

Ālaya Vāni

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*"Bhakti is what makes you
accept all sorrows and sufferings as
a boon from God. Realizing that
sorrows will serve as the
wave-band to talk to
God is Yukti; the
effort you make to
reach God is Shakti;
the feeling that sorrows
are the means to joy is
Virakti. Bhakti, Yukti, Shakti,
and Virakti combine to lead you
to liberation - Jeevanmukthi".
- 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 to participate in the upcoming annual meeting of the Council to be held at Sri Siva Vishnu Temple, Maryland on April 21st, 2012. Agenda of the meeting along with other information will be mailed in the next few days.

Movement of Temples began in the 70s and subsequently many Temples have been built and continue to be built. This is certainly a most welcome phenomenon. All of us Hindus can be proud of our heritage, culture and practice our faith as we did in our Motherland. Such a progress also invites many challenges from all and at all levels. To protect the interests of the Temples, which are built to serve its devotees, there is an absolute need for an entity such as the Council of Hindu Temples of North America to take the lead on behalf of all the Temples. It is therefore extremely important and somewhat urgent that as many Temples as possible join hands and become part of the Council, participate in the meetings and give their valuable input.

The vision of all the Temples is to educate and instill Hindu identity in our youth and then help build quality leadership to continue the sacred work. Together, we can accomplish this.

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



Council Meeting 2011 in progress
at *Śri Meenakshi Temple*, Pearland, TX

**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

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**ANNUAL COUNCIL
MEETING OF 2012
will be held on Saturday, April 21, 2012**

SRI SIVA VISHNU TEMPLE
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FOR FURTHER INFORMATION
REGARDING MEETING CONTACT THE SECRETARY/TREASURER

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Please visit the new Council website at

<http://www.chtna.org/>

For information as well as links and resources
to other Temples in the United States.

Contact the Council by email at:
info@chna.org





“What Can I Learn From the Ramayana?”

by: Pari Vijay



As being a student in a foreign country, there are some things that are important without being from where you are. The culture that affects the society of being no matter where you are from is the true values which connect all the ethics together. There are some things which change and also have different meanings; however have the same goal to make one understand. As how some people say that there is always something new to learn in different types of society and culture. We get our culture and our fundamental concepts from our holy books, no matter which religion you belong in. In Hinduism, there are the two major bibles which we follow and they are The Mahabharata and The Ramayana. Ramayana is the immortal tale of Shri Rama that teaches us the values of love, devotion, duty, relationships, dharma and karma. It is a legendary story about Ram, who is a big worshipper of Dharma. Recitation of the Ramayana earns great peace in the soul. It was noted to have been happened in 1500th BC. Rama and Sita are seen as the ideal married couple. There are a lot of good values to learn from “The Ramayana”, however these are some of them and they are leadership qualities, brotherly love and the value of a promise. I have learned all these good qualities from the Ramayana.

Firstly, Lord Rama is known as the best leader of all times. The qualities of Shri Rama are a model and guideline for every leader at any levels of organization, society and country. The leader is an important part of the project. Napoleon once stated that he would have an army of rabbits led by a lion than an army of lions led by a rabbit. I found this very interesting and something to sit and think about. Rama was a leader with rules which he followed himself and also applied to others. He was firm and brave to take all the risk to protect the words his father (King Dasaratha) gave to Kaikeyi. He not only had these extra ordinary qualities but also had believed in people, never left his words and learned everything as time passed

and which also made him loyal to his people and he never let them down. Many of these things are tough to find in everyone, that’s why there are few people who have the ability to be a leader. He had all that takes to be a good leader with great qualities and also to be an ideal husband, son and a king.

Secondly, brotherly love is a big value which was found between Rama and Laxman. Laxman compromised his 14 years with Rama and for Rama. This is the love and respect which everyone learns from the Ramayana. Similarly when Bharat learned of how his mother Kaikeyee had banished Rama from Ayodhya, he was devastated. He immediately made plans to go to Rama and bring him back to rule. When Rama refused to return until his exile period was up, Bharat placed Rama’s slippers on the throne and ruled Ayodhya in the name of Rama - keeping his place until he returned. When in today’s materialistic world, where property disputes are common between siblings then these stories is something which has a great impact in today’s society. They show a lot of affection for each other and always stood next to each other in bad times as well as good times, which show that they have true devotional love for each other.

Thirdly, Rama stood up on what Dashrath had promised Kaikeyee. He had promised her that he would fulfill her two wishes whenever she would like to ask for them. She knew that Rama was going to become the King of Ayodhya and to prevent that she asked Dashrath to make Bharatha (her son) to become the king and also that Rama goes to exile for 14 years. He couldn’t disappoint Kaikeyee on what she wanted. After, a few years of Rama exile, she visualized that she had done wrong. The most interesting part for me of this exile was that Rama did not return until his 14 years was not over. This is a true devotion and commitment for one to finish his task. He had to finish his job and not to complain about it.

In conclusion, there are a lot of good values to learn from “The Ramayana”, however these are some of them and there are leadership qualities, brotherly love and the value of a promise and commitment. I have learned all these good qualities from the Ramayana. Ramayana is not only an epic of all times but also a book of values which every man in the world can learn from.

*2010-11 Essay Competition Entry - Middle School Prize
Winning Essay*

“The Role of Seva in Hinduism”

by: Aparna Peri

Seva is one of the ways to realize God. By serving others, by making others happy you find your true self inside where your journey towards God starts. One should never do Seva by expecting something in return from others. Seva is a human's duty; a duty to serve others and not for one's own happiness but for other's happiness. Seva is done through one's mind (*man*), through one's body (*tan*), and through one's money (*dhan*).

Seva has to be done through one's mind. One should understand the pain of others. They should understand other's sorrows and problems. But it also means that Seva should not be done just because it is their duty but also from the heart. They should help others through soul; others should feel the seva they are getting. After you serve others through your mind, you could feel their happiness from inside. As many of the Hindu Gods and Goddesses have set examples for us to learn. Like Shri Ram, He has taught us to serve others through our mind. To serve others and to help others from deep inside our hearts. Not just through mind but one should also serve others through their body.

Seva through one's body is one important thing, without which seva is incomplete. One should serve others by making all the efforts to help the suffering or the pain of a person. As our role in Hinduism we serve the poor; the needy with food and some clothes, in which we put our body's effort which serves our role as doing seva from *tan*. As Shri Hanuman has served his disciples through his body. He has also served Shri Ram through his mind and body. The more hard work one does, the more one could serve and the more one could serve the more one will get closer to the journey towards God. Just like *man* and *tan* even *dhan*, one's own resources serves as an important role in seva.

Using one of our own resources which is money serves as a big part in the role of seva. There are many kinds of people in this world who have given their hard earned money in donations. What could be more selflessness than this? Some people do not even serve their parents to save money, but there are people in this world, who might donate their hard work's money to strangers just to serve them. As a role in Hinduism a person donates money in charity, for poor people, and also as a disciple in a Mandir. All these three ways of seva play the biggest role of seva, without which seva is incomplete.

Through one's mind, through one's body, and through one's money, the role of seva is completed. The most important person not just in Hinduism but all religion does the most complete and perfect seva, who is a mother. No other relation can be compare to a mother. She does the most seva to her child, more than anyone else could. She takes care of her child through her mind; from the bottom of her heart. She serves her child through her body; bearing all the pains for her kids puts all her physical effort for them. She also serves her child through her own resource like money; because she would never want her child to ever suffer for anything because of money. A mother plays all three roles, thus completing her role of seva in a perfect way.

2010-11 Essay Competition Entry - High School Prize
Winning Essay



BENEFITS OF SEVA

Let us not believe that we can by means of service reform or reshape the world. We may or may not. The real value of service, its most visible results is that it reforms us. When we do service as a spiritual discipline; then we will be humble and happy.