



Ālaya Vāni

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*"Kindness is
the seed from
which friendship
grows, and where
the shoot of friendship
grows, the flower of love
soon blossoms"*

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**Message from the Secretary
The Council of Hindu Temples of North America**

Dear Friends,

Namaste & Greetings.

On behalf of the Council of Hindu Temples of North America (CHTNA) I extend my best wishes and greetings to all of you and your families for the year 2016. The Annual meeting of CHTNA for 2015 was held on May 2nd 2015 at Paschima Kasi Sri Viswanatha Temple, Flint, MI. About 11 Temples participated in the meeting.

It cannot be emphasized enough that all the Temples must join hands and become members of the Council. This is not only to participate in the meetings but also to share and learn from each other's experiences. CHTNA is a national body representing all the Temples.

There were 11 entries for the Essay Competition of 2014-2015. All the Temples must encourage their young devotees to participate in the Essay Competition. Cash prizes were given for the first and second place winners at all the levels.

CHTNA participated in the Deepavali Celebration at the Library of Congress on November 4th 2015. With the help of member Temples CHTNA contributed \$15,000 towards Nepal disaster fund. Let us collectively look forward to a prosperous and a peaceful new year and hope that the strength of the membership of CHTNA will steadily increase and thus enabling us to face all the challenges successfully.

Dr. Uma Mysorekar
President, *Śri Mahā Vallabha Ganapati Devasthanam*,
Flushing, NY



**Council Meeting 2015
at Paschima Kasi Sri Viswanatha Temple, Flint, MI**

MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

**CHTNA
SECOND GEN WORKSHOP**

SCHEDULED ON

SATURDAY, JULY 30TH 2016

AT

**The Hindu Temple Society of NA
Śri Maha Vallabha Ganapati Devasthanam
45-57 Bowne Street, Flushing, NY 11355**

**DETAILS WILL BE ANNOUNCED IN THE
FOLLOWING MONTHS.**

**MEMBERSHIP APPEAL
TO ALL THE TEMPLES**



PLEASE JOIN AND BE A PART OF THE COUNCIL OF HINDU TEMPLES OF NORTH AMERICA BY BECOMING A MEMBER AND MAKING THE COUNCIL A STRONG BODY REPRESENTING ALL THE TEMPLES. THE COUNCIL CAN HAVE A POWERFUL VOICE IN DEALING WITH ISSUES SUCH AS RELIGIOUS WORKERS VISAS, ETC - COMMON CONCERN OF ALL TEMPLES.

For Further Information regarding membership form and dues, Please call the Secretariat of The Council - Dr. Uma Mysorekar
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**ANNUAL COUNCIL
MEETING OF 2016**

**is scheduled on
July 30th 2016**

**THE HINDU TEMPLE SOCIETY OF NA
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45-57 Bowne St. Flushing, NY 11355**

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<http://nyganeshtemple.org>

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION REGARDING MEETING CONTACT

SECRETARIAT - DR. UMA MYSOREKAR

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Summary of the Annual meeting of the Council of Hindu Temples of North America (CHTNA) held on May 2nd, 2015 at Paschima Kasi Sri Viswanatha Temple, Flint, MI

Contributions of Hinduism to Global Peace
by: Rhea Deokaran

- Participated by 11 Temples.
- The chairman Ms. Mythili Bachu welcomed the members and emphasized the need for enlarging the membership of CHTNA.
- The Council meetings if possible may be conducted in Washington DC so as to attract many more Temples. In the year 2014 there were more than 43 Temples participating at the White House briefings, events at Capitol Hill and the Indian Embassy. Such events must be conducted every year so that more and more Temples will participate.
- Due to lack of continuity in the management of Temples. The participation in such meetings remains low. It is necessary to have at least two representatives from each Temple on a regular basis and one of them being a Current Trustee and the other a former Trustee or designated representative of the Board
- There were discussions about raising funds for Nepal disaster. The representative from SV Temple, Pittsburgh to prepare a letter of appeal to be sent to all the Temples to solicit donations.
- There were only 11 entries for essay competition for 2014-15 and there was no entry for College level. The overall interest and enthusiasm for this activity seems to be decreasing. After a brief discussion some suggestions were made to increase the participation such as - to publicize the competition event in each Temple's newsletters, bulletin boards, and websites, to motivate by making certificates issued by some VIP in Washington like a Congressman etc, to publicize winner articles in CHTNA's website and local Temple websites etc All of these need to be tried.
- Work assignments for 2015 - 2016 were discussed and distributed to member Temples present.

Hinduism has contributed to global peace in a variety of ways. Hinduism promotes the importance of achieving inner peace before attempting to spread peace throughout the community. "Ahimsa Parmo Dharma" is among the major principles of Hinduism that goes deeper than non-violence, prohibiting subtle abused and even simple hurt. Just by contemplating this idea and by at least trying to live by it and practice it in our lives, we could make this world a better place, a more peaceful place to live with each other.

The highest authorities of Hinduism, the Veda also promotes: "Vasudhaiva Kutumbhgam" meaning that the whole world is one single family. This alone is considered an integral part of the Hindu philosophy in reference to Global Peace. Hinduism also never thought to convert people from other beliefs or hate others and also not to start religious wars. Hinduism accepts that all paths are valid and lead to the truth. By seeing the divine in all beings we see that there is no other, no opponent. A very famous verse from the first chapter Balkand in the Shri Ram charitra Manas of saint Tulsidasji says: "Siya Rammay Sab Jag Jaani, Karhu Pranaam Jori Jug Paani", meaning that I see the Lord in every form of life in this universe and I'm humbly bowing to all. Another verse that strongly contributes towards global peace in the Shri Ramcharitra Manas: "Parhit Saris Dharm Nahi Bhai, Par Pira Sam Nahi adhmayee" meaning: not to live only for yourself but also for others as well.

Acknowledging the pain & need of others. Dedicate a fraction of your success, your knowledge, your greatness, your food, your time to others or whatever else one can share with others.

Beliefs, attitudes and actions interact to produce peace or violence. The Brihadaranyaka Upnishad says: "Here they say that a person consists of desires. And so is his desire, so is his will. And as is his will, so is his deed; and whatever he does, that he will reap. "Every belief creates certain attitudes, those attitudes governing all of our actions. Man's actions can thus be traced to his inmost beliefs about himself and about the world around him. If those beliefs are erroneous, his



**WINNERS & PARTICIPANTS of the
ESSAY COMPETITION
2015 conducted by
The Council of Hindu Temples
of North America**



The top two winners in each category were :

<u>Middle School -</u> •Nishanth Araveti •Pranav Bhat	<u>High School -</u> •Rhea Deokaran •Neelansh Bute
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The participants in each category were:

<u>Middle School -</u> Sanjana Gandikota Shivakumar Iyer Megha Gopal Pranav Bhat Divya Venkatesh Nishanth Araveti Adithi Attada	<u>High School -</u> Neelansh Bute Ram Gandikota Sandhya Parameswaran Rhea Deokaran
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The Council members congratulate all the participants and winners for their interest and dedication.

actions will not be in tune with the universal Dharma. Hindus oppose of killing even the smallest form of life for many reasons. Everyone has the right to life. We might have seen an influence of this beautiful idea in James Cameron's movie "Avatar".

Hindus belief in karma and reincarnation which are strong forces in the Hindu mind. Any thought, feeling, or action from themselves too the person will one day return to them. Hindus know in reincarnation that he or she maybe in the same position of anyone. According to Hinduism, to have a non-violent world, individuals will need to reconcile their differences. Mahatma Gandhi was a strong promoter of non-violence, he changed many minds to fight against in justice with peaceful means and non-violence. Still today the anti-corruption and other political reforms in India are being achieved by non-violent means based on the principle of Ahimsa.

Throughout the entire strings of Upnishad's we find countless directions that everyone on this very planet is seen as one by addressing them as "All":

Om Sarveshaam Svastir-Bhavatu Sarveshaam Shaantir Bhavatu. Sarveshaam Purnnam Bhavatu. Sarveshaam Manggalam Bhavatu. Om Shaantih Shaantih Shaantih, meaning Om, May there be Well-Being in All, May there be Peace in All, May there be Fulfilment in All, May there be Auspiciousness in All Om Peace, Peace, and Peace.

Om Sarve Bhavantu Sukinah. Sarve Santu Nir-Aamayaah. Sarve Bhadraanni Pashyant. Maa Kashchid Dukha Bhaag Bhavet. Om Shaantih Shaantih Shaantih, meaning; Om, May All become Happy, May All be Free from Illness. May All See what is Auspicious, May no one Suffer. Om Peace, Peace, and Peace.

These prayers by our Rishi's has never been for Hindus only but for everyone in this world regardless of any race or color. Even the Shrimad Bhagvad Gita was delivered in a way that it serves every human being in this world and here is a valid proof given in the same scripture: Now here in the Shrimad Bhagvad Gita we will find: Krishna is speaking. It says Bhagvanuvaach, meaning the Lord is speaking or God is speaking now.

Mother of a kind in Hinduism.

In the "Mahabharat", a historic archive of Hinduism, we learn that kshama (forgiveness) is one of the attributes of the heart of a Hindu mother. During this great epic, Draupadi's five children were murdered by Ashwathama, the son of Dronacharya. When she saw the headless bodies of her own children laid next to each other, her body was not able to keep her standing. Draupadi collapsed, wept, she grieved and screamed out loudly; I want to see that heartless human whom did this to my innocent children. After Ashwathama being caught, they presented him in front of Draupadi and everyone present there suggested her to describe what punishment she would like to give him. Draupadi looked at Ashwathama and told him that you are just a heartless person who can only perform a lowest act like this but I'm a mother, not an ignorant like you or a murderer. Even if I execute you, I will not get my children back. That's why all I can do as a mother is to forgive you and this will be your punishment. I will not harm you because you are also a son to your mother. Draupadi being not only a mother but a chief female protagonist or heroine in this Hindu epic, had yet a big heart to forgive. Hinduism is a strong promoter of no harm, just forgive for the sake of peace.

Noninterference with Mother Nature. In this paragraph we see that during the performance of all puja's/jagya's (act of prayer), all ingredients used are eco-friendly. These ingredients are of natural sources and safe for the ozone layer. Whether it is daily offerings in the temples or Homam (fire sacrificial), it does not affect global warming which is also contributing to global peace in one way. Before I conclude my writing, I request you to accept my humbly Namaste! And even a simple greeting in Hinduism is packed with rich philosophy and supplies Global Peace to humanity. My Sadguru always reminds me that "Forgiveness is the biggest revenge".

*2015 Essay Competition Entry - High School
Prize Winning Essay*