



# Ālaya Vānī

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*"Seek that  
enlightenment by  
prostrating, by  
listening and by  
service; the wise,  
the seers into the  
Truth will instruct you  
in that knowledge."*

*-Bhagavad Gita*

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

Dear Friends,

On behalf of the Council of Hindu Temples of North America, I extend my namaskars and greetings to all of you and take this opportunity to invite to participate in the next annual meeting of the Council in 2011 at Śri Meenakshi Temple in Houston, Texas.

The Annual Council meeting of 2010 was held at Śri Venkateśwara Temple, Pittsburgh in April and about eleven Temples participated. Despite our repeated appeals the response from the Temples to attend such meetings has been rather disappointing. Hindus are still a significant minority in the United States and unless all the Temples are united and have a common voice, it may be difficult to protect the interests of the Temples.

Once again we appeal to all the Temples to join hands and become members of the Council and participate in these meetings. Representatives of the Temples can share their experiences, thus helping other Temples, particularly the upcoming new ones.

Dr. Uma Mysorekar  
President

Śri Mahā Vallabha Ganapati Devasthānam

**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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**Summary of the Annual meeting of the Council of Hindu  
Temple of North America (CHTNA) held on  
April 24th, 2010 at Śri Venkateśwara Temple, Pittsburgh**

- New regulations of USCIS regarding all non-immigrant visas, particularly in reference to R-1 visas were discussed. Processing of these visa applications are taking considerable time as they need to be submitted in the US first before the local Consulates in India can interview the candidates. After a brief discussion it was unanimously agreed to appoint a committee of four major Temples to review these regulations and consider appealing to USCIS for help.
- Membership of the Council - extensive discussions about the methods to improve the membership. It was recommended that every major Temple should approach other neighboring Temples to promote membership.
- Publications such as Panchangam are very valuable - Suggestions made to increase the price of the Panchangam.
- To develop a national database of Hindu scholars/speakers and Śri Venkateśwara Temple, Pittsburgh to take a lead in this.
- Importance of engaging other faiths in developing a positive outlook towards Hinduism was stressed.
- Priestly Services -
  - Maintenance of discipline among Priests was discussed.
  - While hiring priests from other Temples, the hiring Temple should consult the managements of other Temples.
  - Bereavement services to be made available by the Temples to those in need.
- A youth session was held with Swami Sukhabodananda and following recommendations were made;
  - To develop a database for the youth.
  - More activities for the Youth in the Temples such as cultural activities and social interaction etc.
  - College students may need counseling and Temples may help in this regard.
  - Promotion of Sanskrit classes.
  - The youth activities need to have a mixture of religious, social, cultural, and fun activities to motivate them to participate in the Temple.
- Resolution was passed to observe October 2nd as "Hindu Seva Divas" and Śri Venkateśwara Temple, Pittsburgh to lead this activity for 2010/2011.

**ANNUAL COUNCIL  
MEETING OF 2011  
will be held in April/May 2011**

Śri Meenakshi Temple  
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FOR FURTHER INFORMATION REGARDING MEETING CONTACT  
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*Gaja Pooja - Kumbhabhishekam 2009  
Sri Maha Vallabha Ganapati Devasthanam  
Flushing, New York*

## Does Hinduism Contribute to Global Peace

by: Pooja Shaam



### WINNERS & PARTICIPANTS of the ESSAY COMPETITION 2009-2010 conducted by The Council of Hindu Temples of North America

The top two winners in each category were:

College -

♦Sudha Rao

High School -

♦Pooja Sham  
♦Akshay Navada

Middle School -

♦Abiramy Logeswaran  
♦Sugosh M. Anur

The Participants in each category were:

Middle School -

Pari Vijay  
Krishna Priya  
Nakul Srinivas  
Jeet Agarwal  
Amal Mittal  
Amrita Guha  
Ramya Gopala Krishnan  
Amol H. Sharedalal  
Meghana T. Reddy

High School -

Neeta D'Souza  
Sruthi Sridevan  
Priyanka Shaam

College -  
Sudha Rao

*The Council members congratulate all the  
participants and winners for their interest and dedication.*

*"Prayer it is when the mind is attuned  
to the cosmic Reality and thereby its  
higher possibilities are invoked."*

*- Vedanta*

Which of the world's sophisticated religions strives toward world peace not just through its teaching but in practice? It has been the Hindu tradition to pray for the happiness of the whole world. There is a Sanskrit prayer, "*Lokaa Samastaa Sukhino Bhavanthu*", which promotes peace to the entire world when said whole-heartedly. There should only be boundaries between countries but not for the soul and prayers. Hinduism highly believes in contributing to the stability and peace of the world through its spiritual endeavors. Hinduism, the oldest living religion, neither supports acts of aggression nor advocates violence to terrorize people into submission. Hinduism firmly believes in non-violence, tolerance and the peaceful co-existence with one another and promotes the philosophy of transforming the world as one family that lives in peace, love, and harmony without any hatred, anger and jealousy. This gives the freedom for individuals to think and live as they desire without hurting others or imposing their ideologies onto others.

Religious tolerance is the entity of Hindu religion. Religious tolerance is not tolerating the people of that particular religion but tolerance towards any being of any religion. Hindu religion takes pride in its religious tolerance. It doesn't deny the greatness and teachings of other religions but accepts them with love and forbearance. *Ahimsa* or non-violence is the very core of Hinduism. By examining the core teachings of Hinduism, peace is considered as the greatest yearning of the Hindus. Ceremonies in Hinduism are based on many mantras and in the end of each mantra, Hindus say "*Om Shantih, Shantih, Shantih*" (Peace, Peace, Peace) which is to say and mean, peace be to men, to the forces

of nature and to the entire universe. Various books in Hinduism preach about internal peace and inner tranquility and external peace, which is obtained through meditation and other relaxation techniques.

The *Vedas* are the main sources of Hinduism. The *Rigveda*, *Samaveda*, *Yajurveda* and *Atharvaveda*, all teach peace and universal brotherhood. Truth is the basic element of peace. *Vedas* often discuss peace not only for the human society, but for the whole universe. *Vedas* emphasize in the global brotherhood. Personal attachment, selfish interest and ambition only cause sorrow and suffering. When the whole world can learn to live in harmony; there can be nothing but peace.

Peace is the perception of truth and the philosophy of human life. Though human beings exhaust themselves in search of peace, in reality, the source of peace is within oneself. The present world order lacks the real knowledge of peace. In fact, the source of war is rooted in human mind. Passion is the cause of war. When there is desire, anger and ignorance in human mind, there is war in human world. There are problems and conflicts in human society, and of course, there are the ways to get peace. Every religion of the world shows the way to peace and almost all talk about the realization of the truth. Hinduism is the religion which shows the way to peace. It advocates the understanding of the existence of life by an individual in this universe, as the truth of life and this process is called self-realization. Self-realization is the path of peace. Yoga, meditation, worshiping and other ways will be fruitful to cleanse the mind and get peace.

Principally Hinduism is an ethical religion. It emphasizes on good life, conduct and good beliefs. It suggests a person to lead a moral life being good in thought, words and action. The main aim of Hinduism is to make an individual conscious about life, the world and God. If a human being becomes conscious about himself, he will not indulge in worldly pleasure and can attain redemption in life. It advocates the truth and the way of truth so that humans can get peace and happiness. If one can treat others the way they want to be treated, there will not be any war and there will be happiness and peace all around the world. Hinduism has more depth and knowledge about life, the world and universal quality. It teaches peace. In fact, we can say that Hinduism is not just a religion, but it is a philosophy of peace as well as a way of true life. Fundamentally, peace has to be viewed as the realizing

and understanding of oneself and one's real identity, understanding the essentials, goals and objectives of life, grasping fully a person's role and position in the world, and above all, one's relationship with the rest of the world. If one went about life with seriousness and sincerity; one would join with all of mankind and create an unbreakable bond of unity and togetherness. With this realization, humans can create a horizon and a new awakening, a new approach and a new outlook on life. This would shed human selfishness and petty-mindedness and start focusing on new attitudes of understanding and sympathy with other human beings.

The Hindu religion is one of the hundreds of paths to realize the ultimate reality. The greatness of Hindus lies not in the fighting for religion or discriminating between different world religions but in taking pride in the great eternal religion and its universal teachings. Hindus believe that religion alone is not considered holy but all the beings are considered as holy as the Lord because they emerge from him. This belief makes Hinduism shine in the spiritual world. When one can dig deeper within them, they can realize the greatness of Hinduism through the passing years of their life. Though the eras change, the incarnations change, the followers of the Hindu religion change, and the world goes askew, the religion of Hinduism remains divine and eternal - never changing with time and space. As an individual treading on the path of Hinduism, I respect other religions leading to truth and I bow to this great religion. The foundation of world peace can only be achieved when love, compassion, generosity takes over envy, greed and hatred and we can all live in this radiant world in harmony.

#### 2009-10 High School Winning Essay

***“To Succeed, you must have tremendous perseverance, tremendous will. “I will drink the ocean”, says the persevering soul; “at my will mountains will crumble up”. Have that sort of energy, that sort of will; work hard, and you will reach the goal.***

***-Swami Vivekananda***