



Ālaya Vānī

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*“Far away from the shore
the sea will be deep and
the still waters there
will be devoid of
waves. Likewise, if the
sea of divinity becomes
deep through meditation
and chanting of God’s name
it will be free from the onslaught
of the waves of difficulties”.*

- Swami Vivekananda

Secretariat - THE HINDU TEMPLE SOCIETY OF NORTH AMERICA
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**Message from the Secretary/Treasurer
The Council of Hindu Temples of North America**

Dear Friends,

Namaste. On behalf of the Council of Hindu Temples of North America I request the representatives of all the Temples in US to participate in the upcoming Annual Meeting of the Council, on Saturday, May 14th, 2011 at Sri Meenakshi Temple, Pearland, TX.

There are several hundred Temples in the US and many more are being built. The Hindu Temples are representatives of 'Hindu Dharma' and it is our bonded duty to protect our Dharma. Meetings such as of the Council of Hindu Temples is extremely important to discuss various issues and challenges facing Hindu Temples and Hinduism at large. It is through the Temples that we can promote 'Hindu Unity' not only here in the US but also in India.

The vision of all the Temples is to educate and instill Hindu identity in our youth and thus help build quality leadership to continue this sacred work. The Temples, particularly in North America help serve as a platform for socializing, and promoting all outreach activities such as seniors, youth, health, women empowerment etc.

I take this opportunity to once again request the Temples to promote the Essay Competition - organized annually by the Council of Hindu Temples of North America.

May the blessings of God Almighty be with all of us and our families.

Sincerely,

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



Hanumān Jayanti
Monday, January 3rd, 2011
Śri Mahā Vallabha Ganapati Devasthanam, Flushing NY



**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 2011
will be held on Saturday, May 14, 2011**

Śri Meenakshi Temple
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FOR FURTHER INFORMATION
REGARDING MEETING CONTACT THE SECRETARY/TREASURER
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“Does Hinduism Contribute to Global Peace”

by: Pooja Shaam

Which of the world's sophisticated religions strives towards 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 wholeheartedly. 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 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 Santih, 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 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 Essay Competition Entry - High School Prize
Winning Essay



“What Do I Learn from Going to the Temple”

by: Abiramy Logeswaran

Life without faith is lifeless. Any human, whether rich or poor, healthy or sick, should have belief in something. Religion is the belief in and worship of a superhuman controlling power. Having faith defines who you are. To this day, everyone calls me respectful, kind, moralistic and self conscious. I believe that this all fell into place because of the good guidelines placed before me when I was younger. Being Hindu means everything to me and my family. It shaped me to be the person I am today. Guidelines and steps are key to learning and I believe that visiting the Temple is the best school that I have been to.

The Hindu religion is based on an immense amount of knowledge, yet simple guideline. The purpose of life is to complete all four practices. The four are dharma, artha, kama, and moksha. Dharma means to fulfill one's purpose in life. Artha means to prosper in worldly pursuits. Kama means to have pleasure in life. Moksha means finding enlightenment. Although within every practice there is vast amount of information to be studied it is all quite simple.

The Hindu Temple Society of North America in Flushing, NY is one example of where one can go to learn all information with a very simple technique. This Temple proudly displays most of the deities' forms. Behind every deity there is a story that links to another story. Those stories have been passed down from generation to generation for thousands of years. If you go to the Temple clueless of anything, within an hour I guarantee you that you will learn a lot. This is thanks to the great staff and priests.

All the stories I learn from the Temple are of key importance. This is because in each tale there is something that everyone can relate to. If you feel terrible, guilty, sad or depressed, after reading these stories you could relate to it and that will make you feel better. By visiting the Temple one also learns about unity, acceptance, forgiveness, etc. This is because when we go to the Temple, you forget about the race of oneself. Whether you are Telugu, Tamil, Malayalam, Gujarathi, etc. when you come to the

Temple you are all the same. There is nothing that separates at the Temple cause we are all Hindus.

When you look deeply at each deity you see a symbol or animal with the deity. Each symbol adds to the wonderful stories behind them. The stories are very interesting and I feel proud of them because I know that this is what my whole ancestry is based on. While visiting the Temple one day I saw nobody there. It was only me and another lady in the whole Temple praying. A priest asked us to help him make flower garlands. I was very young then, so I didn't know how to do it. He was like a teacher to me explaining everything in detail step by step. Because of him I had learned to make my first garland of flowers, not for just anyone, for Lord Ganesha.

By devoting time with God at the Temple you avoid going into bad things. The Temple teaches everyone to not smoke, drink, do drugs, gossip, fight, etc. Spending time with God gives us less time to focus on the other bad stuff. There is also a sign in the Temple that says no shorts, ripped jeans, etc. That is a sign to us that those types of clothes are improper to wear in a holy place. The Temple also has annual shows that encourage you to perform your talents in the arts. Many students perform dance, music, drama, etc. This also allows us to learn the art with grace and encouragement because you know that when you perform the audience will appreciate it.

So, I leave you today telling you that by going to the Temple you just don't learn about your faith. You actually learn how to practice it in real life. You can't live life just standing around and acting like a fool. You have to learn and do something. I believe that the Hindu Temple Society of North America does just that. It makes sure that you are on the right path in life. If you mess up part of your life, this Temple will definitely help you get back on track. May the presence and grace of Sri Maha Vallabha Ganapati always be with you.

2009-10 Essay Competition Entry - Middle School Prize Winning Essay

2011 North American Ganita Panchangam

2011 Panchangams (prepared for use in North America) are available.

*For Further Information Please Call
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