priest' with the pastor, rabbi, mullah, cleric, pastor, bishop and the like. This is because mandir is not an equivalent of a church, synagogue or a masjid !

Some of the relevant issues to be deliberated by Hindu Mandirs – for 2020 may be short listed as above.

Religious identity : The functional nature of mandir in a given community is a reflection of several factors of appreciation about the inheritance of religious traditions -identities by the member-claimants belonging to that religion. Some of these factors are: (a) religious traditions grooming received by the mandir supporting current generation, in their early part of life/ growing years (b) expectation from what religion is supposed to do, deliver and maintain its boundaries. (c) perception of religious leadership in society. Mandir management and administration gets shaped by these factors. The mandir plans are guided by religious values-standards imbibed by these members and strong desire to disseminate and perpetuate it in specific forms. This reference can be models of historic past – as done in home land /families – as relevant to the society where the mandir is serving currently.

Current format of Hindu mandir in North America is a representation of the aspirations of current religious identity of US Hindu community, intended to be passed on to the next generation Hindu-Americans in an evolving social, religious, cultural and spiritual dynamics, to relate to 2.5 million strong, confident, diverse and vibrant families. The concern is on the future of Dharmic Traditions. This is founded on the concern that many young generation Hindus in USA are not receiving the right/ appropriate gift of vedic indic religious traditions learning and guidance on maintaining Hindu traditions in schools and advanced educational programs.

The action point is on logistics of how to impart appropriate spiritual and cultural education to future generations. The fact stands that there has been a serious problem of distortion and misinformation about vedic traditions, Hinduism and India prevalent in schools, colleges, and in the media. Hindus, as followers of a non-Abrahamic tradition are largely misunderstood in the global society, would be even more vulnerable to religious discrimination and concerted proselytization. Traditionally, Hinduism is a non-proselytizing religion i.e., Hindus do

not normally convert people of other faiths to their own. This contrasts totally with the record of Semitic faiths like Christianity and Islam.

The expectations from the mandirs in 2020 / future from this perspective are voiced severally as below:

- Mandir should not be an expression of ego of current generation for future generations or the expressions of excellence of a culture lived –respected –cherished and gifted with love and reverence?

- Hindu Mandirs should be halls of learning besides being the altars of Ritual.

- Public institutions to enhance the presence of Hindu traditions in public sphere.

- A place to experience religiosity, spirituality – God's presence and action in this body-Mind-Speech.

- We need to make Mandirs not just a center of rituals & congregation but lighthouses of philosophy & knowledge, which are the basis of Hindu Dharma.

- A place of community communion-congregation for creating an environment where the youth understand, appreciate and love their Hindu culture and identity.

- A place for guidance, counseling for human development, health care, child care and education according to hindu traditions.

- Mandirs should be *Devaalaya* as an integral one stop source for place for worship (*Poojaalaya*), place for education (*Vidyaalaya*), a place for cultural arts (*Kalaalaya*), a place for service (*Sevaalaya*)

- Mandirs have to help bridge the difficulties in relation to the transnational identities by religious factors. Role of mandirs serving the classical Varna-ashrama historical model of Hindu society is different from the role of mandirs serving the current /modern / futuristic hindu society in a land beyond Bharath. If one learns the lessons from Indian mandir history, the role of the Hindu mandir as an integrative institution, along with its contribution to the development of the creative arts such as architecture, sculpture, painting, music, and dance gets a better appreciation. To this, the dimension of health care, yoga, spiritual / family counseling can also be added. Once simple and sacred places of worship, mandirs evolve into historical monuments, and the reverence is accorded to these structures. A live tradition like this helps Dharmic

intellectual endeavors-education leading to an exchange thoughts and ideas, sharing of experiences on how to gift spiritual and cultural education to our next generation, how to defend and remove misperceptions about our dharmic ritual traditions in a dignified way.

Priest - Moorthi - Ritual services - Tradition: The role of a priest in a mandir is of critical importance. In a mandir, the moorthi is the dominant presence and the sole reason for the existence of the mandir. The mandir vibrates with the visible presence of the deity and the atmosphere has a certain amount of joy and gaiety. There are mandirs with and without officiating priest. Right type and qualified priest is needed in a mandir, because there is a specific type of moorthi. The role of priest is to top up the energy in the 'divine container' through the performance of the vedic rites. The priest is not an agent of God. Priest is a facilitator between devotee and God. Priest is also not the owner of the mandir or the moorthi of God!

Priest profession needs a special training. The Hindu priest for mandir services needs to have a different model of training and life style compared to a priest for the family religious services, fire rituals, spiritual counseling, religious teaching-education-public relations, astrological services and the like. Traditionally in India, these are handled by separate set of qualified priests. In the absence of adequate number of priests, or optimum number of community strength to support the presence of a fully qualified priest, a compromise is made. The mandir priest becomes a compromised do-all priest-master. This situation constricts the quality of the service and the benefit the society that truly needs to receive.

Mandir management - Dos and Dents - Guiding future. Society- litigation court - Terrorism-violence: A self review on the following lines will help filter out the Do's from Don't's in Hindu Mandir management. These apply in every sphere- be it an issue of religious, social, or institutional nature.

- Is mandir the spokes person of authority on religious practices? Where is the border of mandir institution, religious authority, social prudence and law of land?

- Is mandir a museum or Super market/ Publix of Gods for service rituals? a health care place, Sunday-socializing place, Sunday school, kids entertainment palce, eat out for vegetarian food?



- What we don't want to happen for the mandir? Moorthy ? Priest? Vandalism disrespect, disgrace to the religious leadership of community.

- should there be a volunteer model or a commercialization of religion? Priest is not the ruler of the mandir like apostle in a church or a janitor to keep the premise clean.

- Is this Hindu mandir a binding place by one model of worship and one faith? or open one? Moorthi is a channel for worship, a road sign. It is a place which allows to accommodate yoga/ karma yoga – jnana yoga which allows transcending form expression of Divine to transcendent.

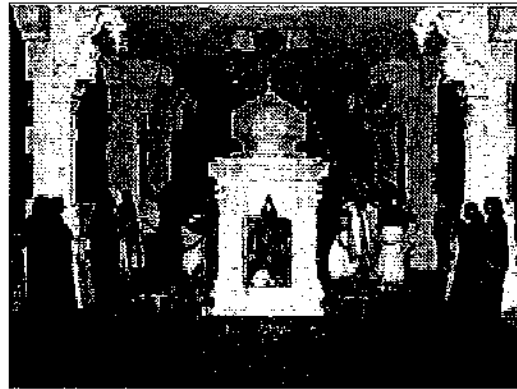
- Of paramount concern, as mentioned, Is mandir a right model in today's scenario for the transmission of Hinduism to the second and third generation Hindus now growing up (or grown up) in the US? With millions of Dollars locked in the mandir assets under the control of select mandir management teams, mandir positions/

controls are prone to be the spots for social recognition and religious power (especially when connected with the tax relief's!). This leads to the potential problem of litigations, terrorism and violence. Mandir managements and communities need to ensure that this direction is not taken by any mandir.

**Conclusion:** Hindu mandir in 2020 should continue as a tradition that it has been through the spanned millennia, as a celebration of life, connecting the generations in a Dharmic way for the pride of inheritance of Vedic indic religious and spiritual traditions for global welfare. In the process, it has to constantly address and answer the question: whom do we cater to? For whom do we exist? The sign of 2020 is a first review point from 2008.

( End note: I acknowledge the inspiration from several web sources and the previous deliberations on this topic of role of a Hindu mandir, the model of Hindu priest we expect and the Hinduism related debates in several forums.)

## Sri Venkateswara Swami Temple of Greater Chicago



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# Hindu Mandir(Temple): Meaning and Significance

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Since ancient times, the fundamental preoccupation of Hindu thought has been with human beings' goals for living a full harmonious, holistic, and joyful life leading finally to their release (Moksha) from the miseries and limitations of the world to experience the Divine bliss. In this quest for crossing the boundaries, the Hindu temple stands as the meeting ground between nescient human being and Godhead. We normally go to temple to have a darshan of a Deity and/or perform pooja, but in order to have a knowledge-laden participatory experience in the temple we need to ask: What is the meaning, significance and purpose of a Hindu Temple, especially in modern times-the times when under the guise of so-called Postmodernism many of our cherished meanings associated with life, living and world are being called into question? Here is a brief essay intended to answer the above question.

The primary meanings of the Hindu temple revolve around its two fundamental features. They are: the sacred center, the heart of the temple called Garbha-Griha or womb-chamber; and the outer structure called the Sharira or body. The Garbha-Griha is the most sacred chamber of the temple where the Divine Being resides within the moorti as His or Her form, and who as the Paramatman, Purushottama or Cosmic Purusha (Virata Purusha) is situated in all beings as the Universal Atman(Self), and is the embryonic essence or sacred seed of all the manifested cosmos with its manifold forms. The outer structure is the Body of the Cosmic Purusha, which is the entire cosmos with its variegated nature consisting of inexhaustible bodies of different shapes, sizes, colors, and textures.

Therefore, the temple is the sacred place where the Bhagavan or Purushottama (God) makes Himself most visible and accessible to the human being; the place where whole visible universe along with its source is mirrored in a measurable, finite form; and a place where the human personality (Atman+sharira) gets reunited with its source-the Divine Purusha. This is in a sense a micro-cosmic representation of the macrocosm. Various terms are used

to designate a Hindu Temple, and these are: Devagriha (house of God), Devalaya (residence of God), Prasada (seat of God), and Mandira (place of God).

Thus we see that a temple is a citadel of Bhagavan (God) and His various manifestations and Avatars. He is worshipped in His various Deity forms (Divine Male as well as Female) as He comes down and manifests in this world at different times to perform His Lila (Divine Play). This supreme phenomenon of the divine manifestation of the One in many forms is very vividly exhibited by the Purushottama or Bhagavan Krishna in the Bhagavad-Gita. **This most basic idea theologically is neither Monotheistic nor Polytheistic. This can be called- Monotheistic Polymorphic-a new term I care to coin.** These various Deity forms are worshipped in various ways according to the scriptural injunctions, and depending upon one's inclination and devotional attitude, one is free to choose and to fix one's own mind on any of these manifestations. This great diversity in the approach, while keeping in mind the underlying unity, helps a devotee to rediscover the purpose and meaning of his or her own life; to re-experience the Divine bliss through the inner-Self or Atman; and to reestablish the lost unity or relationship with Paramatman, Para-Brahman, Purushottama or Bhagavan.

## Temple as Center of Life

The human body is also a temple- the home of the inner Self (Atman), which is the part and parcel of the Supreme Self (Paramatman); and the Sharira (material body) is the material manifestation of Prakriti (the original ground of manifestation of the cosmos). Both of these entities join to form a unified whole, and thus both are sacred as is the consecrated temple. One gets into a sacred space as soon as one enters into a Hindu temple compound, and as one moves further toward the Garbha-Griha to have a darshan(to see in full) of the Deity, one comes in direct communion with the Divine residing within the Moorti. A moorti after the pran-pratistha becomes the Deity with His or Her transcendental body hidden within the material form. It is totally incorrect to refer to a deity

as Idol- the term Idol is understood in many world traditions as the false god. The temple is to be seen and comprehended as our sweet home-so sweet, so beautiful, so wonderful, and the sacred center of the world- that may enable us to experience the sacredness and unity-in-difference of the whole nature- where the trees, the rivers, the mountains, the birds, the animals, the human beings or in essence all the living and non-living entities manifest as the parts and parcels of the same Divine, the same Cosmic Purusha, the same Narayana, or the same Brahman; and all within the same harmonious whole. The circumambulation of the Deity in the temple relates to an act of cyclic rebirth and renewal where although one comes back during this movement to the starting point again and again, but can aspire to gain ever enhancing purity, deeper vision, and greater integration of personality to finally lead one to the ultimate peace, Divine bliss and face-to-face darshan of the Deity.

By looking at the temple the way described above, one can immediately recognize that all the worldly activities- through manas(mind), speech, and real actions- of the human beings, beautifully grouped under the branches- Dharma(duties), Artha(material possessions), Kama( all desires), and Moksha(emancipation) of the Sanatana Dharma- must be controlled and guided by the sacredness of the temple.

### Contemporary Relevance of the Hindu Temple

- The temple can, and must act as an educational and guiding center for all our social, historical, moral, ethical, health related and adhyatmic activities. In times, when an uplifting and purifying environment is becoming a hard-to-find entity in places such as homes, schools, colleges and universities, social and political institutions, it becomes the pious and urgent duty of a concerned and vigilant community to provide a sacred place such as a temple where all can come together to learn and grow for achieving fullness of healthy and joyful living.
- The temple can, and must also serve as the focal point for educating ourselves, our children, teenagers and adults, and others about the entire spectrum of our Sanskriti( Sanskriti is not 'culture') and its foundation. The education must entail subjects like anthropology, history, visual and performing arts, recitation and understanding of scriptures and pooja methodologies. The educational components such as lectures, discourses, kathas, meditation and yoga classes,

and our dharmic awareness classes, should be of utmost importance.

- The temple can, and must act as a source for fostering voluntary and social service attitude and activities in all of us, and especially in the younger generations These activities may include a 'food-for-hungry program', collecting and distributing clothes and other items to the needy people, family counseling and reaching out other communities.

### Some Often Asked Questions

**Question:** When Brahman (God) is present everywhere, why do I have to go to temple?

**Answer:** It is true that Brahman is present everywhere, and can be seen everywhere, but do we have attained that vision? If not, visiting temple, seeing, meditating and doing devotional service to a Deity can certainly help to achieve that vision because the divine presence pulsates more concretely, with sacred radiance within the confines of the temple.

**Question:** I am giving charity to so many organizations, then why do I have to support Hindu temple?

**Answer:** Giving charity (daana) is certainly a pious activity provided it is given with a sattvic attitude (mode of goodness), and it is going to a person or organization engaged in sattvic activities. Unfortunately, such organizations are not many, and some of them may use only a small portion of your donation for the real cause. By supporting also your own temple and actively participating in the governing activities you can focus on issues that deal directly with root causes of social ills.

**Question:** In my home, office, and other places I am doing my duties well, so why do I have care about the temple?

**Answer:** The field of duties or dharma is very hard and complex to understand. The temple as a place for learning about what my duties, responsibilities and obligations are under various situations can be of a great asset. Moreover, a simply doing-my-duties attitude may not fully unfold your own hidden but peaceful and blissful nature, because potential for unfolding demands more efforts or appropriate yogic and meditation practices, and in the absence of which you may be deprived of the blissful experience that you have a birth right to achieve. Your commitment to your routine type of activities is not good

enough to keep purifying your continuously polluting intellect, manas, and body, as well as the surrounding physical and social environment: therefore, you need a sacred or purifying space-a temple.

**Question:** I love cultural activities, so why do I have to care about the religious activities in the temple?

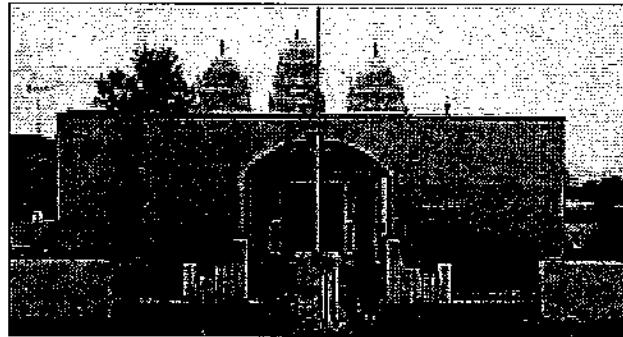
**Answer:** These types of questions stem from the facts that we are in a deep ignorance about our own Vedic traditions. The term, 'culture' is not the appropriate for 'sanskriti', and the term, 'religion' is inadequate, very limiting, misleading, and wrong for Vedic 'dharma'. All the sanskritic activities within the Vedic traditions are grounded in adhyatmic folds that direct us toward reconnecting us to the hidden dimensions of the pervading Divinity and the Sanatana Dharma. These activities not only aimed to unlock our sense of aesthetic (rasa) joy but

also to reorient ourselves toward achieving positive creative lifestyles, with the final goal of human life in perspective. By alienating any such activity from its adhyatmic roots one can loose its essence, meaning and purpose, and at the same time it may lead one to the state of despair, frustration, fragmentation, and finally to suffering and bondage.

AUM SHANTI SHANTI SHANTIH

**NOTE:** This article is a part of a book under preparation by the author. This article needs further refining to adequately express the Vedic ideas. Some English linguistic terms do not adequately correlate to Sanskrit terms.

## Paschima Kasi Sri Viswanatha Temple



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*Hinduism is about how to be truly content here and now. Human beings are unhappy because they seek to satisfy their worldly desires instead of resting their minds in God. The Supreme Being is One, although known by many names, appearing in many forms, and worshipped in many ways<sup>1</sup>. Because of this whole-hearted acceptance of unity in diversity, Hindus make no claim to be the exclusive path to God. God is ever-present in the whole universe. All people can realize their own inner divinity through selfless activity to serve the world and systematic spiritual practice to make their hearts pure and their minds clear and calm.*

## Historical and Cultural Background

### **A1. When and where was the religion founded?**

What is now known as the Hindu religion originated in India a few thousand years B.C.E., the precise period being open to debate. The term "Hindu" is relatively recent, introduced by the ancient Greeks and Persians to indicate the people who lived by the Sindhu River (also known as the Indus River). The ancient term is "Sanatana Dharma," which means "eternal path of righteousness."

### **A2. Who are the main prophets or seers?**

The sages to whom the original scriptures were revealed preferred to remain anonymous. Since then, there have been numerous sages and teachers from ancient times to today.

### **A3. Are saints venerated?**

Although there is no formal tradition of granting "sainthood," sages and teachers, both ancient and contemporary, are deeply venerated.

### **A4. What was the original language of the main scriptures?**

Sanskrit.

### **A5. What are the main divisions and how did they arise?**

The philosophy and practices of Hinduism span an extremely broad spectrum of spirituality. Followers of specific beliefs or practices may consider themselves as separate communities, akin to denominations in Christianity. Distinctions may arise due to philosophy, (such as the traditions of Shankaracharya, Ramanujacharya, and Madhvacharya), the choice of a favorite form in which God is worshipped (such as worshippers of Vishnu, Shiva, or the Divine Mother), or the modes of worship prescribed by revered teachers (such as Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, Vallabhacharya, Basavanna, or Dayananda Saraswati). As India is a large and diverse country, regional and language differences are also significant.

### **A6. How do you greet and part from each other?**

A typical mode of both greeting and parting is to join one's palms in front of the heart and say "namaste" or "namaskar," which both mean "I bow to the divinity in you." In parting, one might use words that indicate "we will meet again."

### **A7. Is there a way to praise God in a greeting?**

Such greetings include "Ram Ram," "Hare Krishna," "Hari OM," and "OM," all of which are various ways to refer to the Divine.

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## (Footnotes)

## Ethics and Morality

### ***B1. What are some of the main ethical injunctions on how to conduct one's daily life?***

Many scriptures contain injunctions on moral and ethical issues that are presented as norms to strive for rather than mandatory commandments. One example is the list of five Yamas (restraints) and five Niyamas (observances) presented in the Yoga Sutras.

The five Yamas are non-injury, truthfulness, non-stealing, non-indulgence, and nonpossessiveness.

The five Niyamas are purity, contentment, spiritual fervor, spiritual study, and surrender to God [1]. All are expected to honor their parents, teachers and guests, and to study and practice the scriptures [2].

### ***B2. What are one's obligations toward other people, society, and the environment?***

The simplest injunctions are to treat others as you would like them to treat you and to regard the whole world as one's own family. Fundamentally, one's obligations are expressed as the need to follow one's Dharma, a complex concept derived from a verb root that means "to sustain." One's behavior should always provide the best possible sustenance to society as a whole.

Each individual has a moral obligation to ascertain what his or her Dharma is under specific circumstances. One aspect of Dharma is that each person should discharge his or her debt to God, who creates and sustains the universe; to the sages, who guide humanity; to ancestors and parents, who have begotten and cared for us; and to the society in which we live [3]. The scriptures exhort human beings to regard the elements of nature as manifestations of God and to treat them with reverence. Care for the environment and respect for nature are part of one's obligations to God [4].

### ***B3. What are one's spiritual obligations?***

Hindus regard spiritual obligation in terms of deepening understanding and devotion to God rather than adherence to doctrine. The highest spiritual goal is to see God in all things and all things in God. Among all living beings, humans are uniquely equipped to be self-aware and seek spiritual growth; it is therefore the moral duty of each human being to cultivate the qualities necessary for spiritual evolution. For this, the scriptures enjoin worship, selfless activity for the good of society, charity, and spiritual discipline (known as Yajna, Dana, and Tapas) [5].

Ancient sages recognized that people differed greatly in their degree of interest in God, in their interest in or capacity to understand philosophy, in their willingness to take time away from their mundane pursuits, and in their ability to overcome their own pettiness.

So they designed a variety of spiritual paths that variously emphasize devotion, philosophical inquiry, service, or ritual. Put differently, one's spiritual goal is, by any means whatsoever, to rest one's mind steadily in God and fully understand one's relationship with the Supreme Being and the universe [6].

### ***B4. What are the religious requirements concerning diet, dress, etc.?***

The strongest prohibitions are against eating beef and using shoes or leather accessories in places of worship. From Vedic times, Hindus have seen cows as a gift from God to humankind, for cows are gentle creatures that give great abundance to humans.

Everything about them is beneficial: they work on the fields, provide valuable dairy products, and even their dung and urine is used. Because of these qualities, cows are considered sacred and are not to be abused.

Many Hindus are strict vegetarians and the most orthodox may eschew onions and garlic.

Fasting is prescribed on the eleventh day of each lunar fortnight. There are generally no rigid dress requirements, though traditional dress is preferred on special occasions.

## God or Ultimate Truth

### ***C1. What higher power (God) or ultimate Truth is worshipped? How do you name God? Is God one or many?***

There is One Supreme Being who is Pure Consciousness, the single source of all existence, all awareness, and all bliss [7]. The One is known by many names and manifests in many forms so that, at a personal level, devotees may choose to worship a specific form and forge a more intimate connection with God (see C3).

### ***C2. What are the relationships among God, the individual, and the world?***

The entire universe, without exception, is pervaded by the One Supreme Being [8]. For ease of understanding this profound truth, the scriptures speak of the creator as



Brahma, the sustainer as Vishnu, and the transformer as Shiva, who prepares the ground for the next round of creation in an eternal cycle. Brahma the Creator is not to be confused with Brahman, which signifies undifferentiated Pure Consciousness.

While nature consistently follows God's laws, humans forget their divine nature and turn away from God toward worldly pleasure. The In-dwelling God responds to each individual based on his or her own adherence to Dharma [9]. God protects and serves the true devotee [10].

### ***C3. Does God have a form?***

The One Supreme Being, Brahman, has no form. While the Formless can be an object of meditation, personal worship of God is directed to more descriptive forms of the Supreme, which may be viewed as different aspects of the One Supreme Being (see C1).

Deities are represented in specific forms: male (such as Rama and Krishna), female (such as Lakshmi, Durga, and Saraswati), and with animal features (such as Hanuman and Ganesha). Scriptures and stories describe their glories, appearances, and roles in the creation, sustenance, and withdrawal of the universe.

### ***C4. Has God appeared on earth?***

As Sustainer of creation, Vishnu appears on earth from time to time to cleanse the world of evil forces and show the right paths in the practice of Dharma [11]. Rama, Krishna, and Buddha are among the main forms in which He has appeared in more recent history.

### ***C5. What are the principal attributes of God?***

The Supreme Being is far beyond the capacity of the human mind and individual perceptions vary according to the level of their own understanding. At the most philosophical level, Brahman is beyond all attributes, as any attribute would limit the Infinite Pure Consciousness [12]. As Ishwara, the One Supreme Being is said to have attributes: omniscient and all-powerful as the inner controller, benefactor, and guide to all living beings [13]. The personalized forms of God are embodiments of love, compassion, and beneficence and are active in eliminating evil.

## **Scripture**

### ***D1. What are the main scriptures? What language were they written in?***

The foundational scriptures, known as the Vedas, are perhaps the oldest existing scriptures. They are in the Sanskrit language and were transmitted orally for many centuries. They include philosophical discourses known as Upanishads. The Puranas and the epics (Ramayana and Mahabharata) present moral philosophy in the more accessible form of stories concerning the various manifestations of the Supreme Being. Moral prescription is the focus of the Manu Smriti. The most widely consulted scripture is the Bhagavad Gita, which clearly states the Hindu philosophy and provides a practical guide on how to embody that philosophy in one's daily life.

### ***D2. What is their origin?***

The Vedas were revealed to sages in ancient times and are traditionally regarded as the very breath of God. The other scriptures were composed by sages.

### ***D3. How old are they?***

The date of the Vedas is fiercely contested. Modern evidence and scholarship indicate that the Vedas existed prior to 3500 B.C.E [14].

## **Worship**

### ***E1. Describe a typical worship ceremony.***

A worship ceremony (*pūja*) generally involves a figure representing a favorite form of God, either a simple stone form representing Shiva or an elaborately carved figure representing some other form of God. At a temple, the figure representing the God to be worshipped is ceremonially bathed and richly attired and decorated with flowers. To the accompaniment of mantras from the Vedas and other prayers, offerings of sanctified flowers, leaves, rice, fruit, incense, lamps, etc. are made.

The nature of the offerings depends on the material means of the devotees: some offer only prayers, others offer flowers, and some even offer gold. Physical offerings are less important than the devotion with which they are made [15]. At the end of the worship, all present receive a token portion of the offerings that have been made to the deity as a symbol of divine grace. The forms of worship are less elaborate in homes than at temples, but do not differ in essence. Worship can also be purely in the mind, with primary emphasis on the use of sacred mantras without any external ritual.

### ***E2. Is worship mainly communal or private?***

For a Hindu, worship of God is primarily a private affair. It can be performed daily in one's own mind or using

rituals at a modest altar at home. A Hindu may visit a temple occasionally, regularly, frequently, or never. A Hindu may observe holy days both by special ceremonies at home and also by going to temples.

**E3. What are the main religious symbols and what do they signify?**

The main religious symbols include

???**(OM)**, which represents the Supreme Being, Brahman. It signifies all aspects

of human experience. This symbol is shown on the cover page of this note, as it is often used at the start of texts, both scriptures and personal letters.

??The **swastika** means "well-being." It signifies the goals of life and is used very widely as a sacred symbol to overcome obstacles and invoke prosperity, auspiciousness, and happiness.

??The **six-pointed star** depicts two interlocking triangles. The upward-pointing triangle represents human effort and the downward-pointing triangle represents divine grace.

**E4. What are the main holy days?**

The most popular Hindu festival is Dussehra-Diwali, which occurs in October/November. (Holy days are set by the lunar calendar.) Known as the "festival of light," it celebrates the victory of good over evil and, in some regions of India, marks the New Year. It includes a month of prayer and festivities related to the Divine Mother. Other major holy days are the birthdays of Lord Rama and Lord Krishna, Maha-shiva-ratri (in honor of Lord Shiva), Ganesha Chaturthi (in honor of Lord Ganesha), and many more.

**E5. What are the major sites for pilgrimage?**

There are major pilgrimage sites all over India, ranging from Kashmir in the north and Varanasi/Kashi in the center to Rameswaram at the southern tip. One of the most sacred sites is Mount Kailas in Tibet. Strongly encouraged by the scriptures, pilgrimage is popular even among the not-so-rich and not-so-devout. The "maha-kumbh-mela" at Prayagraj was estimated to have drawn 80 million pilgrims in one month in 2001, the largest gathering of human beings ever.

**E6. How is worship integrated in daily life?**

For the observant Hindu, there is no activity in daily life that does not involve worship [16].

Prayers are prescribed to remember God during routine activities such as waking, bathing, eating, greeting others,

picking up tools, turning on a light, etc. Pictures and symbols to remind one of God are displayed at home and in the workplace. In all actions, Hindus are asked to remember that God is present in all beings and all things.

**Life Cycle**

**F1. List three or four main life cycle events and the rituals associated with them. What do they signify?**

Scriptural tradition mentions forty sacraments to be observed through life. Three of them precede birth; those during childhood include birth, naming ceremony, first solid food, first haircut, etc. Being a student is the first stage of one's life. The "upanayanam" or "thread ceremony" traditionally marked the start of formal education under the guidance of a Guru. The second stage is "householder," which includes maintaining a family as an integral part of society. Wedding vows are exchanged in the presence of the sacred fire using Vedic mantras culminating in the prayer "may our minds always be in harmony."

In the third stage, husband and wife withdraw from active involvement in the world, devoting their time to spiritual study and practice. The fourth stage, which is entered only by a few, involves a ceremonial "death" to the world, renouncing all familial relationships, all property, and one's entire past identity, and surrendering oneself entirely to the Divine Will. The final sacrament is cremation of the body at death.

**Afterlife**

**G1. Describe the funeral ceremony.**

After death, the body is cremated by male family members in an austere ceremony where only white clothes are worn, followed by several days of prescribed ritual, prayer, and scriptural readings. The rituals signify the provision of food and peace and comfort to the departed soul in its journey to the next world. After about two weeks of mourning, there is a feast celebrating the soul at rest.

**G2. What happens to an individual after death?**

Only the physical body dies. The subtle body (i.e., the energy field and mind; distinct from the individual Soul or Atman) of one who performs good acts is rewarded by going to heaven but remains there only until its merit runs out, at which point it returns to earth [17]. When the subtle body returns to earth, it is in another physical body best suited to exhaust the accumulated karmic consequences of its previous deeds.

***G3. What constitutes salvation? What is the reward or punishment for one's actions? Is there rebirth?***

The subtle body is reborn again and again until the karmic consequences of its past births are overcome by spiritual practice. Freedom from the cycle of rebirth is called *Moksha*, which means freedom or liberation. *Moksha* is the result of spiritual practice to purify the subtle body when supported by the grace of God. But philosophically, the scriptures also say that each person, right here, experiences in their own minds the heaven and hell that they create by their own actions and thoughts [18].

***G4. What is one's relationship to one's ancestors?***

Respect for elders and deceased ancestors is a strong value. On the anniversaries of their parents' deaths, Hindus perform a special ceremony honoring their ancestors. The blessings of ancestors are invoked on special occasions such as marriage and at designated periods each year.

**Governance**

***H1. What are the functions of clergy? What is their education and training? What is the relationship between clergy and laypersons?***

No person or organization is a preeminent authority on doctrinal, religious, or moral issues. Priests are trained for the performance of rituals but do not generally have a role in teaching, preaching, or pastoral counseling. Monks and scholars are active in guiding and teaching spiritual seekers.

***H2. What role do religious leaders play in social issues?***

Religious leaders speak out on social issues and can be quite influential, but decisions are ultimately left to individual conscience.

***H3. Who is permitted to interpret the meaning of sacred texts?***

All spiritual seekers are encouraged to study and reflect on the scriptures directly to the best of their ability. Their understanding is aided by the guidance of commentators and teachers, but there is no stricture against individuals reaching their own interpretations of scripture. Vigorous questioning and independent inquiry are strongly recommended and doctrinal issues are generally left to the individual to decide in line with his or her own understanding of Dharma and personal conscience. The scriptures themselves state that direct experience of the Divine has more authority than the scriptures [19].

***H4. Are women eligible to be clergy or religious leaders?***

Some of the most prominent religious leaders are women, but customarily priests are men.

***H5. Is there a formal way to admit persons to this religion?***

Anyone who professes faith in the Vedas is a Hindu and traditionally there has been no formal rite for conversion.

**Attitude toward the "Other"**

***I1. How are other religions viewed in scripture or tradition?***

Hindus do not engage in proselytizing and have no hesitancy in accepting all religions as legitimate ways to God, as observed diversity is merely superficial, masking the one underlying Reality [20]. This attitude is fostered by the scriptural emphasis on experience rather than doctrine; an ancient tradition of free debate among all philosophical schools, including atheism; and a long history of offering sanctuary to followers of religions that were being persecuted elsewhere, including Jews, Christians, Muslims, Zoroastrians and Baha'i. Hindus have close philosophical and cultural affinity to the three other major religions that were born in India—Buddhism, Jainism and Sikhism.

***I2. Do followers of other religions merit salvation?***

Hindus do not claim that Hinduism is the exclusive path to salvation (see G3).

***I3. How important is it to try to convert others to this faith?***

Hindus do not attempt to convert followers of other religions. A growing number of Hindus oppose proselytisation by others, particularly missionary activities that are seen as subtly coercive, using material incentives to target those suffering poverty and lack of education. Further, there is strong suspicion at claims of "exclusivity" or "uniqueness" by any religious group.

***I4. What is the attitude toward followers who choose to change to another faith?***

There is no social ostracism of Hindus who convert to other religions.

***I5. Cite historical periods when there was exceptional amity or conflict between this faith and other faith. To what extent do these conflicts linger today?***

Hindu society has traditionally been a haven for those persecuted elsewhere (see I1). For a thousand years until

1947, India was governed by non-Hindus who sometimes actively discriminated against followers of Hinduism. And in 1947, India was partitioned on a religious criterion with the creation of territories that are now Pakistan and Bangladesh.

Despite the bitter memories of the awful violence that accompanied that upheaval, religions have mostly lived amicably in India. The sporadic bursts of local conflict are probably politically motivated: the poor, uneducated, and unemployed are easily manipulated to provoke unrest and riots. The Indian Constitution guarantees freedom of religion to all and India is a secular state. "Secular" is not defined as separation of the state from religion but as the obligation to treat all religions equally.

***16. What are the ways in which this religion interacts with other religions in the USA today?***

Hindus are a young community in the USA, with many, if not most, adults being first generation immigrants. The vital effort to build temples is now reaching maturity. Involvement in interfaith organizations has been a high priority for many years and has been the main forum for interacting with other religions. Despite isolated instances of hate-crimes against the Hindu community or places of worship, relations between Hindus and other religions have been most cordial. A small minority of Americans has gained some familiarity about Hinduism through travel or the study of yoga and ayurveda, but most Americans know very little about Hindu philosophy or religious practice.

**More...**

***Are there common misconceptions about this religion that need to be addressed? Are there any other aspects of the religion that need to be highlighted?***

The most common misconception is that the caste system comes from the scriptures and forms a central part of Hindu religious practice. In the scriptures, the division of society into four groups was no more than a recognition of the variety of functions in society: education (the Brahmins), maintaining order and security (the Kshatriyas), producing wealth (the Vaishyas), and performing labor (the Shudras). The social division into numerous communities was quite different from this four-fold division, but over time, the two concepts were conflated into a hereditary, hierarchical and oppressive social system consisting of numerous castes and outcastes that reformers have long fought to eliminate.

In India, the law prohibits discrimination by caste and has put in place extensive affirmative action programs. But much remains to be done to eliminate the practice of discrimination. Caste is a non-issue among Hindus in the USA.

Also, it is common these days to refer to the Abrahamic religions as "the three great monotheistic religions of the world." This is factually incorrect, reflecting a basic misunderstanding of Hindu philosophy. It conveys a sense of superiority over other religions that is misleading and perpetuates misunderstanding.

Finally, many believe that Hinduism is fatalistic in its adherence to the doctrine of karma.

This doctrine is nothing more than the insistence that every action has a consequence; that all our actions will bear their corresponding fruit in this or subsequent lives; and that the only way to assure good outcomes in the future is to do good acts in the present, and pray for divine forgiveness of past misdeeds.

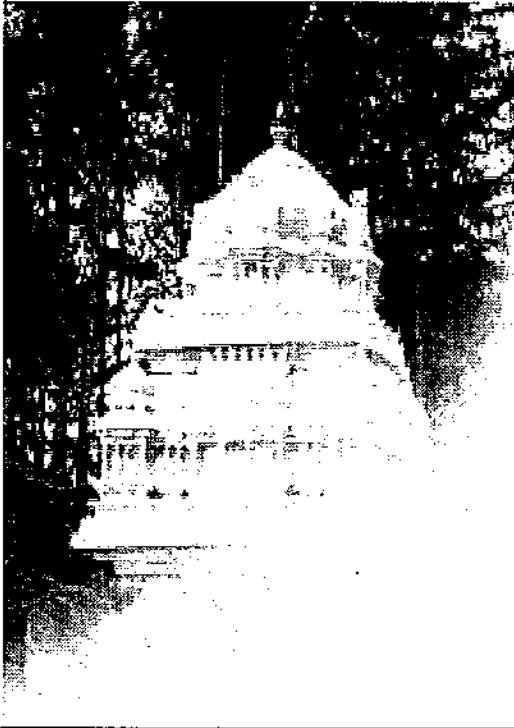
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## Arsha Vidya Gurukulam



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## SEVA in Action at the Bharatiya Temple, Troy, MI

Amisha Agarwal and Prateek Prasad

*Editor's note: VHP of America, Detroit Chapter celebrated Hindu Heritage Day on May 31, 2008 in cooperation with the Bharatiya Temple, Troy. Theme for the Fund Raising was SEVA. Three high school students, Amisha Agarwal, Prateek Prasad and Hari Vutukuru conducted the fund raising drive in an interactive and engaging fashion. Here is how it went.*

### Introduction:

Amisha: Namaste! My name is Amisha Agarwal and I am joined by Prateek Prasad. Thank you for attending this fundraising dinner to help support SEVA. We would like to address a few of the specificities of the SEVA program, and explore how they can help our community both within and outside of the Bharatiya Temple. We hope that you will take SEVA's goals to heart and consider donating to the SEVA Project. Additionally, we would like to draw your attention to the brochures you all have in front of you, regarding Vishwa Hindu Parishad of America's Support a Child Project, which has been collecting donations here for many years. If you would like help sponsor for the Support a Child Project, please fill out the information on the donation sheet in front of you.

### Prateek: So, what is the SEVA Project?

Amisha: Well as Hari already told us, the SEVA project of the Bharatiya Temple is our attempt to make our community more involved with each other and others. More than just for prayers, which are very important, we want to make the temple into a community support center. The main services that SEVA provides include Chaplain Services, Crisis Support and Referral Aid, conducting awareness and preventive workshops, Helping senior citizens, and providing community services in general. Prateek, can you tell us more about SEVA's chaplain services and crisis support?

Prateek: Of course.

### Visit and Offer Prayers (Chaplain Services)

Prateek: One of SEVA's goals is to provide assistance to Indian community members in crises or serious medical health situations. The provided help could be in the form of reciting verses from Hindu scriptures or also providing legal and medical assistance on a need basis at the discretion of the SEVA committee.

Amisha: If a child were to get very ill this weekend, and had to be treated in the Intensive Care unit at the nearest hospital, the parents of that child would obviously be very worried. They would most probably stay at the hospital with their child, and would appreciate support from their community to help their son or daughter regain his or her health.

Prateek: Likewise, SEVA can be the first contact for help and referral in crisis situations. If someone is suffering from depression or another health related case, or needs help to deal with domestic violence, SEVA will be there to provide them with aid. If SEVA cannot provide the proper support, they will refer them to the appropriate professional agencies that can help them.

Amisha: But Prateek, many people worry that their friends and family might come to know about their personal problems. Does SEVA take care of this?

Prateek: Of course. Everyone can be assured that when they call SEVA, they will have complete confidentiality – after all, it is one of SEVA's priorities.

Amisha: SEVA would like to make every effort to help families in our community when they are in need of it. To accomplish this, SEVA needs its own assistance – funds that can cover the costs of the services that SEVA can offer to our families, so that they can be there for us when the time comes.

Amisha: So Prateek, what other services does SEVA offer?

### Arrange Awareness and Preventive Workshops

Prateek: Well, many of you have probably experienced a situation in which your child comes home from school with an A, but not full marks, and you end up scolding

them about their apparent indifference towards their education, or lack of motivation towards attaining perfect test scores. Your child has probably also expressed annoyance at what he or she would refer to as your "over demanding and over strict" nature, and maybe told you that other parents aren't as strict, and so on.

**Amisha:** Bridging the generation gap that many families face is just one goal of SEVA. SEVA is planning to arrange awareness and preventive workshops, which would target a variety of issues, including conflict resolution for families, better parenting, or intergeneration communication issues such as this one. The first of these workshops is on June 8<sup>th</sup>, here at the Temple. We invite you to attend that meeting, so you can hopefully experience the benefits of these SEVA workshops. Prateek, the services that SEVA can provide seem wonderful, and really helpful, but this must be quite expensive to have. How are they planning to cover the costs of these programs?

**Prateek:** The answer is quite simple. These generous people sitting in front of us are going to be our wonderful sponsors. Hopefully, they will open their hearts and their pocketbooks to contribute to SEVA. SEVA needs funding to host these meetings and workshops, and we ask you to make pledges to donate to SEVA so that we can help our community become more aware of these cultural and generational differences, and address them more effectively as a group rather than individually.

**Prateek:** Thank you very much for your attention. We will be returning to continue talking to you about SEVA later. Please remember that our young volunteers are coming around and collecting pledges, so continue filling out those donation forms! Thanks!

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**Prateek:** Hello again, everyone. We are going to continue our discussion of SEVA's services, and how they can be beneficial to our community.

### **Be of Help to Senior Citizens**

**Amisha:** SEVA would also like to assist senior citizens in providing awareness sessions aimed at senior issues. SEVA has started a "Senior Mobility Project" to provide transportation services to senior citizens so that they can attend Bharatiya Temple events.

**Prateek:** There is an old man who lives maybe two miles from the temple, and he wishes to come here every Tuesday to pray. However, he lives alone, and has no reliable method of getting here. So he walks. Maybe he

can manage in the summer months, but what about when November and December come? Walking such a distance can be detrimental to his health at this age, so he needs a better way to get here.

**Amisha:** If any of you happened to notice when you entered the temple this evening, posted on the bulletin boards upstairs is a sign-up sheet for people who are willing to give and are in need of rides to and from the temple on specific days. As part of the Senior Mobility Project, SEVA is planning to buy a temple shuttle that can help provide these rides. For this, SEVA needs funding, this is why we ask all of you to consider making a donation to SEVA tonight.

### **Provide Community Services**

**Prateek:** The goal of the SEVA community project is to promote participation from the Indian community in local community events, which is currently very limited, and representing the Bharatiya Temple. SEVA has participated in Christmas in Action, and is planning to conduct several community projects in coming months. Some of them include Soup Kitchen assistance in October, raking leaves in the autumn for seniors, a canned food drive, a blanket and coat drive, meals on wheels, and many more.

**Amisha:** Take the example of blood drives. Many people think that donating blood is a waste of time, especially if they must travel long distances, wait for hours and eventually just find out that they are ineligible to donate because of iron deficiencies and such. However, when someone from our community gets hurt, these same people wouldn't think twice about accepting blood from someone else if they needed it. We should not only take from our community, but also give back. Besides, you never know whose life you will save when you donate blood – it could very well be your own!

**Prateek:** The SEVA project wants to start a blood – donation center here with the Red Cross, so people who are willing to donate but don't want to go very far can come here and do it. SEVA needs donations to make this possible. Maybe you can't give blood, but you could give your support in this way, which is just as much of a help in the long run.

**Conclusion (Amisha):** Once again, we would like to thank you for listening to our presentation this evening about SEVA. We hope that with your help, SEVA can take off and begin its services to help our community to the best of its abilities. Thank you.



# Bal Gokulam of Troy MI

HMEC 2008

Best Wishes and Compliments

## ॐ Hindu Swayamsevak Sangh (HSS)

[www.hssus.org](http://www.hssus.org)

[www.balagokulam.org](http://www.balagokulam.org)

Let positive, strong, helpful thought enter into  
their brains from very childhood.

- Swami Vivekananda

- One place for entire family
- Once a week for one and half  
hour
- No Admission Fee

## Bala Gokulam

### Activities for Children:

- Stories about Great Heroes, Culture and Hinduism.
- Fun filled games to inculcate team spirit and leadership qualities.
- Practice of slokas and bhajans, Yoga and Suryanamaskar, Ekatmata stotram.
- Homely and loving environment where discipline and Hindu ethos are taught in a playful manner.
- Festivals like Ganesh pooja, Skits etc.
- Participate in the Balagokulam Magazine FOR Children by Children



## Youth Chapters

### Activities for Teenagers

- Discussions & Lectures on Hinduism
- Games & Yoga
- Quality building activities

## Family Programs

### And also HSS Shaka for Youth and Adults:

- Yoga, (Yogasanas, Pranayama), Suryanamaskars practice, exercise.
- Fun filled games for youth and adults.
- Discussions, Talks and Dialogues on Hinduism, Cultural and Social issues/topics of Hindus in USA. Occasional Family Camps to know more about Hindu Home, Hindu Family and Hindu Dharma.

Over 100 different Locations in USA - Activities are free

Visit [www.balagokulam.org](http://www.balagokulam.org) or [www.hssus.org](http://www.hssus.org) for more information

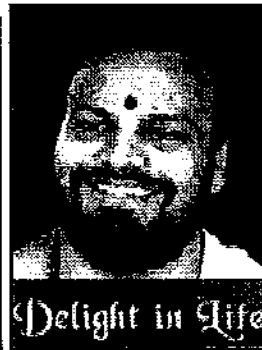
## BAPS Shri Swaminarayan Mandir



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Best Wishes and Compliments  
3131 S. Canton Center Road,  
Canton MI 48188  
734-397-2233

## The Hindu Temple of Canton



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Best Wishes and Compliments  
44955 Cherry Hill Rd.  
Canton MI 48188  
734-981-8730



## THE BHARATIYA TEMPLE

OF METROPOLITAN DETROIT



**HMEC 2008**

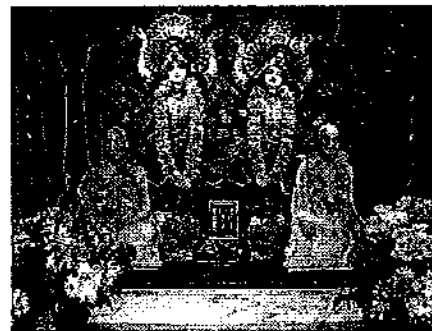
**Best Wishes and Compliments**

**6850 Adams Road**

**Troy MI 48098**

**248-879-2552**

## ISKCON Temple (The Fisher Mansion)



**HMEC 2008**

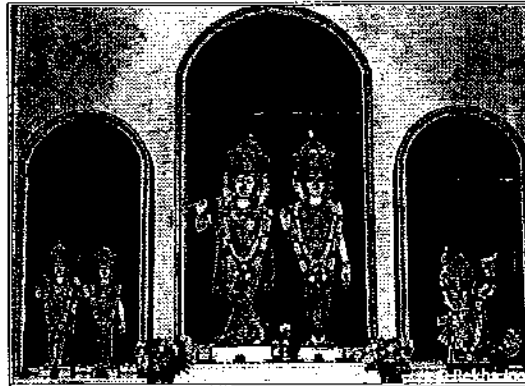
**Best Wishes and Compliments**

**383 Lenox Ave**

**Detroit MI 48215**

**313-331-6740**

# India Temple Association



**HMEC 2008**

**Best Wishes and Compliments**

**25 E. Taunton Ave**

**Berlin NJ 08009**

**856-768-3134**

# Shri Swaminarayan Gadi Sansthan

**(Maninagar)**



**HMEC 2008**

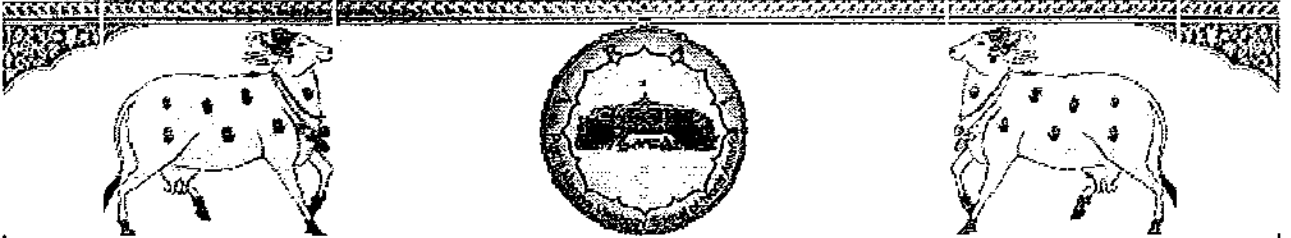
**Best Wishes and Compliments**

**200 Penhorn Avenue**

**Secaucus NJ 07094**

**201-325-0510**

# VRAJ



**HMEC 2008**

**Best Wishes and Compliments**

**15 Manor Road**

**Schuylkill Haven PA 17972**

**570-7547067**

## Sanatana Dharma Foundation



**HMEC 2008**

**Best Wishes and Compliments**

**6823 Windrock Road**

**Dallas TX 75252**

**614-668-1668**



# Durga Temple

(A Tax-Exempt Non-Profit Organization)  
8400 Durga Place, Fairfax Station, VA 22039  
Phone: 703-690-9355  
Website: <http://www.durgatemple.org>



## BOARD OF TRUSTEES

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Surinder Wahi

Since its inauguration, Durga Temple has served the Hindu community's religious, cultural, educational, and social needs in Northern Virginia area. Devotees visit the temple to worship main Deities: Durga Mata, Ram Parivar, Hanuman Ji, Radha Krishan and Shiv Parivar. Other deities include: Satyanarayana Bhagavana, Sai Baba, Jhule Lal Ji, Shri Venkateshwara (Bala Ji), Ganapati Bhagavan, Lakshmi Maa, Santoshi Maa and Gayatri Maa, Sthapana of other deities such as Kaali Maa, Saraswati Maa, & Swami Narayan will follow in near future.

The temple has four full-time and one part-time priest. They are highly qualified and experienced in all facets of Hindu Dharma. To serve our growing community, the temple has a full-time manager. The temple offers: Bal Gokulam, Yoga, Dance, Language, and SAT Classes, Discourses on Gita and Hindu Dharma. Monthly free health clinic and Awareness sessions have served us all well. Highly acclaimed and renowned Spiritual Swamis visit the temple on a regular basis to deliver religious teachings and Bhajans and impart their knowledge to our community.

We celebrate all major Hindu Festivals such as Ganesh Chaturthi, Maha Shivaratri, Janamashtami, Ram Navami, Diwali, Dusheshra, Navaratri, Saraswati Pooja, Hanuman Jayanti, Annakut, etc. The temple places special emphasis on programs for the young & our youth. We now have an active senior citizens group with growing participation. We plan to open a library in the near future. The temple recently launched a new inter-active website. We are looking into streamlining our regular processes to achieve greater efficiencies in the temple operation to serve our members more effectively.

Directions: Fairfax County Pkwy (VA 7100) to Hooes Rd S. (SR-636) One mile, Rt. On Copper Leaf Way, just before the intersection with Silverbrook Rd.

From I-95, Take Exit 163 (Lorton), Rt. Onto Lorton Rd. (SR 642), After 2.4 mi. Rt. Onto Silverbrook Rd (SR-600) at the first TL at Hooes Rd., Lt. on Copper leaf Way..

| Weekly Temple Hours      |  |
|--------------------------|--|
| Monday                   | 7:00 AM – 12:00 Noon; 4:00PM – 9:00 PM   |
| Tuesday                  | 9:00 AM – 12:00 Noon; 4:00PM – 9:00 PM   |
| Wednesday                | 9:00 AM – 12:00 Noon; 4:00PM – 9:00 PM   |
| Thursday                 | 9:00 AM – 12:00 Noon; 4:00PM – 9:00 PM   |
| Friday                   | 9:00 AM – 12:00 Noon; 4:00PM – 9:00 PM   |
| Sat. & Sundays           | 9:00 AM – 9:00 PM                        |
| Public Holidays          | 9:00 AM – 9:00 PM                        |
| Hindu Holy Days          |  |
| Weekly Poojas & Programs |  |
| 7:00AM – 12:00PM         | Shiva Abhisheka                          |
| 4:00 PM – 7:30PM         |  |
| 7:15 PM – 8:00 PM        | Hanuman Chalisa                          |
| 7:00PM – 8:00PM          | Shri Sai Baba of Shirdi-Kirtan           |
| 9:00 AM -10:15AM         | Venkateswara Suprabhatam & Pooja         |
| 10:15 AM-11:00AM         | Vishnu Sahasranaama, 11:00 AM Arti       |
| 4:00 PM – 6:30 PM        | Sponsored Weekly Pooja Arti - & Bhandara |

# Hindu Heritage Endowment

## Endowment Ensures Spiritual Future of USA Temple

Devotees of the Murugan Temple in Lanham, Maryland have enlisted the services of the Hindu Heritage Endowment to ensure the ceremonial and spiritual future of their temple. Pooling their contributions, they created the Murugan Temple of North America Puja Fund, (fund #70.) "Some of us want to support the temple even after we leave this world," said temple board member Dr. Nigel Subramaniam Siva. "We're initially aiming to build the fund to \$300,000." At five percent, he estimates the fund would provide \$15,000 annually for puja supplies. As the fund grows, any income in excess of the supplies budget will be applied to priest salaries and benefits.



*Puja Fund Creators at Murugan Temple*

mance of daily temple rituals in an uninterrupted and proper manner." Kanagasabai Loganathan co-created the Puja Fund at HHE to encourage the next generation to preserve their Hindu heritage. "We asked our three adult children to contribute to the fund with us," he said. "We wanted to help them develop the habit of supporting the temple. We found the Puja Fund a safe, satisfying, sustainable vehicle by which we can support our temple. We hope we will be able to give to the fund regularly."

"My late husband Arumukham Saravanapavan visited Kauai in 1982," recalls Pathmini Saravanapavan. "He told Gurudeva that our community wanted to build a temple, and Gurudeva sent a Ganesha to our home in Bethesda, telling us, 'Pray to him and slowly he will help you build a temple.' He said our temple would 'last more than a thousand years.' It gave me great joy to hear that. In my small way, I want to make sure this happens because of my love for Muruga and my belief in Gurudeva's words." In 2003 Pathmini opened two Murugan Temple funds with HHE.

Dr. Sabapathippillai Kulathungam feels the Puja Fund at HHE links his Murugan temple in Maryland with the Iraivan Temple in Kauai and, through it, with Hindu temples worldwide. "Like many tributaries join to form a single river, all divisions of Hinduism merge within the single Iraivan," he said. Temple trustee Vayudeva Varadan shared his hope for the future of the temple.

"I believe Murugan Temple's priests and the pujas they deliver bring unique light and life to the temple. As the years pass, I expect the feeling to build and grow. Even now, people travel to our Nallur Festival from all over the US and Canada. I suspect it is the same feeling that motivates thousands of people to walk barefoot for days to reach the great temples in India."

Dr. Siva hopes others will contribute to the Puja Fund both to ensure the temple's future and to honor their loved ones as he has done for his parents. Siva, who holds a Doctorate in Water Resources Engineering, credits his parents for much of his professional success, as well as his religious formation. Devotees purchased land for the temple in 1987. The temple was finished in 1999, with Gurudeva attending the Kumbhabhishekam. "My personal experiences at the Temple have convinced me that the high spiritual presence of the divine is there," Dr. Siva said. "I want to make sure this divine presence continues to grow there so that others will benefit spiritually." Please visit the temple at [www.murugantemple.org](http://www.murugantemple.org).



### Hindu Heritage Endowment

Kauai's Hindu Monastery, 107 Kaholalele Road, Kapaa, Hawaii, 96746-9304 USA 808-822-3012 ext 244 • fax: 808-822-3152 • [hhe@hindu.org](mailto:hhe@hindu.org) • [www.hheonline.org](http://www.hheonline.org)





## H.O.M.A Hindu Temple Online Management System

Our best wishes  
to all the Guiding Team and Volunteers at  
Vishwa Hindu Parishad of America for the leadership and teamwork in organizing the 3<sup>rd</sup>  
Annual Hindu Mandhir Executives' conference - HMEC 2008.

HOMA is a fully automated custom software program to  
manage all operations in a Hindu temple.

Completely designed and developed by  
Hindu Temples for Hindu Temples  
with 200,000 users worldwide.



"HOMA provides our Temple with organization wide MIS reports for all the services and events scheduled through the system. We save atleast \$50,000 per year in operational time and effort . We are very pleased with the output and dedicated support from Ventech " Treasurer, Sri Meenakshi Temple Society , Pearland, Texas.

" The contributions from HOMA to our temple with 10,000 devotees is remarkable. We couldn't have been this efficient in managing our temple without HOMA. Thank you to Ventech for its generosity." Chairman, Bharatiya Hindu Temple, Columbus, Ohio.

"You are a click away to keep your mandhir operations in order" – President, Chinmaya Mission, Columbus, OH

[www.myhindutemplesoftware.com](http://www.myhindutemplesoftware.com)

HOMA – Hindu Temple Online Management System  
Attention: Sushma Koyawala  
(614)751-1167 x227 (Off) / (614)937-1042 (Cell)  
Email: [ksushma@ventechsolutions.com](mailto:ksushma@ventechsolutions.com)

A Ventech assistance to Hindu temples worldwide

## **Greetings from the India Temple Association (ITA) Berlin, New Jersey**

Serving the Indian community in the tri-state area of South Jersey, Eastern Pennsylvania and Delaware, the Hindu Mandir in Berlin had the *Prana Pratishthan Mahotsav* in 1985. Murtis of Radhaji, Sri Krishna, Ganesh, Sri Ram Parivar, Srinathji, Shivji, Durga Mata grace the Mandir. Religious services are performed by a full time resident Pujari and several volunteer priests.

Community programs include Health Fairs, Gita, Yoga and Art classes, Senior Citizen Program, American Red Cross Food for the Poor Program and scholarship awards to graduating seniors.

ITA conducts the only Navratri Garba Program in the area on all nine Navratri nights every year. Artists from India as well as local talent provide the musical score.

The Bal Vihar program has close to 150 young children learning the basics of our Hindu religion, culture, language and heritage. The Youth Program has nearly 100 teen-age middle and high school children. The content of the program is primarily determined by the participants themselves. Bal Vihar and Youth Program Annual Day celebrations showcase their talents as well as hopes and aspirations for their future.

The Executive Committee, headed by the President, and under the direction of the elected Board of directors, is responsible for the Mandir operations.

Major Hindu festivals celebrated at the Mandir include Makara Sankranti, Shivratri, Ugadi, Ganesh Chaturthi, Ram Navami, Janmashtami, Hanuman Jayanthi, Tulasi Vivah, Navratri, Vijaya Dasami, Diwali and New Year.

A new Cultural Center to serve the community's needs has recently been approved by the township, and construction is expected to start soon.

We invite you to stop by and visit our Mandir when you are in the area. Jai Sri Krishna!

## Ganesha Temple



521 Old Hickory Blvd  
Nashville, TN 37209-5105  
Phone: (615) 356-7207  
[ganeshatemple.org](http://ganeshatemple.org)

For further information, please contact:  
**Hiranya Gowda** <[ckhgsg@hotmail.com](mailto:ckhgsg@hotmail.com)>

## BHARATIYA HINDU TEMPLE



**HMEC 2008**

**Best Wishes and Compliments**

General Information: [bht@columbushindutemple.org](mailto:bht@columbushindutemple.org)

3671 Hyatts Road, P.O.Box 1466,

Powell OH 43065-1466

Phone: 740-369-0717

## List of Sponsors

**Bal Gokulam of Troy**  
Troy, MI

**BAPS Shri Swaminarayan Mandir**  
3131 S. Canton Center Road, Canton, MI 48188  
Phone: 734-397-2233

**Bharatiya Temple of Metropolitan Detroit**  
6850 Adams Road, Troy, MI 48098

Phone: 248-879-2552  
Contact: Ravi Kunduru  
Email: kravi@ventechsolutions.com

**Bhartiya Hindu Temple**  
3671 Hyatt Road, Powell, OH 43065  
Phone: 740-369-0717  
Contact: Ravi Kunduru

**Datta Yoga Center**  
171-173, Advance Blvd, Unit #41, Brampton, ON L6T 4H9  
Phone: 905-790-3645  
Contact: Teekah Rambauth  
Email: dyccanada@rogers.com

**Durga Temple**  
8400 Durga Place, Fairfax Station, VA 22039  
Phone: 703-690-9355  
Contact: Sant Gupta  
Email: SANT.GUPTA@VERIZON.NET

**Hindu Jain Temple**  
615 Illini Dr., Monroeville, PA 15146  
Phone: 412-733-7475  
Contact: Navin Kadakia  
Email: navin.kadakia@gmail.com

**Hindu Temple of Atlanta**  
5851 Highway 85  
Riverdale, GA 30274  
Phone: 770-907-7102  
Contact: Reddy Sujatha  
Email: vasavmehta@gmail.com

**Hindu Temple of The Woodlands**  
P.O. Box 130307  
Spring, TX 77393  
Phone: 281-292-8381  
Contact: Urnil Shukla

**Hindus of Greater Houston**  
1214 Westwick Forest Lane, Houston, TX 77043  
Contact: Vijay Pallod  
Email: Pallod@aol.com

**Hindu Entertainment & Devotion Society**  
Surrey, BC, Canada

**India Temple Association**  
25 E. Taunton Ave, Berlin, NJ 08009  
Contact: Vinaya Vardhana  
Email: vinayavardhana@gmail.com

**ISKCON Temple (The Fisher Mansion)**  
383 Lenox Ave, Detroit, MI 48215  
Phone: 313-331-6740

**Kadavul Hindu Temple & Iraivan Hindu Temple**  
107 Kaholalele Rd, Kavi, HI 96746  
Phone: 808-822-3012  
Contact: Rajkumar Manickam  
Email: raj@steammaster.com

**Krishna Kripa**  
2714 Lakecrest Dr, Pearland, TX 77584  
Phone: 832-282-5041  
Contact: Deepak Kotecha

**Lakshmi Narayan Mandir**  
Surrey, BC, Canada

**Paschima Kasi Sri Viswanatha Temple**  
1147 South Elms Road, Flint, MI 48532  
Phone: 810-733-5790  
Contact: Vishnu Patel

**Sanatana Dharma Foundation**  
6823 Windrock Road, Dallas, TX 75252  
Phone: 614-668-1668  
Contact: Kalyan Viswanathan  
Email: viswanathan@gmail.com

**Sanskriti Parivar, USA**  
156 Anderson Parkway, Cedar Grove, NJ 07009  
Phone: 973-256-2472  
Contact: Arvind Patel  
Email: sanskritiparivar@gmail.com

**Shri Swaminarayan Gadi Sansthan (Maninagar)**  
200 Penhorn Avenue, Secaucus, NJ 07094  
Phone: 201-325-0510  
Contact: BD Patel  
Email: rdpatel1953@yahoo.com

**Sri Ganesha Temple**  
521 Old Hickory Blvd, Nashville, TN 37209  
Phone: 615-356-7207  
Contact: Hiranya Gowda  
Email: CKHSGS@HOTMAIL.COM

**Sripuram--Sri Narayani Peetham**  
Thirumalaikodi, Vellore, INDIA  
Contact: Cathy Wenuk, Email: ic@sripuram.ca

**Sri Venkateswara Swami Temple of Greater Chicago**  
1145 W. Sullivan Rd  
Aurora, IL 60506  
Phone: 630-844-2252

**The Hindu Temple of Canton**  
44955 Cherry Hill Rd.  
Canton, MI 48188  
Phone: 734-981-8730

**VRAJ**  
15 Manor Road  
Schuylkill Haven, PA 17972  
Phone: 570-7547067  
Contact: Kashyap Sheth  
Email: kash4vraj@gmail.com



## HMEC 2008

### LIST OF REGISTERED ORGANIZATIONS

- 1 Hindu Association of Northwest, Bentonville, AR
- 2 Hindu Temple of Apple Valley, Apple Valley, CA
- 3 Nithyananda Vedic Temple, Montclair, CA
- 4 Radha Krishna Temple, Norwalk, CA
- 5 Shri Mandir, San Diego, CA
- 6 Arya Samaj Mandir, Ft. Lauderdale
- 7 Florida Hindu Organization Inc., Shiva Mandir, Oakland Park, FL
- 8 Hindu Society of Central Florida, Casselberry, FL
- 9 Hindu Temple of Florida, Tampa, FL
- 10 S Florida Hindu Temple, SW Ranches, FL
- 11 Sanatan Mandir, Tampa, FL
- 12 Hindu Temple of Atlanta, Riverdale, GA
- 13 Hindu Temple Society of Augusta, Augusta, GA
- 14 Sanatan Mandir of Atlanta, Atlanta, GA
- 15 Vedic Temple, Lilburn, GA
- 16 Hinduism Today, Kappa, HI
- 17 Kadavul Hindu Temple & Iraivan Hindu Temple, Kappa, HI
- 18 Hindu Temple and Cultural Center of Iowa, Madrid, IA
- 19 Chinmaya Mission, Hinsdale, IL
- 20 Gayatri Gyan Mandir, Itasca, IL
- 21 Seven Stars Foundation, IL
- 22 SV Balaji Temple, Aurora, IL
- 23 Hindu Temple of Central Indiana, Indianapolis, IN
- 24 Datta Yoga Center, Baton Rouge, LA
- 25 Hindu Vedic Society, Baton Rouge, LA
- 26 Om Center, N. Billerica, MA
- 27 Om Temple, N. Billerica, MA
- 28 Satsang Center, Woburn, MA
- 29 Sri Lakshmi Temple, Ashland, MA
- 30 Shri Mangal Mandir, Silver Spring, MD
- 31 Association of United Hindu Jain Temples, MD
- 32 Arya Samaj Mandir, Detroit, MI
- 33 Bharatiya Temple, Troy, MI
- 34 Chinmaya Mission, Ann Arbor, MI
- 35 Durga Temple, Detroit, MI
- 36 Indo American Center & Cultural Center of Kalamazoo, Kalamazoo, MI
- 37 ISKCON, Detroit, MI
- 38 Parashakti Temple, Pontiac, MI
- 39 Paschim Kasi Vishwanath Temple, Flint, MI
- 40 The Hindu Temple of Canton, MI
- 41 Hindu Temple of St Louis, St. Louis, MO
- 42 Global Hindu Heritage Foundation, MS
- 43 Hindu Society of North Carolina, Morrisville, NC
- 44 Saraswati Mandiram, Epping, NH
- 45 Ananda Mandir, Somerset, NJ
- 46 Arsha Bodh Center, Somerset, NJ
- 47 Bharat Sevashram Sangh of North America, Kendall Park, NJ
- 48 Om Kriya Yoga, Windsor, NJ
- 49 Forum for Religious Freedom, Staten Island, NY
- 50 Geeta Mandir, Elmhurst, NY
- 51 Hindu Center, Flushing, NY

## LIST OF REGISTERED ORGANIZATIONS (CONT'D)

- 52 Satyanarayan Temple, Elmhurst, NY
- 53 Columbus Hindu Temple, Columbus, OH
- 54 Hindu Society of Greater Cincinnati, Cincinnati, OH
- 55 Hindu Temple of Toledo, Toledo, OH
- 56 Arsha Vidya Gurukulam, Saylorsburg, PA
- 57 Sri Venkateshwara Temple, Pittsburgh, PA
- 58 Sringeri Vidya Bharati Foundation, Stroudsburg, PA
- 59 The Hindu-Jain Temple, Monroeville, PA
- 60 Vraj, Schuylkill Haven, PA
- 61 Hindu Temple & Cultural Center of South Carolina, Columbia, SC
- 62 Hindu Temple of Spartanburg, Spartanburg, SC
- 63 Sri Ganesh Temple, Nashville, TN
- 64 Ashta Lakshmi Temple, Sugarland, TX
- 65 Barsana Dham, Austin, TX
- 66 DFW Temple, Irving, TX
- 67 Hindu Temple of Central Texas, Temple, TX
- 68 Hindu Temple of the Woodlands, Woodlands, TX
- 69 Hindus of Houston, Houston, TX
- 70 Krishna Kripa, Pearland, TX
- 71 Sanatan Dharma Foundation, Dallas, TX
- 72 Southwest Hindu Temple, El Paso, TX
- 73 Sri Meenakshi Temple Society, Pearland, TX
- 74 Durga Temple, Fairfax Station, VA
- 75 Datta Yoga Center, Brampton, ON, Canada
- 76 Hindu Federation of Canada, Canada
- 77 Hindu Sabha Temple, Brampton, ON, Canada
- 78 Hindu Samaj Temple of Hamilton, ON, Canada
- 79 Hindu Temple & Cultural Center of Windsor, ON, Canada
- 80 Hindu Youth Network, Canada
- 81 Radha Krishna Mandir, Cambridge, ON, Canada
- 82 Ram Mandir, Mississauga, ON, Canada
- 83 Sanatan Dharma Educational Foundation of Canada, Canada
- 84 Sripuram (Intl. Coordinator), Canada
- 85 The Hindu Temple Society of Canada, Richmond Hill, ON, Canada
- 86 Vaishno Devi Mandir, Oakville, ON, Canada
- 87 Vishwa Hindu Parishad of Canada, Canada
- 88 Voice of Vedas Cultural Sabha (Vishnu Mandir), Richmond Hill, ON, Canada
- 89 Hindu Entertainment & Devotion Society, Surrey, BC, Canada
- 90 Lakshmi Narayan Mandir, Surrey, BC, Canada
- 91 Sanatan Dharma Mahasabha, Trinidad
- 92 All World Gayatri Parivar, USA
- 93 Arya Pratinidhi Sabha of North America
- 94 BAPS Shri Swaminarayan Mandir, USA
- 95 Hindu American Foundation, USA
- 96 Hindu Students Council, USA
- 97 Hindu Swayamsevak Sangh, USA
- 98 Hindu University of America, USA
- 99 Seva International, USA
- 100 Sanskruti Pariwar, USA
- 101 Shri Swaminarayan Gadi Sansthan (Maninagar), USA
- 102 Vishwa Hindu Parishad of America, USA
- 103 Yogi Divine Society, USA

(List as of September 14, 2008)

## **Action Items and Committees from HMEC 2007**

### **1. Vision Development Group**

- a. Dr. Rajender Kapoor, Bharatiya Temple, MI
- b. Dr. Bapineedu Kuchipudi, Bridgewater Hindu Temple, NJ
- c. Dr. Raghavan Pratiwadi, Guruvayurappan Temple, NJ
- d. Dr. Pawan Rattan, Sanatan Temple, FL
- e. Dr. Abhaya Asthana, VHPA
- f. Dr BVK Sastry, Hindu University

### **2. Insurance and Benefits**

- a. Shri Lalit Goel, Hindu Temple, IA
- b. Shri AR Ravi, SV Temple, PA
- c. Shri Parvesh Swani, Baltimore Hindu Temple
- d. Dr. Y. V. Rao
- e. Shri Sharad Gandhi, VHPA
- f. Shri Jyotish Parekh, VHPA

### **3. Hindu Samskar Book**

- a. Dr. Ram Belagaje & Shri Kumar Dave, Hindu Temple of Indianapolis, IN
- b. Shri Vittal Venkataraman, Durga Temple, DC
- c. Sanjay Mehta, Hindu Jain Temple, PA
- d. Dr. Abhaya Asthana, VHPA

### **4. Network Development Group**

Permanent representative from the mandir to HMEC for the express purpose of sustaining the networking effort

- a. Dr. Sujatha Reddy, Atlanta Hindu Temple, GA
- b. Smt. Beth Kulkarni, Woodlands Temple, TX
- c. Shri Sant Gupta, Durga Temple, TX
- d. Dr. Vipul Patel, Gayatri Pariwar
- e. Shri Patanjali Rambrich, VHPA, NY
- f. Swamini Jnaneshwari Devi, Barsana Dham, TX
- g. Shri Arvind Patel, NJ, VHPA
- h. Dr. TV Srinivasan, AVG

### **5. Priest Profile Project**

- a. Dr. Ram Bajaj, Hindu Jain Temple, Pittsburgh, PA

### **6. Hindu Awareness Yatraa (HAY)**

- a. Shri Shivaram Sitaram, VHPA
- b. Shri TV Srinivasan, AVG

### **7. Mandir Awareness Campaign**

- a. Dr. G M Ramappa

### **8. Hindu Chair at Universities**

- a. Dr. Sharad Parikh, Hindu Temple of St. Louis, MO

### **9. Special Project Groups**

- a. Hindu Seva Diwas
- b. Library Network
- c. Website
- d. R1 Visa Criteria
- e. Teacher/Priest Training



## **Accomplishments of Vishwa Hindu Parishad of America**

- 1970 Vishwa Hindu Parishad of America founded**
- 1974 VHPA office incorporated in New York State**
- 1974 Bal Vihar program offered**
- 1974 Children's Book project started in New Hampshire**
- 1975 Lecture tour program started**
- 1978 Seva projects started**
- 1979 First Youth camp held in Rhode Island**
- 1982 Emporium established**
- 1983 Samskar Bharti - A/V services established**
- 1983 First Regional conference held in Florida**
- 1984 First International Hindu conference held in NY**
- 1984 First Youth conference held in New York**
- 1984 Cultural Exhibition: India's contribution to World**
- 1985 Support-a-Child Program started**
- 1985 Hindu University of America project announced**
- 1989 Hindu Unity Year Celebrations held in 107 US cities**
- 1990 Hindu Students Council launched**
- 1993 Two-year long Global Vision 2000 Programs in DC**
- 1998 First Dharma Samsad held at Arsha Vidya Gurukul**
- 1999 Dharma Prasaar Yaatra conducted across the country**
- 1999 Ekal Vidyalaya started as a project of VHPA**
- 2000 Dharma Ganga & U. N. Millennium Peace Summit**
- 2001 Re-built earthquake affected Lodai village in Gujarat**
- 2002 Ekal Vidyalaya Foundation of USA established**
- 2003 Hindu Student Council became autonomous**
- 2004 Vanaprasthi Seminars Started**
- 2006 1st Hindu Mandir Executives conference held in GA**
- 2006 Hindu Awareness Yaatra started**
- 2007 2nd Hindu Mandir Executives conference held in NJ**

**VHPA Chapters and Activity Centers:** Antioch, CA; Orange County, CA; Hartford, CT; Metro DC; Broward-Palm Beach County, FL; Miami, FL; Atlanta, GA; Chicago, IL; Boston, MA; Detroit, MI; Merrimack Valley, NH; Central & Northern New Jersey, NJ; Southern New Jersey, NJ; Lindenhurst (Long Island), NY; Queens, NY; Staten Island, NY; Cincinnati, OH; Pittsburgh, PA; Houston, TX





# ***Vishwa Hindu Parishad of America, Inc.***

## **(World Hindu Council of America)**

National Office: P.O. Box 611, Iselin, NJ 08830  
Tel.: 732-744-0851 Email: [office@vhp-america.org](mailto:office@vhp-america.org)

Tax ID # 51-0156325  
Website: [www.vhp-america.org](http://www.vhp-america.org)

### **Why your Mandir/Organization should become an Affiliate member of VHP of America?**

The Mandir gets the following benefits by affiliating with the VHPA.

- A complimentary copy of Hindu Temples of North America, a pictorial, coffee table book, valued at \$35 and listed at \$75 at Amazon.com
- A Membership Plaque
- Recognition in our Quarterly magazine, Hindu Vishwa as an affiliate Institution
- Ready access to VHPA's Executive Board for issues of concern
- Priority in arranging programs for VHPA invited religious and social leaders under its Hindu Awareness Yatra (HAY) program
- 10% discount in the registration fee for the Hindu Mandir executives' Conference (HMEC), a yearly event
- Five copies of Hindu Vishwa, our quarterly magazine
- Membership of Coalition to Protect Hindu Institutions (CPHI)
- Membership of American Hindus Against Defamation (AHAD)
- Invitation to two executives to VHPA's annual Governing Council meeting where you can give valuable input and take part in VHPA's policy making deliberations
- Monetary considerations apart, there is strength in joining forces to provide a secure future for our Mandirs and spiritual institutions, the Hindu society and the second and future generations of Hindus in the USA.

The first year contribution for the Affiliate Membership is \$201 and there after, yearly renewal is at \$111. Long term discounted membership is also available.

The membership is contingent on at least two, and if possible three (or more) of the Mandir executives/Trustees becoming Life member (\$500) or Patron (\$1000) of VHPA so that a strong bond may be formed between VHPA and the Mandir. We expect these life members/patrons to be actively involved in VHPA to represent interests of the Mandir community. Other members of the Mandir Board should consider long term membership of VHPA (5 years for \$100) to express their support to VHPA. (Membership Application form is on the reverse side.)

**Strength in Unity! We are all Hindus first, then anything else. Won't you join us?**

**"Arise, Awake and stop not till the goal is reached" - Swami Vivekananda**

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## Affiliate Membership Application Form

(Fields marked with \* cannot be left blank)

Name of the Mandir/  
Spiritual Organization

\*Street/P. O. Box No.:

\*City:

\*State \*Zip Code

\*Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_ Web site: \_\_\_\_\_

\*Email Address:

\*Contact Person:  
First Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Middle Initial \_\_\_\_\_

\*Last Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

**Affiliate Membership:**

☐ First year dues \$201      ☐ Yearly Renewal \$111

Additional Contribution, if desired: \$

Check No. (Check Payable to VHPA) OR Charge it to a credit card.

*(If Name and address above do not match with that on the credit card, , fill out the following.)*

[illegible]

Street (Address must match on your credit card)

| City | State | Zip Code |
|------|-------|----------|
|------|-------|----------|

**Credit Card Name:**    ☐ VISA    ☐ MASTER CARD    ☐ DISCOVER

[ 11 11 11 11 11 11 11 11 11 11 11 11 11 11 ] [ 11 ] / [ 11 ]

**Credit Card Number**

MO YY  
(Expiration Date)

Signature

Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Mail to: VHPA, PO Box 611, Iselin, NJ 08830 Contact Tel.: 732-744-0851**

## एकात्मता मंत्र Ekatmata Mantra

यं वैदिका मन्त्रदूशः पुराणा, इन्द्रं यमं मातरिश्वानमाहुः ।  
वेदान्तिनोऽनिर्वचनीयमेकं, यं ब्रह्मशब्देन विनिर्दिशन्ति । 1

Yam vaidika mantradrashsh puraanaa, Indram yamam maatarishwaanamahuh,  
Vedantino nirvachaneeyamekam, Yam brahmashabdena vinirdhishanti

*To whom the Vaidikas and the ancient seers call Indra, Yama and Matarishwa; the  
vedantins indicate that inexplicable one by the word Brahma.*

शैवायमीशं शिव इत्यवोचन्, यं वैष्णवा विष्णुरिति स्तुवन्ति ।  
बुद्धस्तथाऽर्हन्निति बौद्धजैनाः, सत्-श्री अकालेति च सिक्ख-सन्तः । 2

Shaiva-yameesham shiva ityavochan, Yam vaishnavaa vishnuriti stuvanti  
Buddhastathaaarhannitibauddhajainah, Sat-shree akaaleti cha sikkha-santah

*To which Almighty the Shaivites call Shiva and the Vaishnavites praise as Vishnu, the  
Bauddhas call him the Buddha and the Jains as Arhat, the Sikh sages call him as Sri  
Akal.*

शास्तेति केचित् कतिचित् कुमारः, स्वामीति मातेति पितेति भक्त्या ।  
यं प्रार्थयन्ते जगदीशितारं, स एक एव प्रभुरद्वितीयः । 3

Shasteti kechit katichit kumarah, Swameeti maateti piteti bhaktya  
Yam prarthayante jagadeeshitaaram, Sa eka eva prabhuradwiteeyah

*Some call him as Shasta, some others as Kumar or Swami, Mata or Pita through  
devotion and pray that the Lord of the universe is only one absolute without second*

## संगठन मंत्र Sangathan Mantra

सं गच्छध्वं सं वदध्वं सं वो मनांसि जानताम् ।  
देवा भागं यथा पूर्वे सञ्जानाना उपासते ॥

San gachhadhwam, sam vadadhwam sam vo manaansi jaanaatam.  
Deva bhaagam yathaa poorve sanjaanaanaa upasate.

*Meet together, talk together, let your minds apprehend alike, in like manner  
as the ancient Gods, concurring, accepted their portions of sacrifice.*

समानो मन्त्रः समितिः समानी, समानं मनः सहचित्तमेषाम् ।  
समानं मन्त्रमभिमन्त्रये वः, समानेन वो हविषा जुहोमि ॥

Samano mantrah Samitih Samani Samanam Manah Saha Chittamesham  
Samanam Mantramabhimantraye Vah Samanena Vo Havisha Juhomi

*Common be the prayer of these (assembled worshippers), common be the  
acquirement, common be the purpose, associated be the desire. I repeat for  
you a common prayer, I offer for you a common oblation.*

समानी व आकूतिः, समाना हृदयानि वः ।  
समानमस्तु वो मनो, यथा वः सुसहासति ॥

Samane va Akootih, Samana Hrudayani Vah  
Samanamastu Vo Mano, Yatha Vah Susahasati

*Common be you intention, common be (the wishes of) your hearts, common  
be your thoughts, so that there may be thorough union among*

## हिन्दु हिन्दु एक रहे Hindu Hindu Ek Rahe

हिन्दु हिन्दु एक रहे,  
भेद भाव को नहीं सहे।  
संघर्षों से दुःखी जगत को,  
मानवता की शिक्षा दे।  
हिन्दु हिन्दु एक रहे (x3)।

Hindu Hindu ek rahe,  
Bhed Bhava ko nahi sahe  
Sangharshon se dukhi jagat ko,  
manavta ki shikcha de.  
Hindu Hindu ek rahe (x3)

एक ब्रह्म कुछ और नहीं,  
हरिहर दुर्गा मात वही।  
देव देवियां रूप उसीका,  
देश काल अनुसार सही।  
सब पंथों का मान करें,  
सब ग्रंथों से ज्ञान ग्रहें।  
सद्गुरुओं की सीख समझ कर,  
जीवन को जीना सीखें।  
हिन्दु हिन्दु एक रहे (x3)।

Ek Brahma kucha aur nahi,  
Harihar Durga Mat wahi  
Dev deviyan rupa usika,  
desh kal anuser sahi  
Sab pantho ka maan karen,  
sab granthon se gyan grahen  
Sadguruon ki seikh samajh kar,  
jeevan ko jeena seikhen  
Hindu Hindu ek rahe (x3)

जो भाई भटके बिछड़े,  
हाथ पकड़ ले साथ चले  
भोजन कपड़ा घर की सुविधा,  
शिक्षा सबको सुलभ रहे।  
ऊँच नीच लवलेश न हो,  
छुआछूत अवशेष न हो।  
एक लहू सबकी नसनस में,  
अपनेपन की रीत गहे।  
हिन्दु हिन्दु एक रहे (x3)।

Jo bhai bhatake bichude,  
hanth pakad le sath chale  
Bhojan kapda ghar ki suvidha,  
shikcha sab ko sulabh rahe  
Unch neech lavlesh na ho,  
chua chuta avashesh na ho  
Ek lahu sab ki nas nas mein,  
apne pan ki reet gahe  
Hindu Hindu ek rahe (x3)

धर्म प्रेम अमृत पियें,  
गीता गंगा गौ पूजें।  
वेद विहित जीवन रचना हो,  
राम कृष्ण शिव भक्ति करे।  
धर्म सनातन अनुगामी,  
बुद्ध शरण गच्छामी।  
अर्हन्तोंको नमन करे,  
नित वाहे गुरु अकाल कहे।  
हिन्दु हिन्दु एक रहे (x3)।

Dharma prem amrita piyein,  
Geeta ganga gau pujein  
Veda vihit jeevan rachna ho,  
Ram krishna Shiva bhakti kare  
Dharma sanatan anugami,  
Budham sharnam gachami  
Arhanton ko naman kare,  
Nita wahe guru aakal kahe  
Hindu Hindu ek rahe (x3)



## मनसा सततम् स्मरणीयम् Lokahitam Mama Karaneeyam

मनसा सततम् स्मरणीयम्  
वचसा सततम् वदनीयम्  
लोकहितम् मम करणीयम्  
लोकहितम् मम करणीयम्

Manasaa satatam smaraneeyam  
Vachasaa satatam vadaneeyam  
Lokahitam mama karaneeyam  
Lokahitam mama karaneeyam

*Let me always keep in mind – let me repeatedly speak out:  
my duty is to do good to people.*

न भोग भवने रमणीयम्  
न च सुखशयने शयनीयम्  
अहर्निशम् जागरणीयम्  
लोकहितम् मम करणीयम्

Na bhog bhavane ramaneeeyam  
Na cha sukha shayane shayaneeyam  
Aharnisham jaagaraneeyam  
Lokahitam mama karaneeyam

*I am not going to live a lustful life nor am I going to enjoy luxuries, but  
be aware all the time of my duty to do good to people.*

न जातु दुःखं गणनीयम्  
न च निजसुख्यम् मननीयम्  
कार्य-क्षेत्रे त्वरणीयम्  
लोकहितम् मम करणीयम्

Na jaatu dukham gananeeyam  
Na cha nija sukhyam mananeeyam  
Karya kshetre tvaraneeyam  
Lokahitam mama karaneeyam

*My miseries are not to be considered, nor my enjoyment  
to be thought about, but I have to engage in a range of  
activities, as my duty is to do good to the people.*

दुःख सागरे तरणीयम्  
कष्ट पर्वते चरणीयम्  
विपत्ति विपने भ्रमणीयम्  
लोकहितम् मम करणीयम्

Dukh sagare taraneeyam  
Kashtha parvate charaneeyam  
Vipatti vipane bhramaneeyam  
Lokahitam mama karaneeyam

*The oceans of miseries have to be tided over and the  
mountains of hardship scaled. During troubled times I will  
remember Ishwar, so that I can do good to people.*

## व्यक्ति व्यक्ति में जगाएँ हिन्दु चेतना Vyakti Vyakti Me Jagyen Hindu Chetna

व्यक्ति व्यक्ति में जगाएँ हिंदु चेतना  
जन मन संस्कार करें यही साधना  
साधना नित्य साधना  
साधना अखंड साधना

Vyakti vyakti me jagayen hindu chetana  
Jan man sanskar karen yehi sadhana  
Sadhana nitya sadhana  
Sadhana akhand sadhana

नित्य शाखा जाह्नवी पुनीत जलधरा  
साधना की पुण्यभूमि शक्ति पीठिका  
रज कणों में प्रकटे दिव्य दीप  
मालिका  
हो तपस्वी के समान संघ साधना  
साधना नित्य साधना३

Nitya shaakha jahnvi puneet jaldhara  
Sadhana kee punya bhoomi shakti peethika  
Raj kano mein prakate divya deep malika  
Ho tapaswee ke saman sangh sadhana  
Sadhana nitya sadhana...

हे प्रभो तू विश्व की अजेय शक्ति दे  
जगत हो विनम्र ऐसा शील हमको दे  
कष्ट से भरा हुआ यह पंथ काटने  
ज्ञान दे कि हो सरल हमारी साधना  
साधना नित्य साधना३

He prabho tu vishwa kee ajeya shakti de  
Jagat ho vinamra aisa sheel hamko de  
Kasht se bhara hua yeh panth kaatne  
Jnan de ki ho saral hamaree sadhana  
Sadhana nitya sadhana...

विजय शाली संघबद्ध कार्यशक्ति दे  
तीव्र और अखंड ध्येय निष्ठा हमको दे  
हिंदु धर्म रक्षणार्थ वीरव्रत स्फुरे  
तव कृपा से हो सफल हमारी साधना  
साधना नित्य साधना३

Vijayshalee sanghbaddha karyashakti de  
Teevra aur akhand dheya nishtha hamko de  
Hindu dharm rakshanarth veervrat sphure  
Tav kripa se ho safal hamaree sadhna  
Sadhana nitya sadhana...



## प्रार्थना

सर्वमंगल मांगल्याम्, देवीम् सर्वार्थ साधिकाम्  
शरण्याम् सर्वभूतानाम्, नमामो भूमिमातरम्॥ 1

Sarva mangala mangalyam, Deveem sarvartha saadhikam.  
Sharanyam sarva bhootanam, Namaamo bhoomi maataram.

*We bow to the Goddess Mother Earth, who is the abode of bounteous blessings, the fulfiller of all needs and the ultimate refuge of all beings.*

सच्चिदानन्द रूपाय, विश्वमंगल हेतवे।  
विश्वधर्मैकमूलाय, नमोस्तु परमात्मने॥ 2

Sacchidananda roopaya, Vishva mangala hetave.  
Vishva dharmaika moolaya, Namostu Paramatmane.

*Our obeisance to the Almighty, who is the manifestation of truth, consciousness and bliss, and the only source of all universal (Vishva) well-being and Dharma.*

विश्वधर्मविकासार्थम्, प्रभो संघठिता वयम्।  
शुभाम् आशिषमस्मभ्यम्, देहि तत्परिपूर्यते॥ 3

Vishva dharma vikasartham, Prabho sangathita vayam.  
Shubham aashisham asmabhyam, Dehi tat paripoortaye.

*O Lord, as we organize ourselves to stand united for the advancement of Universal Dharma, please bestow upon us your auspicious blessings so that we can accomplish this noble mission.*

अजय्यम् आत्मसामर्थ्यम्, सुशीलम् लोकपूजितम्।  
ज्ञानं च देहि विश्वेश, ध्येयमार्ग प्रकाशकम्॥ 4

Ajayyam atma samarthyam, Susheelam loka Poojitam.  
Gyanan cha dehi vishvesha, Dhyeya marga prakashakam.

*Grant us, O Lord of the universe, the invincible inner strength and virtuous character that all humanity adores, and the knowledge that will enlighten the path leading to our mission.*



समुत्कर्षोस्तु नो नित्यम्, निःश्रेयस समन्वितः ।  
तत्साधकम् स्फुरत्वन्तः, सुवीरव्रतमुज्ज्वलम् ॥ 5

Samutkarshostu no nityam, Nishreyasa samanvitaha  
Tatsaadhakam sphuratvantah, Suveera vratamujwalam.

*Let our hearts be always stimulated with that spirit of a solemn vow and determination of a hero, which will lead us to attain the worldly prosperity together with spiritual enhancement.*

विश्वधर्मप्रकाशेन, विश्वशान्ति प्रवर्तके ।  
हिन्दुसंघठना कार्ये, ध्येयनिष्ठा स्थिरास्तुनः ॥ 6

Vishva Dharma Prakashena, Vishva shanti pravartake.  
Hindu sangathana kaarye, Dhyeya nishtha sthiraastunah.

*O Lord, give us that resolute faith in our aim to unite the people and establish world peace through propagation of Universal Dharma.*

संघशक्तिर्विजेत्रीयम्, कृत्वास्मद्धर्मरक्षणम् ।  
परमम् वैभवम् प्राप्तुम्, समर्थास्तु तवाशिश ॥ 7

Sangha shaktir vijetriyam, Kritvaasmad Dharma rakshanam.  
Paramam vaibhavam praptum, Samarthaastu Tavaashisha.

*With your blessings, O Lord, let this triumphant Sangh strength attain the supreme external glory by protecting the principle of righteousness (Dharma).*

त्वदीये पुण्य कार्येस्मिन, विश्व कल्याण साधके  
त्याग सेवा व्रत्स्यायम्, कायो में पततु प्रभो ॥ 8

Twadeeya Punya Karyesmin, Vishwa Kalyan Sadhake  
Tyaga Seva Vratasyayam, Kayome patatu prabho

*In this sacred work of serving and ennobling the entire humanity, give me the strength to accomplish it with single minded focus and supreme sacrifice. May this entire material and spiritual frame of mine be dedicated to this cause.*

॥विश्वधर्म की जय॥ Victory to Universal Dharma



## भोजन मंत्र Bhojan Mantra

ब्रह्मार्पणं ब्रह्म हविः ब्रह्माग्नौ ब्रह्मणा हुतम् ।  
ब्रह्मैव तेन गन्तव्यं ब्रह्मकर्म समाधिनां

Brahmarpranam Brahma havir Brahmag nau Brahmana hutam  
Brahmaiva tena gantavyam Brahma karma samaadhinaa

Any process of offering is Brahman, the oblation is Brahman,  
the instrument of offering is Brahman,  
the fire to which the offering is made is also Brahman.  
For such a one who abides in Brahman, by  
him Brahman alone is reached.

अहं वैश्वानरो भूत्वा प्राणिनां देहमाश्रितः  
प्राणापानसमायुक्तः पचाम्यन्नं चतुर्विधम् ॥

Aham Vaish-vaanaro Bhutvaa, Praaninaam Deham-aashritah,  
Praanaa-paana-Samaayuktah,  
Panchaany-anam, Chatur-vidham.

सह नावतु सह नौ भुनक्तु सह वीर्यम् करवावहै ।  
तेजस्विनावधीतमस्तु मा विद्विषावहै ।  
शान्तिः शान्तिः शान्तिः ।

Om sahanavvatu saha nau bhunaktu, saha veeryam karavaavahai  
Tejasvinavadhitamastu ma vidvisha vahai  
Om shantih, shantih shantih

## About A Sanyasi

न कर्मणा न प्रजया धनेन त्यागेनैके अमृतत्वमानशुः ।  
परेण नाकं निहितं गुहायां बिभ्राजते यद्यतयो विशन्ति । ।

Not by work, not by progeny, not by wealth, they have attained Immortality.  
Some have attained Immortality by renunciation.  
That which the hermits attain is laid beyond the heaven; it shines  
brilliantly in the purified heart.  
(Maha-Narayan Upanishad)

## NOTES

## NOTES



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*His Holiness*

*Sri Ganapati Sachchidananda*

*Swamiji*



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*There is an intimate relationship between music  
and God. But this relationship is established  
only when Nada is approached with reverence  
and devotion. Nadhopasana leads to moksha  
...Sri Swamiji*





## *Tribute to Dr. Jitendra Sukhadia*



Vishwa Hindu Parishad of America takes this opportunity to salute Dr. Jitendra Sukhadia who passed away on the day of Holi, March 21, 2008.

We feel proud of his contribution to VHPA in various ways. His association with VHPA started in early eighties when Staten Island, New York from where he hailed, became hub of planning a massive first Hindu Conference in 1984. The Conference at the prestigious Madison Square Garden in Manhattan drew 4000 delegates from 45 countries. Dr. Sukhadia was instrumental in its grand success.

In the years that followed, he served as the president of Staten Island chapter and built a team of selfless workers by setting an example of integrity and dedication. His abilities, especially fund raising skills were put to test when VHPA held Global Vision 2000 conference in 1993 as well as in 2000 when VHPA was entrusted with taking care of more than 100 saints and swamijis who had converged upon New York to attend Millennium Peace Summit of World Religious Leaders convened by the United Nations. He also deftly handled a public function to honor, the then Prime Minister of Bharat, Shree Atal Bihari Vajpayee.

He was always very patient and listened to one and all. While immensely successful as a pediatric endocrinologist along with his wife, Dr. Ila Sukhadia, he never let his personal success go to head. He was always caring for the less fortunate and his heart beat strongly for the suffering of the Hindu community in Bharat. He was very active in the mainstream American society and led many a drives when a calamity occurred anywhere in the world.

Dr. Sukhadia's home was (and is) always open for any gathering for a good cause. Countless meetings have been held at his residence and scores of spiritual leaders as well as dignitaries have made his home truly a Mandir with their vibrations.

It was through the prayers and blessings of the spiritual leaders and dedication of his family that he came back from near death experience, few years back. While someone else would have decided to take it easy after a severe illness, Jitendrabhai plunged headlong in the activities of VHPA upon recovery. His greatest contribution was leading Hindu Mandir Executives' Conference at Edison in New Jersey in August 2007. From start to finish Jitendrabhai was up front and center. He took keen interest in all aspects of planning the conference and his leadership, persuasive skills and well earned respect in the society was evident when contributions poured in to make the conference a financial success too.

Dr. Sukhadia's untimely death at age 62 has left a great void not only for his immediate family but also for the larger VHPA family.

We miss him and his guiding wisdom and high spirits as we convene for this HMEC-2008. May his Atman continue on the journey to its final destination- Moksha.