

United Hindu and Jain Temples

ASSOCIATION OF ALL MAJOR TEMPLES OF
METROPOLITAN WASHINGTON DC AND BALTIMORE

DIWALI MELA 2025 SOUVENIR



VENUE:

TUSCARORA HIGH SCHOOL
801 N KING ST
LEESBURG VA 20176 (USA)

DATE:

SUNDAY OCTOBER 5TH 2025
11:00 AM TO 7:00 PM

Participating Temples

Rajdhani Mandir * BAPS Sanstha * Chinmaya Mission * Durga Temple * Sri Venkateswara Lotus Temple
Sri Siva Vishnu Temple * ISKCON * Vishwa Hindu Parishad of America (VHPA) * Gayatri Pariwar
Greater Baltimore Temple * Hindu Temple * Jain Society of Metropolitan DC
Mangal Mandir * Murugan Temple

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HH MAHANT SWAMI MAHARAJ

(Swami Keshavjivandas)

24 September 2025
Jodhpur, India

Shri Alokhai Srivastava,
President, United Hindu and Jain Temples (UHJT) Association,
Washington DC and Baltimore Metropolitan Areas

Pranam.
Jai Swaminarayan.

With immense prayers, His Holiness Mahant Swami Maharaj gratefully acknowledges the kind and heartfelt invitation for the Joint Diwali Mela on October 5, 2025, in Leesburg, Virginia. Swamiji is pleased to see the unity of so many mandirs coming together to celebrate the sacred festival of Diwali.

Swamiji has prayed to Bhagwan Swaminarayan and Pramukh Swami Maharaj for the success of this celebration. May the Ram Lila, pujas, and devotional offerings inspire countless souls to follow the path of dharma, unity, and selfless service.

Although Swamiji will not be able to attend in person, heartfelt prayers and blessings are with all the devotees. May this year's theme, "Light Up the Future: Honoring Heritage, Inspiring Tomorrow," guide the community, especially the youth, to remain rooted in spiritual values while contributing positively to society.

With innermost prayers for peace, prosperity, and progress.

Jai Swaminarayan from Sadhu Shrutipriyadas for HH Mahant Swami Maharaj.

Sadhu Keshavjivandas

Jai Swaminarayan from Sadhu Keshavjivandas
(HH Mahant Swami Maharaj, Spiritual Head, BAPS Swaminarayan Sanstha)



**Diwali Message to United Hindu Jain Temples (UHJT)
Association's Yr. 2025 Diwali Celebrations from
Gurudev Sri Sri Ravi Shankar**

At this time of the year, people around the world are getting ready to celebrate Diwali, the festival of lights. One of the biggest festivals of the East, Diwali is celebrated by Hindus, Buddhists, Jains and Sikhs.

Diwali is the commemoration of the light of wisdom in our lives. Diwali symbolizes the victory of good over evil, light over darkness, and knowledge over ignorance.

Lamps are lit on this day not just to decorate homes, but also to communicate the profound truth that life has many facets and stages to it, and it is important to throw light on each of them for life to be fully expressed. For an oil lamp to burn, the wick has to be partially immersed in the oil. If the wick is completely drowned in oil, it cannot bring light.

Life is like the wick of the lamp—you have to be in the world and yet remain untouched by it. If you are drowned in the materialism of the world, you cannot bring forward joy and knowledge in your life. By being in the world, yet not drowning in the worldly aspect of it, we can be the light of joy and knowledge.

This Diwali light the lamp of wisdom and love in every heart and bring a radiant smile on every face.

Diwali is also called Deepavali, which literally means "rows of lights." Life has many facets and stages to it, and it is important that you throw light on each of them, for life to be fully expressed. The rows of lights remind you that every aspect of life needs your attention and the light of knowledge.

Every human being has some good qualities. And every lamp that you light is symbolic of this. Some people have forbearance, and some have love, strength, or generosity, while others have the ability to unite people.

The latent values in you are like a lamp. Don't be satisfied with lighting just one lamp: light a thousand! You need to light many lights to dispel the darkness of ignorance.

By lighting the lamp of wisdom in yourself and acquiring knowledge, you awaken all facets of your being. When they are lit and awakened, that is Diwali.

***Light the lamp of love in your heart, the lamp of abundance in your home,
the lamp of compassion to serve others, the lamp of knowledge to dispel the darkness of ignorance,
& the lamp of gratitude for the abundance that the Divine has bestowed on us.***

***With love and blessings,
Gurudev***



ASSOCIATION OF UNITED HINDU AND JAIN TEMPLES
 Of Washington DC and Baltimore Metropolitan Areas
 301 Saybrooke View Drive, Gaithersburg, MD 20877 (USA)
WWW.DCUnitedTemples.Org

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 Vivek Gupta 703-659-5538

Sri Siva Vishnu Temple

Hari Har Singh 301-972-3944
 Siva Subramanian 301-983-9699

Sri Venkateswara Lotus Temple

Ram Chavali 703-863-2532
 Satya Gavaravarapu 202-957-9912

Vishwa Hindu Parishad

Ghanshyam Gupta 301-560-7617
 Madhumita Chavan 240-454-1893

BAPS Swaminarayan Mandir

Ratee Bhal Patel 703-525-8979
 Vaidehi Rao 312-208-6902

Chinmaya Mission

Rama Iyer Devaraj 301-948-9455
 Geetha Sundaram 480-294-9108

Durga Temple

Suresh Gupta 301-299-5000
 Narendra Tandon 301-948-3965

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Shantilal Mistry 240-671-9081
 Satish Misra 240-252-8244

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Sanjeev Gholap 240-381-6122
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 Ananda Vrindavan 301-910-3426

Jain Temple

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 Nisheeth Mehta 240-605-1066

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Shyam Bajpai 301-294-6030
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Mayur Modi 240-330-9421
 Ishwar Bhai Patel 443-694-3541

Murugan Temple

Mani Saravanan 240-498-0272
 Krishna Kumar 703 203 0483

Interfaith Council (IFC) Members

Siva Subramanian 301-983-9699
 Nanik Lahori 301-652-0696
 Mythili Bachu 301-526-5135
 Prasad Kadambi 301-236-4162

Message from the UHJT Diwali Mela Organizing Committee

Dear Friends,

On behalf of the organizing committee, it is with deep humility and heartfelt joy that we welcome you to this year's Diwali Fair. Diwali, the sacred *Festival of Lights*, reminds us of the eternal triumph of light over darkness, wisdom over ignorance, and dharma over adharma. Today's celebration is not only a festival, but also a prayer that we may all walk together in harmony, peace, and joy under the blessings of the Divine.

Today, through devotional music, graceful dances, sacred Ram Lila, and vibrant cultural offerings, we rejoice in the timeless beauty of our Sanatan heritage. Each performance is a flame, each smile a lamp, together illuminating the path of unity and harmony.

With gratitude to all temples, organizations, volunteers, performing arts schools, artists, sponsors, authors, and advertisers who have come together in the true spirit of *seva* to make this celebration possible. A special thanks goes to Shri Anil Sharma Ji, Board Member of Rajdhani Mandir and CEO of 22nd Century Technologies, for sponsoring the venue; to the National Council of Asian Indian Associations (NCAIA), Virginia HQ, for their generous support; and to Vishwa Hindu Parishad of America for blessing us with the presentation of Ram Lila.

As you partake in today's festivities, may the divine light of Diwali illuminate your homes with peace, prosperity, devotion, and happiness. Let us carry this sacred flame forward by sharing kindness, strengthening unity, and serving society with love.

With blessings and best wishes

Alok Srivastava

Dr. Alok Srivastava

President, United Hindu and Jain Temples (UHJT) Association, Washington DC and Baltimore Metropolitan Areas
 Trustee, Rajdhani Mandir, Chantilly, VA



RAJDHANI MANDIR, Inc.

(A Tax-Exempt Religious Organization of Metropolitan Washington, D.C. Area)
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October 5th, 2025

Message from the Lead Temple for Coordinating the UHJT Diwali Mela

Rajdhani Mandir is honored to lead the United Hindu Jain Temples (UHJT) and in coordinating this year's Diwali celebrations. Since 1993, UHJT has represented Hindu and Jain faiths at the Interfaith Council (IFC) while fostering unity among temples through joint initiatives, service projects, and cultural programs. Diwali, one of our most cherished traditions, brings the community together to celebrate heritage, faith, and shared values.

On this auspicious day celebrated by Hindus, Sikhs, and Jains; we remember Shri Ram's sacred return to Ayodhya. Revered as Maryādā Purushottam, Shri Ram exemplifies dharma, truth, and virtue. His life as a devoted son, loving brother, just king, and humble leader guides us to uphold duty, integrity, and compassion.

By his side, wife Sita embodied courage and loyalty; brother Lakshman served selflessly; Hanuman and the Vanara army risked everything for righteousness; and brother Bharata renounced the throne, ruling through Ram's sandals. Their sacrifices continue to inspire devotion, truth, and love across generations.

Through the worship of Goddess Lakshmi, bestower of wealth and auspiciousness, and Lord Ganesha, remover of obstacles and harbinger of wisdom, devotees seek both material and spiritual well-being. By their grace, our communities and country flourish. This Diwali, as lamps illuminate our homes and hearts, we are reminded that divine wisdom and abundance sustain not only individual lives but also the collective prosperity of our nation.

Harsh Sethi
Chairman

Alok Srivastava
Trustee/Secretary

Rajdhani Mandir, Chantilly, VA

Interfaith

COUNCIL OF METROPOLITAN WASHINGTON

The United Hindu-Jain Temples (UHJT) of Metropolitan Washington brings together 14 major Hindu and Jain temples across the Greater Washington Area, serving as a collective voice for their worship, service, and cultural life. Its creation was influenced in part by the vision of IFC founder Rev. Dr. Clark Lobenstine, whose encouragement of interfaith cooperation inspired local Hindu and Jain leaders to unite. Through festivals, youth programs, and charitable initiatives, UHJT has fostered unity among its member temples while also building bridges with the wider community. This spirit of collaboration aligns closely with the mission of the Interfaith Council of Metropolitan Washington, and by partnering with IFC, UHJT ensures that Hindu and Jain traditions are an integral part of the region's interfaith dialogue, service, and celebration of shared values. On Sunday,



September 7, 2025, the Interfaith Council of Metropolitan Washington hosted its annual Unity Walk, a cherished tradition in our nation's capital that began in the aftermath of 9/11. Conceived as a visible expression of hope and healing, the Walk has since become a signature event for the IFC, drawing many hundreds of participants each year and engaging numerous congregations and organizations across the metropolitan area. Over the course of the afternoon, 11 different faith communities open their doors to

walkers, including the Hindu and Jain communities, inviting walkers into their religious and cultural spaces for conversation and relationship-building. In recent years, the Walk has grown not only in participation but also in diversity as local high schools, colleges, and confirmation classes bring their students to the event to experience different sacred places, share in new and familiar faith and spiritual rituals, and build connections between one another. The Unity Walk is a rare opportunity to experience the breadth of religious and spiritual diversity that exists in our region and to celebrate it with others of all ages, faiths, and ethnic backgrounds.





The Hindu Temple of Metropolitan Washington

10001 Riggs Road, Adelphi, MD 20783
(301) 445-2165 & (301) 434-1000

Website: www.hindutemplemd.org

Facebook Page: [TheHinduTempleMD](https://www.facebook.com/TheHinduTempleMD)

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MISSION: The Hindu Temple of Metropolitan Washington was established in 1982 with the main objectives of congregating and praying in the traditional manner of Hindu faith and to serve the cultural and educational needs of the Hindu community.

BACKGROUND: The site was acquired on December 11, 1987. The new Temple was completed in 2006 and is visible from the Capital Way Beltway. The temple is a beautiful, traditional yet modern, with a Prayer hall, Auditorium, and a modern kitchen. The lower level has conference rooms, office spaces and library. The Temple is well maintained and beautifully landscaped. It is conveniently located near the Capital Beltway and has ample parking and privacy.

The **Prayer Hall** has deities from various regions of India. The main Darbar has deities of Ram, Laxman, Sita, Hanuman Ji, Laxmi Narayan, Radha Krishan, and Mata Durga. Other deities are of Ganesh, Laxmi, Saraswati, Shiv Ji temple with Shiva Lingum, Mata Parwati, Ganesh, Kartikey, and Nandi, Sai Baba, Jaganath Swami with Balabhadra, and Devi Subhadra, Mahavir Jain, Jhulelal Sai Baba, Gayatri Mata, Santoshi Mata, Baba Balak Nath, Kali Mata, Chakradhari Krishan Ji, Shri Bala Ji, Tulsi Das, and Pran Nath Ji. In April 2012, we also an outdoor covered Hanuman Ji Temple with a 6 foot tall Hanuman Ji statue and Nava Grah (9 Planets) statues and prayer area

The **Auditorium** is a state-of-the-art hall with wall-to-wall carpeting and multiple chandeliers for lighting. It is also equipped with a professional performance-size stage with built-in professional lighting and sound systems. Hindu Temple auditorium, banquet hall and prayer hall are available for rent for Weddings, Anniversaries, Birthday Parties, Mata Chowkis and Jagrans, Poojas, and Kathas services & Cultural, Educational, and Religious programs. Please visit our website for details and photos.

RELIGIOUS SERVICES: Hindu Temple has 2 full time priests with a team of part time priests who are available for services in the temple or devotees' homes. They perform Ramayana Paath, Sunderkaand Paath, Gita Paath, Kirtan, Satya Narayana Katha, Mata Chowki and Jagran, Janma Teva, Annaprashan Sanskar, Mundan Sanskar, Birthday Pooja, Vivaha Sanskar, Grah Pravesht, Grahashanti Paryog, Anteshthi Sanskar, Shanti Paath and other religious services as needed.

RELIGIOUS SERVICES SCHEDULE AT THE TEMPLE:

Temple Hours: 8 AM to 1 PM & 5 PM to 8 PM	
Daily Aarti - 8 AM and 8 PM	Monthly - 2nd Saturday - 5 PM to 8 PM - Sunderkaand Paath
Every Sunday - 5 PM to 7 PM - Ram/Krishna Katha	Monthly - Last Sunday - 5 PM to 7 PM Bhajan Sandhya
Every Tuesday - 7 PM to 8 PM - Hanuman Chalisa	Monthly - Purnima - Satya Narayana Pooja & Katha
Every Thursday - 7:30 PM - Sai Baba Aarti	Every Friday - 8 PM - Santoshi Mata Aarti

Welcome to Hindu Temple – Come & Celebrate With Us.



Understanding Our Religion: Sanatana Dharma or Hinduism... By Rateebhai Patel BAPS Swaminarayan Mandir, Beltsville, MD (USA)

In general, most of us are confused about Religion - our own Religion and/or other major religions of the World. Here is my humble attempt to summarize the essential or key features of Sanatan Dharma for Spiritual paths. I believe that there is a need for no-nonsense reviews of our Religion. My attempt here is to highlight the real strength of Sanatan Dharma or Hinduism. Most of us have followed our Religion without a deep understanding of the Rituals that we practice every day. An endowment of the same will allow you to have a good grasp of the essential truth of our Religion. Remember, however, that all major Religions of the World are not the same, as they seek to lead devotees by the same means to the same ultimate reality. Sanatana Dharma is not tied to a specific founder, a fixed time, or a particular place, but rather represents a natural and eternal law. Sanatan Dharma very clearly says that the Truth is one, but paths are many. Sanatan Dharma leads us all from Unreality to Reality and from Darkness to Light.

Sanatan Dharma means "eternal dharma" or "eternal order". It refers to the universal, timeless principles and duties that are considered the absolute and unchanging laws governing life. The term reflects a more traditionalist and enduring aspect of the faith, emphasizing the concept of a single, divine consciousness (Brahma) underlying all creation and serving as the basis for a way of life that promotes virtue and purpose. Sanatana Dharma refers to the timeless, eternal principles and duties governing life, often synonymous with Hinduism, encompassing virtues like honesty, purity, and compassion, and serving as the universal "Eternal Order" or "Cosmic Law" for spiritual truth and righteousness. Hinduism is not a religion, but it is a way of life. It is not a Religion but a Dharma. Sanatan Dharma cannot be destroyed by fire, weapons, water, air and which is present in all living and nonliving beings. Dharma means the way of life which is the "Total of all customs and rituals". The Sanatana Dharma has its foundation on scientific spirituality as we all can see that science and spirituality are integrated. The use of scientific knowledge for attaining immortality through philosophical outlook is possible. In each and every tradition or custom, there exists the component of spirituality in it. Without spirituality, nothing exists. Sanatana is not a Religion; it is a Dharma as Hinduism is not created by any individual, prophet or an incarnation. Spirituality is a part of every Hindu custom in the normal life of a Hindu. However, these customs need to be followed based on their merits and need not follow them blindly. These customs need to be followed for the prosperity of human beings, and it should be the prime focus for practicing in your life. The customs or rituals need to be followed for physiological health, long life, prosperity, strong family, social bondage, Dharmic outlook and vision.

Sanatana Dharma or Hinduism is the oldest religion and has no beginning as it predates recorded history. This religion has no human founder. Instead of one book, It has Vedas, Upanishads, Smriti (From the Memories) and Shrutis(From Listening). Hinduism is a vast and profound religion, and the worship is one Supreme Reality, called by many names, yet believe that God alone exists. Sanatana Dharma accepts all genuine spiritual paths. Each Soul - Atma is free to find his own way by devotion or meditation or selfless service. Mandir worship, scriptures and Guru-disciple tradition are stressed and the festivals, pilgrimage, chanting of holy hymns and home worship are recommended and practiced. Love, nonviolence, good conduct and the Law of Dharma define the Hindu path. Hinduism explains that the Soul - Atma reincarnates until all the Karmas are resolved and God Realization is attained. Hinduism is a mystical religion, leading the devotee to personally experience the Truth within, reaching the pinnacle of Consciousness where human beings and God are one. Sanatana Dharma is Principle-Based. Unlike rule-based religions, it provides a framework of timeless principles and an "eternal set of duties" for all Hindus, irrespective of their social standing. Sanatana Dharma has Challenging Boundaries that recognize the innate human yearning for something beyond limitations and aims to guide individuals toward liberation and limitless expansion. At its core is the belief in a divine consciousness (Brahman) that is the source and foundation of all existence, as well as the underlying divine within each individual. It is way of Life to provide a comprehensive path and that emphasizes principles of righteousness, integrity, and the pursuit of spiritual knowledge to understand one's true self.

Sanatan Dharma has very eloquently specified the paths to Almighty God. We are free to choose our form of worship as all paths lead ultimately to God and Our Soul - Atma is pure. Our God does not judge or punish but our Karma does according to our Actions and Reactions. Most of our suffering is due to the immaturity of our soul and we can eliminate that suffering by progressive paths that lead us from ignorance to knowledge, and that

knowledge can guide us through Karma into Dharma and finally to Liberation or "Moksha". Our Karmic intensity provides our suffering in our life. We all have given much more attention to the working of our Mind rather than to our Karma. Sanatana Dharma believes in goodness as our God has bestowed upon us the very goodness on us as our instinctive or intellectual Mind keeps us from obtaining the knowledge of yourself and God. However, Sanatan Dharma has recommended virtuous conduct and right belief as they both are the foundation of our Religious Life. Liberation, as such, requires knowledge and personal attainment. Sanatan Dharma is cosmic, eternal, transcending human history which happens to be cyclical. To allow us to have freedom to worship and to believe in a variety of ways is predominant of the Sanatana Dharma, though other paths are accepted as God's Divine will. Thus, Sanatana Dharma is tolerant and Universal. Our Religion emphasizes the goals of enlightenment and Moksha in this life. Dharma says that the worship is individual and must be highly ritualistic and possibly meditative around the Mandir (Temple) and home.

Hindu Beliefs:

Sanatana Dharma's core beliefs center on Dharma (righteous living and universal duty), Karma (the law of cause and effect), Samsara (the cycle of birth, death, and rebirth), Moksha (liberation from the cycle), divinity of the soul (Atman) and its unity with the divine (Brahman), and the eternal nature of truth and spiritual knowledge found in texts like the Vedas. It emphasizes universal principles such as non-violence (ahimsa), compassion, truthfulness, self-control, and the pursuit of spiritual realization through self-enquiry and spiritual education.

- (1). Hindus believe in one Supreme Being, Creator and Unmanifested Reality. All Souls - Atmas are evolving toward union with God to get Moksha and spiritual knowledge. Hindus believe in one God - Parmeshwar. However, Hindus worship three principal manifestations of God - Brahms: Vishnu and Mahesh. Hindus regard God to be Omnipresent, Omniscient and Omnipotent
- (2). Hindus believe in Karma, the Law of cause and effect by which each individual creates his/her destiny by his/her thoughts, words and deeds. Hindus believe in Karma (Deeds or Actions) and the laws of Karma. It is "what will seed, so shall we harvest". Hindus believe that we are bound by the Karmic thread of our past existence and must pay the price for our present or past Karma. We get what we truly deserve by our own action - Karma.
- (3). Soul - Atma reincarnates, evolving through many births until all Karmas have been resolved. Hindus believe in Reincarnation (Punar Jsnm). Soul - Atman) does not die when the body dies. Based on the Karma of the present life, the Soul - Atman transmigrates from one body to another. The cycle of birth, death and rebirth continues till one achieves Liberation - the Moksha, The ultimate goal of all human beings.
- (4). Mandir worship, rituals, sacraments and personal devotionals create a communion with Gods and Devas. Hindus believe in the Vedas, and there are various scriptures based on the Vedas. - the Bhagavad Gita being the foremost. The Bhagavad Gita is the nectar of all the Vedas, and as such, it is an ocean of knowledge that guides the devotee for spiritual living.
- (5). Hindus believe in Prayer Prarthana) as it is the most powerful tool for communication with God. Establishing a direct link with God, it elevates our mind to God. Prayer, Worship and Austere living are the foundation for a lasting relationship with God.
- (6). Hindus believe in Ahimsa (Non-violence or Non-injury). Hindus believe in not to hurt anyone by spoken words, written or Oral thought or action. Killing of any kind is against the spiritual laws.
- (7). Hindus believe in the Religious Rituals as they are the backbone of day-to-day living. Through the practice of rituals, faith is manifested and reaffirms the faith in God.
- (8). Hindus believe in Simple Living, which allows them to realize God. Love for all and Hatred for none is stressed by the Vedas.
- (9). Hindus believe in respect and reverence for parents, teachers and elders as they are builders and molders of life.
- (10). Satguru is essential to know the transcendent Absolute.
- (11). Hinduism believes that all life is sacred to loved and revered, and hence Ahinsa (nonviolence) is practiced at all levels.
- (12). Hinduism does not teach that the only way to salvation above all others is the Hindu way; Hinduism believes that all genuine religious paths are facets of God's pure love and light, deserving tolerance and understanding.



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International Society for Krishna Consciousness

Founder-Acarya A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Srila Prabhupada

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All are welcome to join us every week for our Sunday Open House. Guests are invited to participate in kirtan, listen to a spiritual talk, join a small-group discussion, attend a mantra meditation workshop, volunteer for a service project, enjoy a free prasadam lunch, and more!

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Ancient Hindu Temples Beyond India: A Journey Through History and Devotion

While India is the sacred cradle of Sanatan Dharma, its spiritual legacy extends far beyond. Across lands that were once part of Bharata, ancient Hindu temples stand as timeless symbols of devotion, history, and artistry, inviting the faithful to seek the blessings of the Divine.

Southeast Asia, including Cambodia, Indonesia, Thailand, and Malaysia, preserves a magnificent tapestry of Hindu heritage. Many temples, built between the 4th and 14th centuries under powerful Hindu kingdoms, showcase exquisite carvings, iconography, and architecture. Most of these remain active places of worship, where rituals and festivals continue the eternal dharma.

U.S. citizens can visit these sacred sites, while those in Pakistan require extra precautions, though guided tours from Karachi and Lahore make pilgrimage possible.

A journey to these ancient temples is not merely travel, it is a spiritual voyage connecting us to the timeless wisdom and divine blessings of our ancestors.

Pakistan: Hinduism and Jainism have an ancient presence in what is now Pakistan, especially in Sindh and Punjab.

- **Shri Hinglaj Mata Temple (Baluchistan):** One of the 51 Shakti Peethas, located in the Hingol National Park; a major pilgrimage site where the Head of the Sati, daughter of Prajapati Daksha lies who married to the Lord Shiva against his wishes. It is one of the two Shakti Peethas in Pakistan, the other one being Sharada Peeth in the Neelum Valley of Pakistan-controlled Kashmir.
- **Katas Raj Temples (Chakwal, Punjab):** A complex of temples linked to the legend of the Mahabharata, especially the story of Pandavas.
- **Shri Krishna Mandir (Karachi):** Historic temple in Karachi, famous among the Sindhi Hindu community.
- **Kalibari Mandir (Peshawar):** A historic Kali temple serving the local Hindu population.
- **Shri Ramapir Temple (Tando Allahyar, Sindh):** Dedicated to Saint Ramapir, revered by both Hindus and local communities.



Nepal

Nepal is predominantly Hindu and has several significant shrines, often overlapping with Buddhist traditions.

- **Pashupatinath Temple (Kathmandu):** One of the holiest Shiva temples in the world; UNESCO World Heritage site.
- **Muktinath Temple (Mustang):** Sacred to both Hindus and Buddhists; Vishnu temple at high altitude.
- **Janaki Mandir (Janakpur):** Dedicated to Goddess Sita, birthplace of Sita according to Ramayana.
- **Gosaikunda (Langtang National Park):** Sacred lake linked to Lord Shiva, visited during Janai Purnima festival.
- **Changu Narayan (Bhaktapur):** Dedicated to Lord Vishnu; one of the oldest temples in Nepal.



Bangladesh

Bangladesh has a historic Hindu presence, particularly in Dhaka, Chittagong, and the Chittagong Hill Tracts.

- **Dakshineswar Kali Temple (Dhaka):** Not as large as Kolkata's temple but significant.
- **Paharpur Shiva Temple (Paharpur):** Ancient ruins of Somapura Mahavihara, used by Hindus historically.
- **Shat Gombuj (Sixty Domed Mosque area, Mahasthangarh):** Area has historical significance with Hindu temples nearby.
- **Dhakeshwari Temple (Dhaka):** National temple of Bangladesh.
- **Mongla Shakti Peeth (Khulna):** Part of the 51 Shakti Peethas, dedicated to Goddess Kali.



Myanmar (Burma): Hinduism is practiced mainly by Tamil and Bengali communities in Myanmar.

- **Sri Kali Temple (Yangon):** Very active temple dedicated to Goddess Kali.
- **Nat Mandir (Sagaing, Mandalay region):** Hindu deities often worshiped alongside Burmese Nat spirits.
- **Shree Sanatan Hindu Mandir (Yangon):** Serves the local Hindu community, mainly of Indian origin.



Cambodia

- **Angkor Wat (Siem Reap)** – Originally built as a Hindu temple dedicated to Vishnu in the 12th century, it later became a Buddhist site. It's the largest religious monument in the world and an iconic symbol of Cambodia. It can be seen as a reinterpretation of South Indian Hindu temple art and architecture, where the Chola legacy provided both spiritual inspiration, technical blueprint and construction help.
- **Preah Khan and Preah Ko** – Hindu temples devoted to Shiva, featuring intricate carvings and ancient Khmer architecture.
- **Banteay Srei** – Known as the "Citadel of Women," it's a small 10th-century temple dedicated to Shiva, famous for its detailed red sandstone carvings.



Indonesia

- **Prambanan Temple (Java)** – A 9th-century temple complex dedicated to the Trimurti: Brahma, Vishnu, and Shiva. Known for its tall and pointed architecture.
- **Candi Sukuh and Candi Cetho (Java)** – Temples with unique pyramid-like structures and Hindu fertility symbolism.
- **Gunung Kawi (Bali)** – Ancient rock-cut shrines devoted to royalty, blending natural landscapes with Hindu spirituality.



Thailand

- **Phanom Rung (Buriram Province)** – A Khmer-style Hindu temple dedicated to Shiva, situated on an extinct volcano.
- **Prasat Hin Phimai (Nakhon Ratchasima Province)** – A major Khmer temple, originally Hindu but later adapted for Buddhism.



Vietnam

- **My Son Sanctuary (Quang Nam Province)** – A UNESCO World Heritage site, these 4th–13th century temples were built by the Champa civilization for worship of Shiva.



Malaysia

- **Batu Caves (near Kuala Lumpur)** – A living Hindu shrine dedicated to Lord Murugan, famous for its giant golden statue and annual Thaipusam festival.
- **Kellie's Castle Temples** – Lesser-known sites with Hindu-style carvings, blending colonial and Hindu influences.

These temples are not only religious centers but also cultural and historical landmarks. They show the spread of Sanatan Dharma beyond India and its fusion with local art, architecture, and culture. Most sites now, like Angkor Wat and Prambanan, are UNESCO World Heritage Sites and attract millions of pilgrims and tourists alike.

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Diwali in Jainism: A Festival of Liberation and Light

When most people think of Diwali, they imagine fireworks, sweets, and the victory of good over evil. While all of that holds true in Hindu traditions, Diwali carries a very different, yet equally profound, meaning in Jainism. For Jains, Diwali marks not a worldly conquest, but the ultimate spiritual triumph: the liberation of Bhagwaan Mahavira, the 24th Tirthankara.

The Jain Significance of Diwali

According to Jain tradition, on the new moon night of Kartika, in 527 BCE, Bhagwaan Mahavira attained moksha in Pawapuri, Bihar, India. His soul achieved pure freedom, forever beyond the bonds of karma.

That night, it is said, the heavens themselves were illuminated with divine light. His followers, mourning the loss of their great teacher yet celebrating his eternal liberation, lit rows of clay lamps to symbolize the shining of inner knowledge and the victory of the soul over ignorance. This is why Jains continue to celebrate Diwali as the festival of spiritual light rather than material wealth or victory.

How Jains Celebrate Diwali

While you may still find lamps, rangoli, and sweets in Jain homes, the heart of the celebration lies in reflection and prayer. Many Jains spend Diwali in temples, reciting scriptures such as the Uttaradhyayan Sutra, Mahavir Bhagwaan's final teachings. Acts of charity, meditation, and vows of nonviolence are emphasized over extravagance.

The festival is also a time of self-renewal. Just as Hindus begin their new year with Diwali, Jains mark the following day as the start of their own spiritual new year.

Light Beyond Lamps

For Jains, Diwali's light is not just the glow of a flame - it is the light of knowledge and truth. The lamps are reminders that while Mahavira is no longer physically present, his teachings continue to illuminate the path toward peace, nonviolence, and liberation. In this way, Diwali in Jainism is less about outward celebration and more about inner awakening. It invites everyone, Jain or not, to reflect: *how can we bring more clarity, compassion, and nonviolence into our own lives?*

For Jains, Diwali is not about celebrating a victory on earth, but about honoring a soul's victory over earthly bonds. It is the festival of ultimate freedom, guiding us to look inward and seek the light that never fades.

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Diwali for Sikhs - Light Beyond Lamps: The Legacy of Liberation and Leadership

Diwali and Bandi Chhor Divas

For Sikhs, this time holds a deeper spiritual and historical significance. Alongside Diwali, Sikhs commemorate Bandi Chhor Divas a day that honors moral courage, collective liberation, and the enduring power of principled leadership.



The Legacy of Guru Hargobind Sahib Ji

The origins of Bandi Chhor Divas trace back to the early 17th century, during Mughal Emperor Jahangir's reign. Guru Hargobind Sahib Ji, the sixth Sikh Guru, was imprisoned in Gwalior Fort under false political suspicions. He found that 52 Rajput kings were also unjustly held. When the Emperor agreed to release Guru Sahib, he imposed a condition: only those who could hold onto the Guru's robe could leave. In a remarkable act of empathy, Guru Hargobind Ji had a special robe stitched with 52 tassels, allowing each king to grasp one and walk free. This collective liberation is the essence of Bandi Chhor Divas, meaning "Day of the Liberation of Prisoners."



The Illumination of Harmandir Sahib

Upon Guru Sahib's return to Amritsar, the city celebrated joyfully. The Golden Temple (Sri Harmandir Sahib) was illuminated in his honor, a tradition that continues today. Each Bandi Chhor Divas (Diwali), the temple glows with thousands of lamps and candles, reflecting off the sacred Sarovar in a breathtaking display.

This illumination symbolizes the triumph of justice over tyranny, light over darkness, and selfless leadership over personal gain. The Golden Temple stands as a beacon of hope, unity, and divine presence, drawing devotees worldwide to witness its splendor and offer prayers of gratitude.

Diwali Through the Sikh Eyes

While Diwali marks the triumph of good over evil, for Sikhs it also reflects the values of Guru Hargobind Sahib Ji:

- Justice: Defending the oppressed, even when inconvenient.
- Compassion: Helping others through selfless action.
- Leadership: Using influence to serve, not dominate.

Gurdwaras worldwide hosts kirtan (devotional singing), Ardas (prayer), and langar (community meals), focusing on spiritual reflection, service, and unity rather than material celebration.

Relevance for Today's Sikh Leaders

The message of Bandi Chhor Divas is more relevant than ever. For Sikh entrepreneurs, professionals, and community advocates, this occasion reminds us that true leadership uplifts others. Whether navigating challenges, building partnerships, or advocating for the community, Guru Hargobind Sahib Ji's legacy inspires integrity, courage, and compassion. This is a time to:

- Lead with conviction, even in adversity.
- Build inclusive spaces where justice and dignity prevail.
- Amplify voices that have long been silent.

A Season to Reflect and Recommit

As we light candles and gather with loved ones, let us reflect on the deeper meaning of this season. Diwali and Bandi Chhor Divas are spiritual beacons, guiding us toward purpose, service, and principled action. Let this be a time to re-commit to our values, strengthen communities, and illuminate the path for others. May Guru Hargobind Sahib Ji's legacy continue to inspire all that we do.

Wishing you and your families a joyful, meaningful, and inspiring celebration.

By **Nrip Singh** a visionary entrepreneur, and respected community leader. The Founder and Trustee of the Global Sikh Business Alliance (GSBA).

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Based on the principle of "Giving is the law of the Universe" (Yagya) and Wisdom (Vivek), Gayatri Pariwar U.S.A. in Washington DC is dedicated to 'Serve God in Man'. Gayatri Pariwar U.S.A. is giving a helping hand to needy people; clothes to the hungry and homeless; scholarships to deserving students; family counseling in the Washington area; and financial support for blind schools in India.

GayatriPariwarU.S.A. is involved in many religious and cultural activities such as:

- Monthly Satsang with Study on Gurudev's teaching;
- Celebration of festivals like Rakshabandhan organized by youth

At present Shantikunj, headquarter of All World Gayatri Pariwar at Haridwar in India is still actively supporting the rehabilitation work for the Uttarakhand Disaster occurred in 2013. Gayatri Pariwar U.S.A. is helping Shantikunj for this worthwhile endeavor.

Gayatri Pariwar celebrates Vasant Panchami and Gurupurnima each year. Gayatri Pariwar also conducts Youth Camp for children each year in summer months. In addition, Gayatri Pariwar performs religious activities for our Parijans in Washington Metropolitan area:

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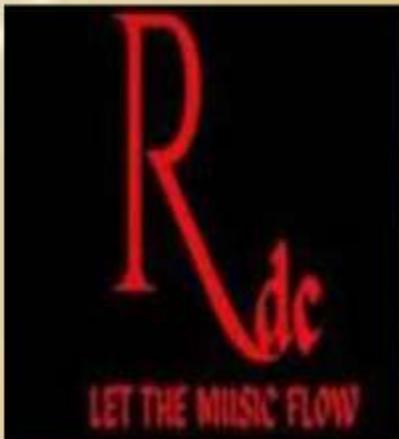
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The Concept of Moksha: Liberation as the Ultimate Goal

In Sanatana Dharma or Hindu philosophy, the ultimate aim of human life is **Moksha**—liberation from the cycle of birth and death (samsāra) and union with the Eternal Self. While Dharma (righteous living), Artha (wealth), and Kāma (desire) provide structure and purpose to life, it is Moksha that gives it ultimate fulfillment.

The Vedas declare the eternal nature of the soul and hint at liberation as the highest pursuit. The *Rig Veda* (10.90) proclaims:

पुरुष एवेदं सर्वं यद्भूतं यच्च भव्यम् ।

puruṣa evedam sarvam yaḍ bhūtam yaḥ ca bhavyam

"The Supreme Person alone is all this—what has been and what shall be."

Here the seers remind us that realizing the all-pervading Puruṣa is the path to freedom.

The Upanishads, the crown jewels of the Vedas, provide profound insight into Moksha. The *Katha Upanishad* (2.2.13) states:

न जायते म्रियते वा विपश्चिन्नायं कुतश्चिन्न बभूव कश्चित् ।

na jāyate mriyate vā vipaścīn nāyaṁ kutaścīn na babhūva kaścit

"The Self is not born, nor does it ever die. It did not come from anywhere, nor did anything come from It."

Knowing this immortal Self frees one from the fear of death.

The *Chandogya Upanishad* (6.8.7) conveys the mahāvākya:

तत्त्वमसि ॥

tat tvam asi

"That Thou Art."

This great utterance reveals that the essence of the individual soul is none other than the Supreme Brahman. Similarly, the *Mundaka Upanishad* (2.2.8) declares:

परिश्य लोकान्कर्मचितान् ब्राह्मणो निर्वेदमायान्नास्त्यकृतः कृतनेन ॥

pariśya lokān karmacitān brāhmaṇo nirveda-māyān nāstyakṛtaḥ kṛtena

"Having examined the worlds attained by action, the wise one becomes dispassionate, realizing that the Uncreated (Brahman) cannot be attained by action."

Here, Moksha is described as transcending ritualistic works through Self-knowledge.

The *Bhagavad Gītā*, often called the essence of the Upanishads, echoes this vision (8.15):

मामुपेत्य पुनर्जन्म दुःखालयमशाश्वतम् ।

नाप्नुवन्ति महात्मानः संसिद्धिं परमां गताः ॥

mām upetya punarjanma duḥkhālayam aśāśvatam

nāpnuvanti mahātmānaḥ saṁsiddhiṁ paramāṁ gatāḥ

"Having attained Me, the great souls do not take birth again in this temporary and miserable world, for they have reached the supreme perfection."

Thus, Moksha is not mere escape but the realization of one's true limitless nature, blissful, and eternal. It is the state where the knower, the knowledge, and the known merge into oneness, beyond bondage, beyond sorrow. Moksha, therefore, is the final goal of life, the liberation from the cycle of life and death (samsara) that brings peace, bliss, and eternal unity with Brahman (Ultimate TRUTH).



Diwali is a symbol of hope for humankind.

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The world remembers *Schindler's List* for its heroism, but few know of another savior whose kindness crossed continents Maharaja Digvijaysinhji Ranjitsinhji, the Jam Saheb of Nawanagar.



The year was 1940. World War II had turned the globe into a battlefield. Amid this chaos, hundreds of children, torn from their homes, faced a terrifying fate deportation to Siberian gulags. Alone, frightened, and starving, they journeyed for months through freezing Russia, harsh deserts of Central Asia, and finally across Persia, until destiny brought them to the shores of Gujarat, India to the warm embrace of Jam Saheb.

When the first group of 500 exhausted, mostly barefoot children arrived, they carried more scars in their hearts than on their bodies. Some had watched their parents die. Others had forgotten what a home looked like. The Maharaja, a Hindu delegate to the British War Cabinet at the time, had already instructed the Red Cross and Anders' Army to bring any orphaned children to Jamnagar. And when they stood before him, he uttered words they would never forget: "Do not think of yourselves as orphans. You are now my children. You are Nawanagaris. And I am your Bapu."



Under his personal protection, the Maharaja built a haven at Balachadi near Jamnagar. Here, the children and other refugees received warm beds, nourishing food, medical care, and an education even with Polish-speaking teachers so they would not lose their language. Jewish and Catholic priests were invited to tend to their spiritual needs. In a world consumed by hate, this corner of India became a sanctuary of love.

From 1942 to 1946, Balachadi was their home, and the Maharaja their protector. More camps followed at Valivade (Kolhapur), Bandra, and Panchgani. Between 1942 and 1948, about 20,000 European refugees — many of them children passed through India under kindness of Jam Sahab, staying from a few months to several years. Around 6,000 were even granted special war-time domicile until 1948.



But Jam Saheb's compassion was not just an act of charity; it was an act of humanity at its purest. At a time when most nations closed their doors, he opened his heart. And as true patriot when India gained independence, he stood proudly among the first rulers to sign the Instrument of Accession to the Dominion of India on 15 August 1947 to be part of India.

Today in Poland, the "Good Maharaja" (*Dobry Maharadza*) is remembered with deep affection. Roads, schools, and monuments bear his name. Warsaw's *Dobry Maharadza* School institution honors his legacy, and every year, survivors and their families gather in India to share stories of the man who gave them a second life.

When the world was gripped by cruelty, Indians chose compassion. Jam Saheb gave a generation of children the most precious gift of all — hope. And in doing so, he reminded humanity that borders may divide lands, but kindness unites hearts forever.

Shashi Agarwal of Manoranjan TV and with NCAIA HQ VA

Since 1993, UHJT has been blessed with the opportunity to serve the community by promoting Hindu and Jain religious activities, organizing the annual Grand Diwali Mela and IFC Unity Walks, supporting charitable food donations, and arranging bus trips to sacred places of worship. These photographs offer just a small glimpse of our shared journey of faith, unity, and service.







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In the early 1990s, several dedicated members of the Hindu and Jain community in the Greater Baltimore area felt the need for a place of worship and a cultural center to preserve and foster their religious and cultural heritage. As a result, the Greater Baltimore Temple was built and inaugurated in 1998.

The Temple Complex consists of the Temple Hall, an adjacent Community Center, and a Bal-Vihar building. The Temple Hall houses a prayer hall, deities' chamber, pooja rooms, and administrative facilities. It is approximately 3000 sq-ft and accommodates about 250 devotees. The adjacent Community Center, approximately 4800 sq-ft, accommodates 300 people.

The Temple celebrates all major Hindu and Jain festivals throughout the year, as well as cultural events during major religious festivals. The Temple recently celebrated Maha Kumbhabhishekam. A Bal-Vihar Program teaches religions and culture to the next generation.

Greater Baltimore Hindu-Jain Temple's mission is to provide religious and spiritual services to the Hindu and Jain diaspora and to promote educational, social, cultural values and interfaith outreach within the surrounding communities with the following goals.

1. To provide a place of worship, an educational and a cultural center for the community.
2. To sponsor and conduct religious, spiritual, educational, social and cultural activities
3. To embellish and preserve Hindu and Jain heritage and promote tradition of our rich culture.
4. To provide a platform for the community members to present their talent during the cultural and religious events.



Bosons – A Glimpse of Divine Energy in the Universe

From the Hindu perspective, the universe is not merely matter in motion, but a tapestry woven with divine intelligence and energy. The Vedas and Upanishads reveal that Brahman, the Supreme Reality, pervades all creation, sustaining life through Shakti, the cosmic creative power. Remarkably, modern physics mirrors this ancient insight: the Higgs-Bose particle, popularly called the “God Particle,” imparts mass to matter, shaping the very fabric of the cosmos. Its invisible field silently sustains every star, river, and living being—a scientific echo of God’s omnipresent energy.



Viewed through the lens of Hindu philosophy:

- Bosons embody divine Shakti, the sacred energy that manifests the universe.
- The “God Particle” resonates with the truth that God is immanent, giving form and substance to all creation.
- Its discovery allows humanity a fleeting glimpse of one of God’s instruments, affirming that the universe is intelligently and divinely sustained.

Named in honor of the eminent Indian Hindu physicist Prof. Satyendra Nath Bose (1894–1974), the boson was first observed at CERN Lab, Geneva, in 2012. While co-author Professor Peter Higgs received the 2013 Nobel Prize as is given only to person alive, the particle immortalizes Bose’s visionary contribution. More than a mere particle, bosons are a testament to the invisible, omnipotent power of God, perfectly echoing Hindu teachings that Brahman is the eternal source of all existence.

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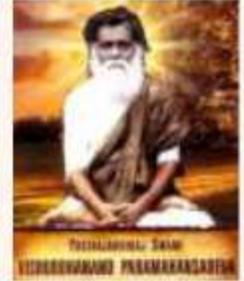
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Gyanganj – the land of immortals Kaal Chakra, Shambhala and Shangri-La



Gyanganj, also called Siddhashram or Shambhala, holds a revered place in Hindu, Buddhist, and yogic traditions. Described as a hidden spiritual realm in the Himalayas or Tibet, it is believed to be the eternal seat of enlightened beings, siddhas, and yogis **who silently guide humanity**. Absent from maps and satellites, many scholars suggest it exists on a higher plane, beyond ordinary perception.



Great saints and scholars are said to have visited Gyanganj. Baba Gorakhnath, Swami Vishuddhananda, Gopinath Kaviraj, and Narayan Shrimali are among those linked to its mysteries. Kaviraj Gopinath (1887–1976), philosopher and principal of the Sanskrit College in Varanasi, studied under Vishuddhananda Paramahansa and is believed to have visited Gyanganj. Vishuddhananda, who guided the family of Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose, is said to have imparted extraordinary spiritual practices even to disappear to him.



Paramahansa Yogananda, in *Autobiography of a Yogi*, describes Mahavatar Babaji's realm, often identified with Gyanganj, as a haven of immortal saints who subtly guide humanity. Yogananda, who spent sixteen years in the U.S. until his passing in 1952, envisioned a "United World" blending **India's spiritual wisdom with America's efficiency an ideal inspired by such hidden masters**.

The idea of Gyanganj also appears in literature and culture. James Hilton's book *The Lost Horizon* popularized Shangri-La, a Himalayan paradise of ageless beings. Nicholas Roerich, the Russian explorer and philosopher, saw Shambhala as a universal spiritual code. Saint Mohan Ji recounts his guru, Avadhoota Nandananda who is alive, as one who also visited Gyanganj.



Kālchakra: The Wheel of Time

The concept of Kālchakra (Sanskrit: कालचक्र, "Wheel of Time") appears in both Hindu and Buddhist traditions. In Hinduism, it symbolizes creation, preservation, and dissolution across the four yugas: Satya, Treta, Dvāpara, and Kali. In Buddhism, especially Tibetan Buddhism, it reflects both cosmic cycles and inner energies of body and mind. The sacred Kālachakra initiation, conferred by high lamas including the Dalai Lama, links to Shambhala. The actual **Kālchakra** believed to lie in north of Kailash-Manasarovar in Tibet, with references even in the *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata*.



The Timeless Wisdom of Gyanganj

Gyanganj, Shambhala, or Shangri-La symbolizes a spiritual sanctuary where sages of all paths unite. While humanity debates religious differences, the essence is universal: all spiritual paths lead to truth. These hidden realms inspire, preserve dharma, and remind us to rise above division, awakening to the light that connects all beings and fosters harmony in the world.



Sri Venkateswara Lotus Temple



12501 & 12519 Braddock Road, Fairfax, Virginia 22030

www.svlotustemple.org Ph: 703 815 4850

Sri Venkateswara Lotus Temple of Virginia was established in the year 2007 to serve the devotional, cultural and spiritual needs of the Northern Virginia community in accordance with distinct Vedic traditions. The primary purpose of the Corporation is to construct and administer a traditional Vaishnava Temple based on “Sri Vaishnava Sampradaya”.

Sri Venkateswara Lotus Temple was incorporated as a religious Non-profit organization in October 2007 under the laws of Virginia state. SVLT acquired approximately 18 acres of land in 2003 and 2005 at Braddock Road, Fairfax, Virginia.

Currently, SV Lotus Temple embarked on the Phase II project to render a completely transformational prayer hall for generations to come. With your continuing support we will make this grand dream a reality. Phase 2 of the construction is to complete a 17,500 square feet of Prayer Hall (Maha Mandapam) with separate shrines for Sri Mahalakshmi, Andal, Sri Rama Parivaram, Sri Anjaneya Swamy, Sri Krishna, Sri Lakshmi Narasimha swamy, Sri Bhoo Varaha swamy, Sri Hayagreeva swamy, Sri Dhanvantari, Sri Chakrathazhwar, Azhawars, Acharyas.

The temple also hosts several educational programs and workshops that focus on various aspects of Sanathana Dharma, including yoga, meditation, and the philosophy and spirituality of the religion. These programs are open to people of all ages and backgrounds and are designed to promote a deeper understanding of Hinduism and its teachings.

In addition to its cultural and educational activities, SV Lotus Temple is involved in several social welfare initiatives. The temple has a team of volunteers who work on various community projects, including organizing food drives and other charitable endeavors. These efforts are essential to promoting social justice and helping those in need.

SV Lotus Academy Vidyalaya is the educational wing of SV Lotus Temple, the goal of this program is to develop understanding and pride in the significance of our Vedic heritage, cultural forms, expressions and spiritual practices of our rich Sanātana Dharma. All children in our Balavidya program will be actively engaged using a systematic curriculum, fun filled projects, games, enacting, ideas to ponder on, critical reflections and field work. We look forward to another exciting annual journey together as a community with the collective goal of “Bālavidya” i.e. – providing children a strong foundation in our vast and rich Vedic Heritage.

www.svlotustemple.org or contact the temple management for additional information. May Lord Sri Venkateswara’s blessings be always with us!

Organizing Committees – 2025 UHJT Diwali Mela

Coordinator:

Rajdhani Mandir

Chair: Alok Srivastava

Co-Chair: Hari Har Singh

Members: Bharat, Manimekalai, Tandon, Padmapriya, Susheela & Vasanthi

Cultural:

Hindu Temple / Greater Baltimore Temple

Chair: Shukla Khanna

Co-Chair: Sanjeev Gholap

Members: Harshad, Vaidehi & Bharat

Decoration:

ISKCON

Chair: Sonia Chopra

Co-Chair: Mythili Bachu

Members: Kalpana, Jayasri (NCAIA)

Deity Worship:

Jain Temple

Chair: Kamlesh Shah

Co-Chair: Padmapriya Sundaram

Members: Manimekalai, Vaidehi & Mythili

Education:

VHP

Chair: Ghanshyam Gupta

Co-Chair: Padmapriya Sundaram

Members: Jitendra, Hari & Samir

Finance/Fund Raising:

Durga Temple

Chair: Narendra Tandon

Co-Chair: Mythili Bachu

Members: Dr. Siva, Rateebhai & Vivek

Hospitality:

Murugan Temple/Gayatri Pariwar

Chair: Saravanan Manimekalai

Co-Chair: Shantilal Mistry

Members: Mythili, Padmapriya, Vaidehi & Satish

Logistics:

Rajdhani Mandir

Chair: Kripa Shankar Singh (NCAIA)

Co-Chair: Vivek Gupta

Members: Manimekalai, Sampath, & Vasanthi

Membership:

Sri Siva Vishnu Temple (SSVT)

Chair: Dr Siva Subramanian

Co-Chair: Dr. Suresh Gupta

Members: Jitendra, Manimekalai, Narendra & Sonia

Publicity:

Jain Temple/Chinmaya Mission

Chair: Kamlesh Shah

Co-Chair: Devraj Ramaiyer

Members: Manimekalai, Satish, Shantilal & Dr Siva

Souvenir:

BAPS Swaminarayan Temple

Chair: Vaidehi Rao

Co-Chair: Devraj Ramaiyer

Members: Ghanshyam, Shukla & Padmapriya

Vendor:

Rajdhani Mandir

Chair: Promila Gupta (NCAIA)

Co-Chair: Vivek Gupta

Members: Kamalesh, Padmapriya & Vasanthi

Youth:

Rajdhani Mandir

Chair: Vivek Gupta

Co-Chair: Vaidehi

Members: Bharat & Devraj Ramaiyer

Website:

Greater Baltimore Temple

Chair: Sanjeev Gholap

Co-Chair: Vivek Gupta

Members: Padmapriya, Sonia & Manimekalai

We sincerely appreciate and are grateful for the invaluable support of the National Council of American Indian Associations (NCAIA HQ VA) team, led by Mr. Sunil Singh.

The Association of United Hindu Jain Temples (UHJT)

For more than four decades, the Association of United Hindu-Jain Temples has proudly celebrated Diwali as a unifying and grand community event. What began as a modest gathering in the early 1990s has since grown into one of the most anticipated festivals in the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area, bringing together thousands of devotees and families from across the region. Each year, UHJT temples and organizations join hands to offer prayers, cultural programs, music, and dance, creating a vibrant atmosphere that reflects the richness of our shared traditions. The Diwali Mela not only honors the spiritual essence of the Festival of Lights but also serves as a shining example of the unity and collective strength of the Hindu and Jain communities in Greater Washington.

Mission Statement (what UHJT does today)

1. *To unite Hindu and Jain temples and organizations across the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area, fostering collaboration, cultural celebration, and interfaith understanding while preserving and promoting our shared spiritual heritage.*
2. *To strengthen the bonds among Hindu and Jain communities by organizing joint festivals, educational programs, and interfaith initiatives that promote unity, cultural pride, and mutual respect.*
3. *To serve as a collective voice of Hindu and Jain temples in the region, advancing spiritual values, community service, and interfaith harmony in partnership with broader society.*

Vision Statement (what UHJT aspires to for the future)

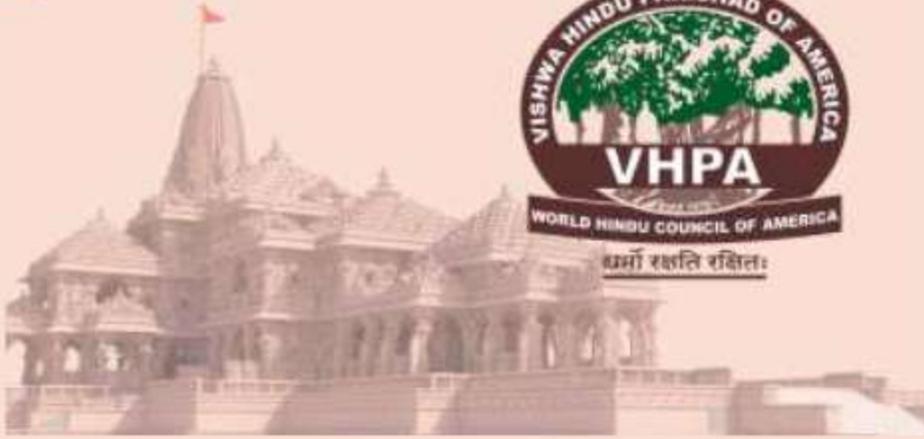
1. *To be a vibrant and unified community where Hindu and Jain traditions flourish together, enriching future generations and contributing to a harmonious, inclusive society.*
2. *To create a lasting legacy of unity, where Hindu and Jain temples collectively inspire faith, culture, and service, while strengthening interfaith partnerships across the region.*
3. *To stand as a beacon of cultural and spiritual harmony—where the shared values of dharma, devotion, and community uplift both our own traditions and the wider interfaith community.*

Current UHJT Member Temples and Organizations

The Association of United Hindu-Jain Temples (UHJT) is comprised of the following thirteen member temples and organizations in the Washington, D.C. and Greater Baltimore region:

1. **Sri Siva Vishnu Temple (SSVT)** – Lanham, MD
2. **ISKCON of D.C. (Hare Krishna Temple)** – Potomac, MD
3. **Chinmaya Mission Washington Regional Center (CMWRC)** – Silver Spring, MD
4. **Gayatri Chetna Center** – Sterling, VA
5. **Jain Society of Metropolitan Washington** – Silver Spring, MD
6. **Hindu Temple of Metropolitan Washington** – Adelphi, MD
7. **Rajdhani Mandir** – Chantilly, VA
8. **Durga Temple of Virginia** – Fairfax Station, VA
9. **Murugan Temple of North America** – Lanham, MD
10. **Greater Baltimore Hindu-Jain Temple** – Finksburg, MD
11. **Vishwa Hindu Parishad of America (VHPA), DC Chapter**
12. **BAPS Swaminarayan Sanstha** - Beltsville MD and Chantilly VA
13. **Shree Mangal Mandir** - Ashton, MD

UHJT represents the Hindu and Jain faiths in the Interfaith Council of Metropolitan Washington DC.



VISHWA HINDU PARISHAD AMERICA

The Vishwa Hindu Parishad America (VHPA), established in 1974, is possibly the first Hindu organization in the United States, now serving the community for over 50 years.

Many well-known organizations — such as HSS, HSC, Ekal Vidyalaya, and several others engaged in Hindu advocacy — have either originated from VHPA or been shaped by the dedication of VHPA volunteers.

Serving through our pillars of Sanskar, Seva, Sampark and Prachar — raising pride in Hindu American identity while contributing to and integrating with American society.

Dream Project: Develop Hindu Center in DC

Major Activities:

- Hindi class with nearly 400 students,
- Summer overnight and day youth and family camps,
- Maryland Cricket League, a Support-A-Child fundraiser,
- 5k and Tennis Tournaments for local scholarship fundraiser,
- Celebrate festivities like Ayodhya Mandir Anniversary, Deepawali, Navratri, Rakhi etc



vhpadc@gmail.com



vhpa_dc

<https://dc.vhp-america.org>

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Dhananjay Shevlikar
Vice President
571-212-6055

Mahendra Sapa
President
301-377-3247

Murali Adatrao
Secretary
240-535-5607

Animesh Shukla
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*Vishwa Hindu Parishad of America is a 501(c)(3) Not for profit organization. Any donations above \$100 will receive a tax deductible receipts.



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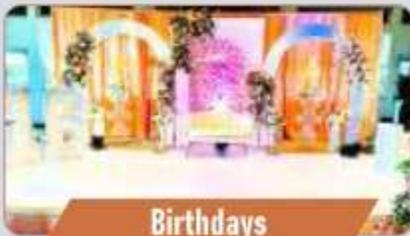
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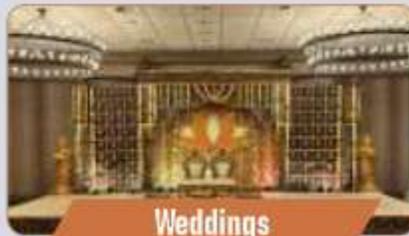
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*May the light of Diwali dispel the darkness of ignorance,
ignite the lamp of wisdom in our hearts, and guide us
on the path of dharma, peace, and devotion*

With love, respect and best wishes
Sant and Gita Gupta
Lorton, VA

May this Diwali illuminate your path with wisdom
warmth and well - being.



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Murugan Temple of North America

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வட அமெரிக்க
முருகன் ஆலயம்

(301) 552-4889
contactus@murugantemple.org

Our Temple History & Timeline

Murugan Temple of North America (MTNA) is the first temple dedicated to Lord Murugan (Karthikeya) in the United States. Conceived in the 1980's and opened in 1999, MTNA celebrates all Hindu and Tamil festivals, holidays, and special occasions. We follow the Saivite traditions of pujas, agamas and worship at our temple. In addition, the temple provides bhajans, Tamil, and religious classes, devotees from all over the Maryland, Washington, DC region, Virginia and the country visit this traditional Saivite Hindu Temple located in Lanham, MD.

Spread over 7000 sq. feet, the Temple houses the main deities, Valli-Devasena Sametha Murugan. Lord Sundareswaran, Lord Vara siddhi Vinayaka, Lord Palani Andavar, Goddess Meenakshi, Goddess Durgai Amman, Kala Samhara Moorthi, Bairavar, Nataraja Sivakami and Navagraha's are the other deities with 63 Guru Nayanmars. For more details on history and timeline, please do visit the following webpage <https://murugantemple.org/about/about-temple/>

We will be having special Abhishekam for Lord Murgu on Deepavali Oct 20th 2025 @11am and Kedari Gowri Pooja @6pm. Major functions especially Thaipooasam and Skanda Sashti are conducted on a grand scale and attended by ~2800 devotees. This year it will be celebrated between Oct 22nd to 27th 2025. Please do attend the special functions. We have Durgai Abhishekam every Sunday and also do special Kolu during Navarathri with Meenakshi Abhishekam @ 10.30am and Lalitha Sahasranamam @ 7.30pm. For more details check the webpage <https://murugantemple.org/events/temple-calendar-of-events/>.

Our temple is working hard to be part of mainstream in this country. We are already taking steps in that direction. Murugan Temple is a proud partner of United Hindu & Jain Temples Association (UHJT), Council of Hindu temples of North America (CHTNA) and Inter Faith Council (IFC).

Education Programs at Murugan Temple

Education is an integral part of any Hindu Temple culture. We offer classes in Tamil, Hinduism, Hatha Yoga, and bhajans with particular emphasis on imparting the great wisdom of our sages to our children. For more details, please visit the webpage <https://murugantemple.org/about/childrens-school/>

Donation and Special Services at Murugan Temple

Donating online is easy as 1-2-3. Please visit our secure-site for a list of donation options. Clicking the link below will redirect you to webpage with instructions on how to Donate. <https://murugantemple.org/about/donate-online/>

Our Murugan Temple Kitchen

Murugan Temple of North America has a beautiful kitchen where we make our prasadam with quality ingredients. [Details of our Kitchen services.](#)

An auditorium is available for rental; religious services will be performed by our priests either at the temple or Devotee's residence as appropriate, upon request. Visit us online at www.murugantemple.org. Please reach us at info@murugantemple.org or 301-552-4889.

Washington Muruganukku, Haro Hara!!

This Diwali, may the lights of joy, prosperity,
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Serve, Love, and Respect God and His Devotees. In the joy of others lies our own.

Directions

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T: 301.931.3135

From Route I-95 South (from Baltimore):

Follow I-95 South
Take exit 29A - Beltsville
Follow MD-212 South / Powder Mill Road to Ammendale Road
Turn Left on to BAPS Shri Swaminarayan Mandir

From Route I-270 South (from Frederick):

Follow I-270 South
Merge onto I-495 East towards Silver Spring
Take exit 27 for I-95 North towards Baltimore
Continue onto I-95 North; take exit 29-A towards Beltsville
Follow MD-212 South / Powder Mill Road to Ammendale Road
Turn Left on to BAPS Shri Swaminarayan Mandir



About BAPS:

BAPS is a volunteer-driven spiritual organization committed to fostering individual growth through Hindu values of faith, service, and harmony. It enriches society with the devoted efforts of tens of thousands of volunteers from diverse professional and social backgrounds, contributing millions of volunteer hours annually. Under the spiritual leadership of His Holiness Mahant Swami Maharaj, BAPS nurtures Indian traditions in over 100 North American and 3,500 communities worldwide. Through these communities, it champions holistic personal growth, promotes social progress, and encourages diversity by embracing all.



BAPS.org/WashingtonDC

ISKCON
Nityananda Swami Maharaj



His Holiness
Mahant Swami Maharaj

BAPS Swaminarayan Sanstha | www.BAPS.org

Mandir Activities



BAPS Shri Swaminarayan Mandir
Washington, DC

UHJT Diwali Mela 2025 Oct. 5th, Leesburg, VA the Tentative Culture Program Sequence (Subject to Update)

Program or Song/Dance School	Lead or Teacher's Name	Participants
11AM - Pooja and Inauguration of Diwali Mela 2025 - Coordinators & Emcee's lined up, National Anthem		
BAPS NoVA Chantilly, VA Mandir		
KIRTAN by ISKCON Devotees	Ram Murari Das	
Shiva Vandana by India Cultural and Spiritual Center	Tanu Shrivastav	Parvathavartheni Piramanayagam, Yamini Raju, Sahana Kirthi Raj, Radhika Sarma, Mita Gupta, Rashmi Sinha, Sheetal Rawat
Ganesha Stuti and Vande Matram by Saanwee Performing Arts	Priti Gupta	Anita, Aarushi, Anshu, Aarya, Araahi, Devna, Isabel, Michaela, Mira, Sakshi, Samah and Varshini
Ganapathy Talam by Salangai Arts	Akila Subramanyam	
Sankara Sri Giri on Lord Shiva by Nrityanjali	Shanthi Ashok	Riya Kodangil, Arya Eeaswar, Rima Khan
Namo Devi Mangala Charan by Odissi Lasya Dance academy	Lisa Santhanam	Lisa Santhanam , Antara Panda, Nora Chawla and Luna Gomes
Kuchipudi - classical by India Cultural and Spiritual Center	Saikantha Raparla	
Bharatanatyam - Sriram Bhajan by Saanwee Performing Arts	Priti Gupta	Anita, Anuritha, Aarya and Varshini
Durga Stotram Dance by Saanwee Performing Arts	Priti Gupta	Anita, Anuritha, Aarushi, Anshu, Aarya, Araahi, Aadhya, Devna, Isabel, Michaela, Mira, Sakshi, Samah, Samaya and Varshini
Dhol-Tasha performance by Avartan	Rohit Kolhatkar	Tejal Desai, Tanmay Pendharkar, Omkar Dhayagude, Raturaj Mhasvekar, Rahul Kesarkar, Anvi Kesarkar, Atharva Deshpande, Neha Saidane, Soham Katkar, Abhishek Kale, Rutvik Deshmukh, Aditya Kulkarni, Rushikesh Sable, Rohit Kolhatkar
Group song "Gore gore o banke chore" by Virginia Happy Feet	Arpita Gogoi	Preeti, Sreejana, Nimal, Parikshit and Arpita
Sri Saraswathy Dance by Salangai Arts	Akila Subramanyam	
Spiritual Dance, a dialogue with God by Konark Dance School	Jayantee Paine-Ganguly	Jayantee Paine-Ganguly
Dance Performance by Bhangra Steps Academy	Harpreet Kaur	Soham Jain, Kabir Jain, Ronav Singh Saluja

Dhol-Tasha performance by Shiv-Mudra	Praveen Patil	
Kuchipudi - classical by Pranava Natyam	Subha Maruvada	
Kuchipudi Classical Dance by Siri Chandhana Nikku	Manjula Nikku	Siri Chandhana Nikku
Gidda a Punjabi folk dance by Mere Apne	Preeti Singh	Sunita, Mira Chopra, Rajni Ahuja, Sudha Panjabi, Meena Munjal, Sneh Sethi, Indu Dhingra, Pavai Nagarajan, Sujata Nohria, Kamlesh Gulati
Bharatnatyam Dance by Tapasya Dance School	Sudha Krishnamurthy	
Kuchipudi - Classical Dance by Samskrithi Art Academy	Swathi Kandadai	Amoolya Adatrao, Mahanyasri Katta, Mahima Vulli, Parnika Mallajyosula, Shriya Chinthakindi, Sragvi Ginna, Tanusree Medi
Thillana by Bharatha Mallika School of Kuchipudi Dance	Aparna Talluri	Sai Sumedha Pathuri, Manya Cherukupalli
Jathiswaram - Mohana Ragam by Kalavaridhi Center for Performing Arts	Sheela Ramanath	Geetha Rejeesh, Indira P. Manchem, Sabitha Menon, Liji Scaria, Udhayasree Panicker, Jyotsna Jame
Shiva Panchakshari by Bharatha Mallika School of Kuchipudi Dance	Aparna Talluri	Aarya Kachipuram, Vaishnavi Nelli, Sahasra Kanakala, Adhya Viddamarri, Aarna Chalamacharla, Akshara Bodduna, Manasvi Ramshetty
Nrityam by Bharatha Mallika School of Kuchipudi Dance	Aparna Talluri	Manasvi Yarra, Veda Pantham, Keerthana Veldhandi, Likhitha Gumma, Nithya Gadiraju, Anvitha Thatipudi
Durga Puja Dance by Rajdhani Mandir Bal Vikas	Angana Chatterjee	
Ram-Leela by VHP-A	Madhumita Chavan	
Dev Garjana Dhol Tasha Group	Abhijeet Panse & Sameer Mangrulkar	
Jagadeesh Aluru Music Group - Bollywood Songs	Jagadeesh Aluru	

Laxmi-Ganesh Puja in between at 4:30PM



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