



# United Hindu and Jain Temples




## DIWALI MELA 2024

Saturday, October 19, 2024, 11:00 AM to 7:00 PM

VENUE

**Murugan Temple of North America**


6300 Princess Garden Pkwy Lanham, MD, US 20706



Jain Society of Metropolitan DC



Mangal Mandir



Murugan Temple of North America



Rajdhani Mandir



Sri Siva Vishnu Temple




ISKCON Hare Krishna Temple




Sri Venkateswara Lotus Temple




The Hindu Temple



VHP of America



Greater Baltimore Hindu-Jain Temple



Gayatri Pariwar U.S.A.



Durga Temple



Chinmaya Mission



BAPS Swaminarayan Mandir





## ASSOCIATION OF UNITED HINDU AND JAIN TEMPLES

301 Saybrooke View Drive, Gaithersburg, MD 20877-3780

Web page: [www.dcunitedtemples.org](http://www.dcunitedtemples.org)

### Mrugan Temple NA

Manimekalai Saravanan 240-498-0272  
Suseela Krishnan 703-282-0008

### Rajdhani Mandir

Alok Srivastava 703-736-9335  
Vivek Gupta 703-659-5538

### Sri Siva Vishnu Temple

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

### Sri Venkateswara Lotus Temple

Vasanthi Aharam 443-538-3006  
Sampath Krishnan 703-867-8407

### Vishwa Hindu Parishad

Ghanshyam Gupta 301-560-7617  
Jitendra Saxena 301-294-3379

### BAPS Swaminarayan Mandir

Rateebhai Patel 703-525-8979  
Harshad Patel 301-490-8299

### Chinmaya Mission

Rama IyerDevaraj 301-948-9455  
Vineet Sachdev 443-534-6705

### Durga Temple

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

### Gayatri Parivar

Shantilal Mistry 240-671-9081  
Satis Misra 301-340-2983

### Greater Baltimore Hindu Temple

Sanjeev Gholap 240-381-6122  
Kalishankar Mallik 410-252-4865

### Hindu Temple

Shukla Khanna 301-879-9708  
Narendra Misra 612-401-9164

### ISKCON

Sonia Chopra 703-438-8861  
Ananda Vrindavan 301-910-3426

### Jain Temple

Kamlesh Shah 301-838-9778  
Nisheeth Mehta

### Mangal Mandir

Samir Shah 301-760-0367  
Harshad Parikh 301-653-8810

### IFC Members

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

### Wish you "A Happy Diwali"

On behalf of United Hindu and Jain Temples Association (UHJT) we are happy to invite you here today to participate and celebrate religious festivity Diwali with our family, friends and our communities. Diwali is a major religious festival that symbolizes the victory of light over darkness (evil) and the start of new beginnings. Spiritually, Diwali is a time for self-reflection and realization, and inner cleansing of our minds. It is a day when we light lamps everywhere and burst firecrackers with great joy.

We, the fourteen temple representatives and volunteers, are happy to see the support of our community being present to witness our festivity and our strength of "unity in diversity". Your presence gives us strength and courage to manage and overcome the difficulties that have come across on our way.

Our heartfelt appreciation for your presence and participation in making it possible with success.

This big event is for the first time being celebrated in the Murugan Temple of North America (MTNA). It was our pleasure and pride being celebrated together with you all at the premise of our beloved temple.

With regards,

Sincerely

Dr. Krishnakumar  
President of MTNA

Dr. Gopal Guruswamy  
Chairman of MTNA

Dr. Manimekalai  
Chair, UHJT

# 2024 DIWALI MELA COMMITTEES

## **Coordinator/Finance:**

**Murugan Temple**

**Chair:** Dr. Krishnakumar

**Co-Chair:** Alok Srivastava

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

## **Cultural:**

**Hindu Temple / Greater Baltimore Temple**

**Chair:** Sanjeev Gholap

**Co-Chair:** Shukla Khanna

**Members:** Harshad, Vaidehi & Bharat

## **Decoration:**

**ISKCON**

**Chair:** Bharat Prabhakaran

**Co-Chair:** Mythili Bachu

**Members:** Kalpana, Sonia

## **Deity Worship:**

**SSVT**

**Chair:** Hari Singh

**Co-Chair:** Padmapriya Sundaram

**Members:** Harshad, Vaidehi & Mythili

## **Education:**

**VHP**

**Chair:** Ghanshyam Singh

**Co-Chair:** Padmapriya S

**Members:** Jitendra, Hari & Samir

## **Fund Raising:**

**Durga Temple**

**Chair:** Dr. Suresh Gupta

**Co-Chair:** Mythili Bachu

**Members:** Dr. Siva, Ramaiyer & Vivek

## **Hospitality:**

**Gayathri Parivar**

**Chair:** Shantilal Mistry

**Co-Chair:** Dr. Suresh Gupta

**Members:** Mythili, Padmapriya, Vaidehi & Satish

## **Logistics:**

**Murugan Temple**

**Chair:** Mythili Bachu

**Co-Chair:** Bharat Prabhakaran

**Members:** Manimekalai, Sampath, Vivek & Vasanthi

## **Membership:**

**Mangal Mandhir**

**Chair:** Dr Siva Subramanian

**Co-Chair:** Shantilal Mistry

**Members:** Jitendra, Manimekalai, Narendra & Sonia

## **Publicity:**

**Jain Temple**

**Chair:** Alok Srivastva

**Co-Chair:** Kamlesh Shah

**Members:** Manimekalai, Satish, Shantilal & Dr Siva

## **Souvenir:**

**BAPS Swamynarana Temple**

**Chair:** Rateebhai Patel

**Co-Chair:** Hari Singh

**Members:** Vaidehi, Ghanshyam, Shukla & Padmapriya

## **Vendor:**

**Murugan Temple**

**Chair:** Manimekalai Saravanan

**Co-Chair:** Ramaiyer Devraj

**Members:** Kamalesh, Padmapriya & Vasanthi

## **Volunteer/Ticket /Parking:**

**SVLT**

**Chair:** Vasanthi Aharam

**Co-Chair:** Vivek Gupta

**Members:** Kalpana & Vaidehi

## **Youth:**

**Rajdhani Mandir**

**Chair:** Vivek Gupta

**Co-Chair:** Vaidehi

**Members:** Bharat & Rateebhai

## **Website:**

**Chinmaya Mission**

**Chair:** Vineeth

**Co-Chair:** Sanjeev Gholap

**Members:** Padmapriya, Sonia & Manimekalai



# Association of United Hindu and Jain Temples

Maryland, Virginia and District of Columbia

Founded in 1993

Supporting Hindu & Jain community and promoting Interfaith



## Diwali Mela 2024 Culture Program

### Schedule Summary

Time	Program
11:00 am	Pooja and Inauguration of Diwali Mela 2024 – Coordinators & Emcee's
11:15am to 12:45pm	Cultural Music and Dance Program by Group A youth of age group 6-18 years
12:45 to 1:00pm	UHJT Updates and Announcements
1:00 to 2:30pm	Cultural Dance Program by Group B youth of age group 6-18 years
2:30 to 2:45pm	UHJT Updates and Announcements and Diwali inaugural speech by Dr Richa Agarwal
2:45 to 3:25pm	Cultural Dance Program by Group C youth of age group 12-18 years
3.25 to 4:00pm	Fashion Show by Sangeetha Singh and Team
4:00 to 5:00pm	Lakshmi Pooja and various Delegate speeches
5:00 to 5:30pm	Dance Melody Program by Revathi
5:30 to 7:00pm	Garba and group dance – Open to all





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## Diwali Mela 2024 Culture Program Details Schedule of Performances

Time	Program or Song/Dance School	Teacher Name	Dance Participants
11:00 am	Pooja and Inauguration of Diwali Mela 2024 – Coordinators & Emcee's		
11:15am	Karaoke Song by Virginia Happy Feet	Arpita Gogoi	Preeti Singh, Vani Hovale, Panchali Chakravarty, Nirmali Das, Arpita Gogo
11:20am	Song by Virginia Happy Feet	Arpita Gogoi	Preeti Singh, Vani
11:30am	Dance by Salangai Arts	Akila Subramanyam	Netra Ganeshkumar, Diya Sudhakar,
11:40am	Dance with DC	Divya Chopra	Aayant, Aanvi, Asha, Aarya, Aadish, Sanjay
11:45am	Dance by Salangai Arts	Akila	
11:55am	Dance by Samskrithi	Gurus Swathi	
12:00pm	Shiva Thandavam Dance by Muwa	Srinivas Kandadai	Joshita Mandava, Krithi
12:05pm	Thillana Dance by Thapasya	Smt Lavanya	Arna Gumgol, Mridhulam
12:15pm	Pallavi Odissi Dance - School of Dance	Jayantee Paine	Tanika Karnik, Aparajita i
12:25pm	Soorya Anjali - Dance School of VA school of dance	Guru Smt Lavanya Ananth/ Sudha Krishnamurthy	Ishika Mathew, Sanjana Nayak, Arna Dharmapuri, Mahanya Narayanan

12:45pm	<b>UHJT Updates and Announcements</b>		
1:00pm	Dance	Divya Chopra	Aarav, Arjun, Divij,
1:05pm	Riddhi Dance	Shaini Tomar	Avni Panwar, Gunjan
1:10pm	Dance/ Dance with DC	Divya Chopra	Aarman, Bhuvana
1:15pm	Dance/ Nehas Bollywood Thumkas Dance Academy	Neha Gupta	Aksha Mothukuri, Varnika Nagelli, Ishika Kallem, Akhil Jamisetti, Shlok Sondhi, Akki chintala, Aarohi Gupta
1:20pm	Dance Medley by Thumak Dance Company	Priya Aswani	Rishaan Moolchandani, Vyan Mathur, Rohan Subramian
1:30pm	Shankara Srigiri Hamsanandi Dance by Bharatha Mallika School of Kuchipudi Dance	Mallika Ramprasad	Praseedha Basavala, Neha Nookala, Sanjana Perugu, Hrithika Kantipudi.
1:45pm	Fusion Dance by Nehas	Neha Gupta	Sreeka muppala,
1:50pm	Tamil Folk dance by Bollywood Thumkas	Pragathi kesavalu	Srinainika Gurram,
1:55pm	Ramayana Sabdam Dance Bharatha Mallika School of dance	Mallika Ramprasad	Bharatha Mallika students
2:30pm	<b>UHJT Update and Announcements along with Diwali Inaugural Speech by Dr Richa Agrawal</b>		
2:45pm	Ramayana Sabdam Dance Bharatha Mallika School of dance	Mallika Ramprasad	Bharatha Mallika students

3:00pm	Shiv Sakthi Medley Dance by Nrithyashala School of Indian Dance	Guru Smt. Janaki Sivaraman / Sitara Chakkamadathil	Rebecca Kadavil Sanika Chakkamadathil Rishika Nambiar Aditi Rajeev Diya Sanooj Georgy Mattamana
3:05pm	Dance	Dr. Tapasi	Riya Sen, Hanshini
3:10pm	Shiva Thandava Dance by Nrithyashala School of Indian Dance	Guru Smt. Janaki Sivaraman	Sitara Chakkamadathil
3:25pm	Fashion Show by Sangeeta Singh	Sangteeta Singh	Sangeetha and Team
4:00pm	<b>Lakshmi Pooja</b>		
4:30pm	<b>Various Delegates Speech</b>		
5:00pm	Bharatnatyam melody by Revathi	Shri Hari Nambiar	Revati
5:30pm	Garba and Group Dance for all		Masilamani



# Directions

4320 Ammendale Rd, Beltsville, MD 20705  
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](https://BAPS.org/WashingtonDC)

# Mandir Activities



**BAPS Shri Swaminarayan Mandir**  
Washington, DC

Brahmaswarup  
Pramukh Swami Maharaj



Pragat Brahmaswarup  
Mahant Swami Maharaj

BAPS Swaminarayan Sanstha® | [www.BAPS.org](http://www.BAPS.org)



# Rituals

**Daily Arti & Katha Timings** ..... 7:00 am & 6:30 pm

## Darshan Timings

Mon - Sat ..... 7:00 am - 12:00 pm  
4:00 pm - 8:00 pm  
Sun ..... 7:00 am - 8:00 pm

## Abhishek Timings

Mon - Sat ..... 7:00 am - 12:00 pm  
4:00 pm - 8:00 pm  
Sun ..... 7:00 am - 8:00 pm

## Special Pujan

Maha Shivratri ..... Fri, Mar 8, 6:30 pm  
Hanuman Jayanti ..... Tue, Apr 23, 10:30 am  
Ganesh Pujan ..... Sat, Sep 7, 6:30 pm  
Diwali - Chopda Pujan ..... Thu, Oct 31, 6:30 pm

## Punam Mahapuja

Thu, Jan 25	Tue, Apr 23	Sun, Jul 21	Wed, Oct 16
Sat, Feb 24	Thu, May 23	Mon, Aug 19	Fri, Nov 15
Sun, Mar 24	Fri, Jun 21	Wed, Sep 18	Sun, Dec 15

# 2024 Festivals

Makar Sankranti - Jholi Utsav ..... Sun, Jan 14  
Vasant Panchami ..... Sun, Feb 18  
Holi - Fuldol Utsav ..... Sun, Mar 24  
Swaminarayan Jayanti / Ram Navmi ..... Sun, Apr 14  
Yogiji Maharaj Janma Jayanti ..... Sun, Jun 2  
Guru Purnima ..... Sun, Jul 21  
Janmashtami ..... Sun, Aug 25  
Jal Jhilani Ekadashi ..... Sat, Sep 14  
Mahant Swami Maharaj Janma Jayanti ..... Sun, Sep 29  
Sharad Purnima ..... Sun, Oct 13  
New Year - Annakut ..... Sat, Nov 2  
Kids' Diwali Celebration ..... Sun, Nov 3  
Pramukh Swami Maharaj Janma Jayanti ... Sun, Dec 8

## Mahila Festival Celebrations

Swaminarayan Jayanti / Ram Navmi ..... Sun, Apr 21  
Mahant Swami Maharaj Janma Jayanti ..... Sun, Oct 6  
Pramukh Swami Maharaj Janma Jayanti ... Sun, Dec 15

*Note: Dates and timings are subject to change.*

# Sabha

## Bal Mandal

(Grades Pre K - 8)  
Sabha 4:30 pm - 6:30 pm

For more info, contact:  
Nikunjibhai Patel  
dcbalmandal@gmail.com

## Kishore Mandal

(Grades 9 - 12 & College)  
Sabha 1:30 pm - 3:00 pm  
Seva 4:00 pm - 5:00 pm

For more info, contact:  
Aakashbhai Patel  
dckishoremandal@gmail.com

## Yuvak Mandal

(Post College - English)  
Sabha 3:00 pm - 4:30 pm  
Seva 5:30 pm - 7:00 pm

For more info, contact:  
Sahajbhai Patel  
dcyuvaks@gmail.com

## Sanyukta Mandal

(Gujarati)  
Sabha 4:30 pm - 6:30 pm

For more info, contact:  
Yogeshbhai Patel  
dcsatsang@gmail.com

## Balika Mandal

(Grades Pre K - 8)  
Sabha 4:30 pm - 6:30 pm

For more info, contact:  
Bhumiben Patel  
dcbalikamandal@gmail.com

## Kishori Mandal

(Grades 9 - 12 & College)  
Sabha 2:00 pm - 3:30 pm  
Seva 4:00 pm - 5:00 pm

For more info, contact:  
Bhumiben Pakai  
dckishorimandal@gmail.com

## Yuvati Mandal

(Post College - English)  
Sabha 2:00 pm - 3:30 pm  
Seva 5:30 pm - 7:00 pm

For more info, contact:  
Muktiben Patel  
dcyuvatis@gmail.com

## Premvati Mandal

(Gujarati)  
Sabha 2:00 pm - 3:30 pm

For more info, contact:  
Amitaben Patel  
dcmahila@gmail.com

# Donations

Donations can be made online or at the accounting office



[donate.na.baps.org/WashingtonDC](https://donate.na.baps.org/WashingtonDC)

# Announcements

Stay in touch with our latest announcements by joining our telegram channel



## Understanding Religious Rituals and Routine Practices

Unlike other Religions, Vedic Dharma has many specialties, which is known as "Sanatana Dharma" According to Bhagavad Geeta, "Sanatana" means which cannot be destroyed by Fire, Weapons, Water, Air and which is present in all living and non-living being. "Dharma" means the way of Life Which is "total of all customs and rituals". In each and every ritual, there are components of Spirituality in it. Without Spirituality, nothing exists in Sanatana Dharma. But remember that spirituality is not a Religion. Spirituality as Religion does not exist at all. Though Spirituality is a part of every custom or Ritual in our normal life as Rituals can bring prosperity to the Human Beings. Hence, we should focus on practicing the Religious Rituals. Rituals are also meant to bring good health and long life along with strong family and social bondage. Therefore, it is necessary to understand each and every Religious Rituals and Routines Practices today. The Religious Rituals offer to all of us a feeling of solidarity as we participate in such events as Puja, Mandir (Temple) going and celebration of various religious occasions such as, Ram Navami, Janmashtami, Diwali etc. The ritual life is important because it reinforces the family's identity along with values and a sense of belonging. Ignoring the Religious Rituals could deprive a family from an important source of strength and the most enduring experience of our journey on this Universe. Today's rituals, in fact, are tomorrow's memories that become a binding link between the generations. The Religious Rituals of many Vedic Family (Hindu Family) are basically focused on Bhakti- Devotion to God. The Religious Rituals are the backbone of Vedic (Hindu) Religion and its day-to-day living. It is the practice of Religious Rituals that Vedic Family manifest and reaffirm their Faith in God. Exploring the Heartwarming Indian culture of Religious Rituals which were perfectly and carefully crafted, by our revered Rishis, with vibrant color palettes, and experienced lovely beginnings of Various Religious Rituals with devotion - Bhakti as depicted here:

### (1). Why do we go to the Mandir -Temple?

For the people who strictly follow Hinduism, Mandir Has been a center of Faith and Worship since Sanatana Dharma Civilization. Mandir has been the bastion of Faith and Culture and has become a center of worship, prayer and Peace as well. Mandir is considered as a Divine Body of God and as such, it established the Mandir Religious rituals for awakening the inner thoughts and emotions for the Divine. These Rituals engage our Mind, Heart and Senses with the Divine God and it cleanses our bad Karmas and imbuing divinity. The practice of Religious Rituals has countless blessings of mental sanity, peace and everlasting Joys.

- The Mandir is a house of God - a place of worship. We believe that God is present in the form as well as in spirit. Mandir is a place where the deities of God reside into it and it is the stronghold of our Faith and Religion.
- Mandir is a transmitter of our spiritual heritage through Rituals as it makes its way into our emotional and spiritual life. Mandir helps us to grow spiritually and elevates our thoughts to God awareness. This helps us to make spirituality the basis of our life; Putting God at the center of our Life and allowing God to lead our life.
- Mandir is a place where God consciousness and devotion are taught and practiced. Mandir purifies our mind and elevates thoughts, thus sublimating our very life. It is a



place where God's words are spoken and recited, which helps us in building the spiritual foundation for God realization.

- Mandir Provides a pious atmosphere, putting our Life into a spiritual trance, removing all outward world happenings. Mandir thus allows us to bring purity and tranquility to our mind to practice spiritual disciplines.
- Mandir Provides invaluable avenues for our children's spiritual and religious development. Mandir provides an opportunity to learn and teach to live in harmony with each other and Godly people. This Godly association exposes us to the various viewpoints and healthy exchange of ideas and thoughts, thus facilitating " Sat sang".
- Mandir also facilitates a wholesome environment for social and cultural needs of our families through celebrating Religious and cultural activities. God has designed the local Mandir as a place to fill the needs of receiving spiritual solace in the time of tragedy.
- Mandir provides a "Spiritual Cement" of Faith that holds and binds our life together when our life is under stress and strain of our modern day living. God enables us to ride over the storms we may encounter now or in future.

## **(2). Why do we perform Aarti?**

In the Mandir, Aarti is usually performed by the Priest and it is performed by the head of the household in home and is attended by everybody who is present. In Hinduism, Aarti is a religious ritual of worship that is a part of Puja, in which light from Ghee soaked wicks is offered to one or more deities. Aarti is also sung in the praise of the deity. Aarti is generally performed one to five times daily and usually at the end of a Puja. Aarti is performed during almost all religious ceremonies and occasions. The Aarti is waved in the right hand in a clockwise circling movement to light the entire form of the deity while all devotees sing the Aarti.

- Aarti denotes the joy and auspiciousness which accompanies the vision of God. Aarti is done with love, devotion, reverence and exuberance.
- Aarti is often performed with camphor which has special significance. Camphor represents that the light of Aarti Illuminates the Deity and is symbolic of Knowledge. Camphor also emits a pleasant perfume indicating that the "Perfume of Love" also be spread to all.
- At the end of the Aarti, devotees place their hands over the flame and then touch their respective eyes and on the top of the head, meaning thereby that the light of Aarti lights up the vision; the vision be divine, all thoughts be noble and wise.
- Hindus believe that God is the source of the wondrous phenomenon of the Universe, and due to HIM alone that all else exists and shines
- Aarti reflex spirit of Humbleness and Gratitude wherein faithful devotees become immersed in God's Divine Form.
- Aarti can also be performed to all forms of life which help in progress of the culture, signifying that everyone has a part of God within them.
- The philosophical meaning of Aarti is the fact that Sun, Moon, Stars, Fire, lightning etc are the Natural sources of light as the Light of Aarti is.

### **(3). Why do we perform Pradakshina (Circumambulation):**

Pradakshina consists of walking around in a "Circle" as a form of worship in Hinduism. The devotees walk around the innermost chamber of the shrine, housing the deities. Pradakshina is also done around Tulsi plant and Peepal tree. It is also done around Mandir as well. In Pradakshina, one goes to the left-hand direction to keep the deity around the Sanctum Sanctorum on one's right side. Pradakshina is one of the customary aspects of going to a Mandir. Typically, Pradakshina is done after the completion of traditional worship (Pooja) and after paying homage to the deity. Meditative mood is present in each Pradakshina done and a clockwise direction is the right way to do Pradakshina. We always assume that God is the center of our existence as God exists everywhere. Our actions and thoughts are always centered around God. The center point of our Life is always fixed and remains the same at whatever distance we do the Pradakshina. Our Pradakshina should be done with God at the center with our thoughts and actions must dwell on God. We also assume that God is always on our right side, reminding ourselves that we must always lead a righteous life, in the right path called Dharma.

- It is believed that the sins committed by the Mind are destroyed by the first step of Pradakshina.
- The sins committed by Speech or unkind words are destroyed by the second step of Pradakshina.
- The Sins perpetrated by the Body are destroyed by the third step of Pradakshina.
- Pradakshina, being a Devotional Rounds, should be done with folded hands and visualizing the deity in your mind all the time. All these actions have salutary effects to ward off the Ego from the mind.
- God is the center, source and essence of our lives, and this recognition is the significance of our Pradakshina.
- Wherever we may be or whoever we may be, we all are equally close to God. What our Pradakshina points out that God's grace flows towards us without any partiality or favoritism.
- In India, the right side symbolizes Auspiciousness, and therefore Pradakshina is done clockwise as God is always on our Right. It means that we all should lead an Auspicious life of righteousness with God as Right-Hand guide.

### **(4). Why Do We Offer Food to God?**

Hinduism makes an offering of food to God and later on partakes the same food as "Prasada" with the blessing of God. God is Omnipotent and Omniscient, where man is part, while God is the totality. Hence, all that we do is by God's strength and knowledge alone.

- From tiniest Ant to the mightiest Elephant, God - the creator of Universe - provides for each and every one of HIS creations. HE ensures that none of HIS creatures goes hungry. HE alone is the one who provides our food,
- In order to show our appreciation and gratitude to him, we put before him Water, Milk, Fruits, and cooked food as a token of our daily meal and thank God for the food HE provides.

- We gracefully bow to HIM in thanks and Pleading Prayer to humbly ask that HE bless the Food placed before HIM. We then partake of this Food in the full knowledge that it had been blessed by God and will therefore give us the good health of Mind, Body and Spirit.
- This blessed Food is then eaten in the form of "Prasad". This blessed Food becomes healthy, giving us immense pleasure, both Physically and Psychologically.
- 

### **(5). Why Do We Fast?**

Most devout Hindus fast regularly or on "Ekadashi" only, which comes twice a month on the 11th day of the month. On such days, they do not eat Food Grain at all, and eat only fruits or a special diet of simple food. "Upvas" is another Sanskrit name which means "Near to stay", meaning thereby "staying near to God". Since Certain foods make our mind dull or agitated, eating either simple, light food or totally abstaining from eating is recommended by Ayurveda philosophy, and it says that Mind becomes alert, generating noble thoughts, allowing you to stay in constant contact with God. But to me, it is a self-imposed form of discipline of "Fasting". Fasting is a break which helps us to overhaul our digestive system along with our entire body to work at its best. Fasting also helps us to cultivate control over our senses thus sublimating our desires and guiding our minds to be at peace. Of course, there is a noble goal behind fasting. Bhagavad Gita urges us all to eat simple, pure and healthy Sattvik Food even when not fasting.

- Fasting on "Ekadashi" has its root in our Vedic Philosophy of practicing some sort of AusteriThroughty. Consumption of Grain of all kinds is prohibited on "Ekadashi". Fasting is believed to help provide a cleansing of the body as well as mind. It gives some relief to our digestive muscles and the system.
- Fasting helps in checking body weight levels, keeping our reflexes sharp and our mind alert. Through fasting, we can improve our discipline by increasing our will power.
- On humanitarian grounds, fasting makes us aware of the pangs of hunger, and thirst. The fasting highlights the plight of the poor and under-fed and helps us to become more tolerant, sympathetic and charitable towards them.

### **(6). Why Do We Offer and Crack Coconut?**

In Hinduism, the most common offering is Coconut which is also known as "Shrifal" and regarded as a "Sacred" fruit.

Coconuts are offered to God, but It is also offered on the occasion of Weddings, Festivals, New houses or vehicles. Coconut is also offered in the sacrificial Fire while performing Yagna (Home). In most religious rituals, a coconut is placed on a "Kalasha" set up for a Puja. The Coconut is broken and placed before God and then distributed as "Prasad". The Coconut is broken, thus symbolising the breaking of the Ego. The sweet juice within the coconut is offered along with the white Kernel to God. It is believed that our mind is thus purified by the touch of God. Coconut is a symbol of goodwill and good human qualities and hence finds use in every auspicious function.

- Hinduism strongly believes that the Coconut is the purest form of offering that one can render to God. The Coconut is a fruit which is unique in many respects. The sweet nectar- like water within the coconut is pure and untouched by the Human hand.



- The course-knit outer fibers represent the "Jealousy", "Greed", "Lust", "Selfishness" and other vices of Human Nature which must be broken up and removed to penetrate and reach the white inner purity and taste the sweet untouched nectar of spiritual purity and bless of God.
- Coconut is the only fruit that has three distinct eyes. These eyes symbolize the Trinity of Evaluation namely: Creation, Preservation and Dissolution.
- The eyes of Coconut also represent the three eyes of Man - Two Physical eyes plus the third or "Inner Eye" which is the mind's eye or Conscience. Only the "Inner Eye" can penetrate the false, outer facade and reach the ultimate truth. It alone distinguishes right from wrong.
- The composition of the Coconut is characteristic of the three elements of Human Being. The hard outer shell with its coarse fibers represents the physical composition. The inner white fruit represents Human Being's Psychological element, and the pure untouched water signifies his spiritual composition.
- It is a belief that Coconut has now received Divine Vibration from God and will therefore give them good prosperity and good health of Mind. Body and Spirit.

### **(7). Why do we apply the Holy Ash or Bhasma (Yagne Ash):**

Bhasma (Yagna Ash or Holy Ash) is the ash from Yagna (Sacrificial Fire) where special wood along with Ghee and other herbs is offered as worship of God. Alternatively, Ash used for Abhisheka is also distributed as Bhasma which could be applied on the forehead. A pinch of this sacred Ash is consumed each time devotees receive it. It is believed that this sacred Bhasma destroyed our sins and its application signifies destruction of evil with remembrance of the divine. Bhasma is also known as "Vibhuti" as it gives glory to one who applies it and receives "Protection" from ill health. This Bhasma purifies the mind as false ego or identification is also burned by the application of Bhasma. Bhasma is also associated with Lord Shiva who applies it all over HIS Body.

- We place the Bhasma on our foreheads to remind ourselves of the universal truth that nothing is permanent, and the final end is ultimate Dust.
- The Bhasma serves to remind us to cast aside our petty Jealousies Suspensions, Selfishness and other evil qualities, and to live in harmony with one another; to Love, Respect, Serve etc.
- Bhasma is believed to have Medicinal Properties and contains high curative qualities. It is believed that Bhasma also relieves Pain, illness and Anxiety. It dissolves all our ills and brings us good health, peace and prosperity.
- Bhasma is considered to be highly potent which brings peace, happiness, harmony; being having a dynamic power when used with prayer.

### **(8). Why do we worship Idols?**

Hinduism considers Idol worship essential because it makes the mind powerful and progressive. Idol worship is believed to be sensitive for God realization. Hinduism believes that worship is very scientific as it provides a step-by- step process and procedure to develop a relation with God, removing the feeling of isolation. The immense Faith and Devotion turns that idol into God, believing that God is "Omnipresent", meaning that HE is everywhere and that God is present in Idol too.

- In the presence of an idol, one experiences physical and emotional security which is a strong feeling which helps strengthen self-confidence.
- A believer sees in an Idol what a non-believer cannot. Perhaps, it is only a stone to non-believers but to believers, it is God Himself. AS God is embodied in all HIS creations, HE manifests Himself in all that HE creates. HE, therefore, is in that Idol too.
- Another reason for idol worship is the fact that ordinary people with a simple and untrained mind would find it difficult to concentrate on God with the forces of worldly distraction. So, the presence of an idol becomes the center point of concentration to focus their minds to communicate with God through Prayers. Therefore, it is easier to seek God, instead of everywhere, Him in Idol. An Idol provides that image of God with a definite form having qualities.
- In the presence of an Idol, one experiences physical and emotional security which is a strong feeling that helps strengthen self-confidence.

### **(9). Why do we ring the Bell in a Mandir (Temple):**

Is it to wake up our God? And let HIM know that we have come? But our God never sleeps and never needs to be told as HE is all knowing. God welcomes us at any time and at all the time. Then, why do we ring the Bell? The ringing of the bell produces an auspicious sound - the sound of OM (Aum) which is the universal name of God. The ringing of the bell provides the vision of God who is all-auspiciousness. Even while doing the ritualistic Aarati, we ring the bell. Sometimes, the Conches are also blown with other musical instruments. This ringing bells is significant as it helps drown any inauspicious or irrelevant noises that disturb or distract the devotee in their devotional ardour and inner peace. The ritualistic worship or puja is also accompanied by ringing the bell and chanting.

### **(10). Why do we worship Tulasi?**

For Indians, Tulasi is the most sacred Plant and regularly worshiped. Tulasi leaves can be washed and reused in Puja as the leaves are considered to be self-purifying. One story says that Tulasi was a devoted wife of a celestial being and was cursed by the same to become a stone because of her sinning. But seeing Tulasi devotional and adhered to righteousness, the God blessed Tulasi that she would become the worshipped plant. And that all offerings would be incomplete without the Tulasi leaf and hence the worship of Tulsi. In fact, Tulasi also symbolizes Goddess Laxmi - the consort of Lord Vishnu. Thus, Tulasi is worshipped for a happy family life. Thus, Tulasi demonstrates to the world that even a small object, like a leaf of a sacred plant, offered with devotion means more to God than all the wealth in the World. The Tulasi leaf has great medicinal value and is used to cure various ailments.

- Tulsi has a special importance in Hinduism. That is why the Tulsi plant is found in most homes. This plant is believed to be a favorite of Lord Vishnu, so women worship Tulsi after their morning bath to seek God's blessings. It brings positive energy in the house. Apart from this, Tulasi plants are also very beneficial for health. Tulsi keeps the atmosphere of the house clean. But, wearing Tulsi beads is also considered very good.
- Wearing Tulsi beads is a religious belief but it has a power. Wearing Tulsi beads around the neck purifies the body, increases vitality and cures many diseases. Wearing Tulsi beads helps a person to increase the power of dehydration, fever, cold, headache, skin

diseases, brain diseases and many diseases related to gas. Wearing Tulsi beads calms the mind and purifies the soul.

- Tulsi is a wonderful medicine that improves blood pressure and digestion. Taking Tulsi increases the flow of electrical energy in the body. Wearing Tulsi beads around the neck emits electric waves that prevent blood circulation. Tulsi is very beneficial in malaria and other types of fever. Tulsi beads give mental peace. Tulsi helps to improve memory. It is beneficial as an antibiotic, pain reliever and immune booster. Wearing Tulsi garland increases glory, fame and fortune. Wearing Tulsi beads around the neck increases vitality.

### **(11). Why do we light Lamp (Deepa):**

In almost every Indian Home, a Lamp (Deep) is lit daily before the Altar of God. Akhanda Deep is maintained continuously in few homes as well. All auspicious functions commence with the lighting of Deepa. Light symbolizes knowledge and the Darkness symbolizes ignorance. Here, God is the Knowledge Principle, that is Chaitanya, who is the illuminator of all knowledge, and hence, The Deep is worshiped as God Himself. Knowledge removes ignorance just as light removes darkness. Hence, Deep is lighted to get knowledge as a greatest form of wealth. The traditional oil Deep has a spiritual significance in the sense that oil or Ghee symbolizes our negative tendencies and the ego. When lit by spiritual knowledge the negative tendencies of ours get slowly exhausted and ego also perishes. Like flame which always burns upwards, the acquired knowledge also takes us towards higher ideals.

- Lighting a Deep is considered to be a spiritual and cultural process. This process is an essential element of worship of God. And all auspicious functions commence with the lighting of Deep. The lamp is lit at the beginning of conferences, cultural programs and similar activities or celebrations.
- In pilgrimage Places, such as Varanasi (Kashi), Prayag, Gaya etc., the pilgrims light a Deep and let it float in the current of the river. This is considered as an integral part of the worship to Mother Ganga.
- The lighting of Deep signifies the wish and desire to let the light of good thoughts reach all. The light symbolizes knowledge and darkness as ignorance. Upanishads says that "Take me from darkness (ignorance) and lead me to light (Knowledge) - तमसो मा ज्योतिर्गमय।

### **(12). Why do we have Puja?**

Puja is the act of showing our reverence to God through prayers and rituals. The object of the Puja is to create thoughts of spiritual forces in and around us. Our prayers are a big reservoir of vast spiritual force. The Purpose of Puja is making a spiritual connection with the divine. God is a focal point for communicating with the divine. Puja is a multi-sensory experience. Puja is a ritual but the quality of devotion is important. Puja is performed in large gatherings and performed on religious festivals; however, daily Puja is performed everyday as Puja ends with Arati. Tilak is applied and Prasad is distributed to all. By performing the Puja, a relationship with the divine is created. Puja is an individual offering to the deity but must be done with love, devotion and reverence to the divine. Puja is a means of honoring Gods or Goddesses whose presence in the home is believed to protect family and bring peace and harmony.



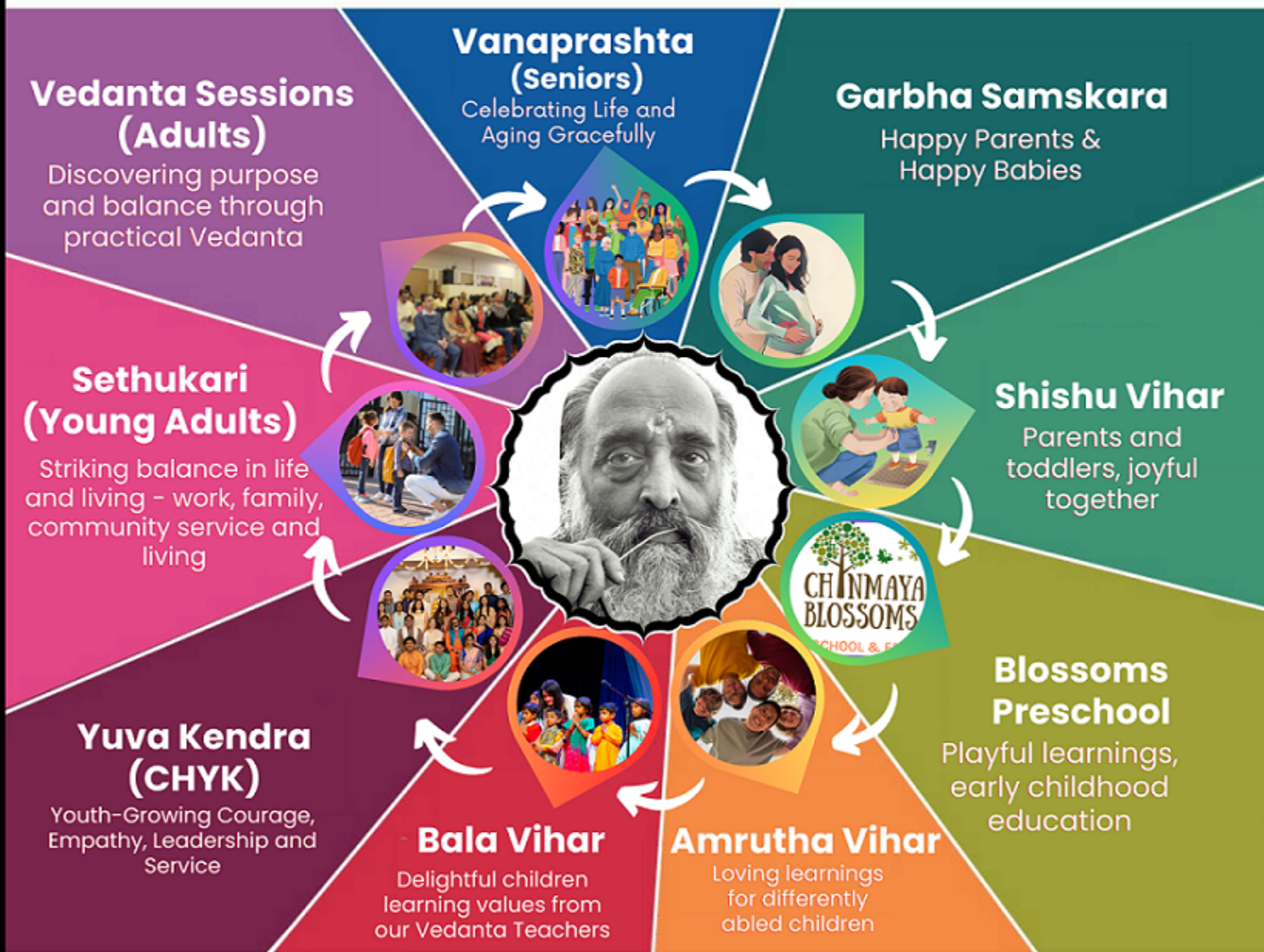
- Puja invokes the spirit of God or Deity, welcoming the Deity by washing its feet etc. Lighting the incense and the Deep are common in performing Puja. Fresh flowers are offered along with Food to the deity and Prayer or Mantra is chanted dwelling on the divine aspects of the deity. The sanctified food is offered to the deity and then it is distributed to all devotees as Prasad which is considered as the blessing of God.
- Forging a spiritual connection with the divine is the ultimate goal of performing Puja. Prayers, Invocations or Rituals are performed with devotion. We bond with the divine through the Puja Rituals. The purpose of rituals is to create an atmosphere in which Human and divine or Spiritual Being can enjoy communication with one another. Puja thus serves to bring the humans and the Divine together on an energetic level. Performing a Puja ritual is a wonderful way to experience direct communication with the divine. Thus, Puja is meant to be a joyful experience, done meditating on the Divine.
- With Puja, you can create a direct path to spiritual oneness that allows you to experience closeness, reinforcing your connection with the Divine.



**Chinmaya Mission Washington Regional Center (CMWRC®) was established in the late 1980's to serve communities in the Washington DC Metropolitan area, Maryland, and Virginia. It is an affiliated center under Chinmaya Mission West (CMW) and Central Chinmaya Mission Trust (CCMT-India).**

**A center for spiritual study for Advaita Vedanta, the knowledge of universal oneness. With a focus on character building, inner transformation and practical application of the scriptures. CMWRC offers a wide array of Vedanta study forums for all ages and operates numerous social service projects.**

## VEDANTA IS THE SCIENCE OF LIFE



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46 Norwood Road,  
Silver Spring, MD 20905

### FREDERICK CHAPTER

Urbana Middle School  
3511 Pontius Court,  
Ijamsville (Urbana), MD 21754

### CHINMAYA SOMNATH

4350 Blue Spring Dr,  
Chantilly, VA 20151

### RICHMOND CHAPTER

11537 - A Nuckols Rd,  
Glen Allen, VA 23059

**CMWRC® is registered as a non-profit organization and is guided by trained Acharyas, Vedanta Teachers and entirely run by dedicated volunteers.**

**[www.chinmayadc.org](http://www.chinmayadc.org)**

The **Durga Temple of Virginia** is a prominent Hindu temple located in Fairfax Station, Virginia. Established as a center for spiritual growth and community engagement, the temple serves devotees from diverse backgrounds who come to worship, participate in religious ceremonies, and engage in cultural activities.

## Deities

The temple is dedicated primarily to **Goddess Durga**, the embodiment of strength and protection, revered as the mother of the universe. Other deities worshipped at the temple include:

1. **Shiva** - The destroyer and transformer among the Hindu Trinity.
2. **Vishnu** - The preserver and protector of the universe.
3. **Ganesha** - The remover of obstacles and the god of wisdom and prosperity.
4. **Goddess Lakshmi** - The goddess of wealth and prosperity.
5. **Hanuman** - The deity of strength, devotion, and perseverance.
6. **Radha-Krishna** - Representing divine love and devotion.
7. **Rama, Sita, and Lakshmana (Ram Darbar)** - Central figures of the epic Ramayana, symbolizing righteousness, loyalty, and familial devotion.
8. **Buddha, Jhule Lal, Kali Mata, Satyanarayan, Saraswathi, Sai Baba are the other deities in this Mandir.**

## Activities

The temple serves as a vibrant hub of religious, cultural, and community activities. Key activities and services include:

1. **Daily Worship and Aarti:** The temple holds regular morning and evening worship services, including aarti (ceremonial light offering), where devotees offer prayers to the deities.
2. **Festivals:** The temple celebrates major Hindu festivals such as **Navaratri, Diwali, Holi,** and **Janmashtami**, with special poojas (rituals), music, dance, and cultural programs that bring together the larger community.
3. **Poojas and Rituals:** The temple offers personalized poojas, havans (fire rituals), and other spiritual services for occasions like weddings, housewarming ceremonies, and name-giving ceremonies.
4. **Cultural and Educational Programs:** The temple provides cultural classes, language lessons (like Hindi and Sanskrit), and yoga and meditation sessions aimed at fostering personal growth and well-being.
5. **Charitable Activities:** The temple is actively involved in various social service initiatives such as food drives, blood donation camps, and other philanthropic activities to support the local and global communities.
6. **Balgokul:** The temple conducts weekly religious education classes for children to teach them about Hindu culture, scriptures, and values, ensuring the preservation of cultural heritage among younger generations.

With its combination of spiritual guidance, religious services, and community-building activities, the Durga Temple of Virginia plays a crucial role in enriching the lives of its devotees and fostering a strong sense of connection and purpose.

# SIGNIFICANCE OF DIWALI (DEEPAVALI)

DIWALI is prominently known as Festival of Lights. This festival is associated with the return of Lord Sri Ram along with his wife Sita to Ayodhya after killing the ten-headed demon king Ravana. People of Ayodhya, overjoyed on his return after an exile of fourteen years, welcomed him with great pomp and show and by illuminating the entire kingdom with Diyas (lamps).

This day also carries significance for Jains, Sikhs, and people all across India and the world as they celebrate to commemorate their spiritual heritage.

People of Indian origin also worship Lakshmi: The Goddess of Wealth: to invoke her blessings and bring wealth and prosperity to family and friends. Diwali is also considered to be the beginning of New Year for businesses.

While the story behind DEEPAVALI and the manner of celebration varies from region to region, the universal theme is the VICTORY of GOOD over EVIL, LIGHT over DARKNESS, and KNOWLEDGE over IGNORANCE. The DIWALI festival could act as a catalyst to integrate the common philosophical threads in all religions for fostering LOVE and PEACE among HUMANKIND.

We request our honorable County Executive to declare October as Hindu Heritage Day every year as has been done in several other states in the US. We also request him to declare Diwali as a holiday in Montgomery County schools where the students are taught not only about Deepavali but also about other religions because all religions teach the same values of love, respect, and tolerance; so that hate crime is eliminated.

Why do we celebrate Diwali on the darkest night of the month (new moon)? It is to remind ourselves to break free from our own dark habits, our worldly obsessions, egos, self-importance, insecurities, and all our inner demons. This year, let us learn and share the deeper meaning of this celebration. On this Diwali, let us challenge ourselves to shine our inner divine nature as bright as possible, so that we can become a beacon of light for those who are still in darkness. This is especially true today with shattered peace and rampant war hysteria.

We wish you all a season of Peace, Happiness, and Prosperity during this Diwali celebration.

**SHUBH DEEPAVALI**



**AumBhoorBhuvahSwahTatSaviturVarenyamBhargoDevasyaDheemahiDhiyoYoNahaPrachodayat**  
(MayAlmighty illuminate ourintellect which leads us to righteous path)



**GAYATRI PARIWAR U.S.A. (DC Chapter) (703) 391 0487**

[www.awgp.org](http://www.awgp.org)

**NON-PROFIT RELIGIOUS & CULTURAL ORGANIZATION**



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Gayatri Pariwar U.S.A. Inc. is an integral part of the world-wide Gayatri Pariwar movement, founded by Yugrishi SriRam Sharma Acharya and Mata Bhagawati Devi Sharma. Gayatri Pariwar is a spiritual movement that regenerates the highest human values around the world. Gayatri Pariwar (India) was founded in 1940 in order to uplift the oppressed in India and to rejuvenate divinity among its people.

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
- 
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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:

**GayatriYagya/DeepYagya      SatyanarayanKatha      VivahSanskar      GrihParavesh Sanskar**  
**Other Sanskars such as Punsavan, Namkaran,**  
**Mundan, Yagyopaveet, Janmadin & Vivahdin**

# *Greater Baltimore Temple*

2909 Bloom Road, P.O. Box 690, Finksburg, MD 21048

Tel: (410) 861-8387, Web: <http://www.baltimoretemple.org>, E-mail: [gbt101@yahoo.com](mailto:gbt101@yahoo.com)



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.







## The Hindu Temple of Metropolitan Washington

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

[www.hindutemplemd.org](http://www.hindutemplemd.org)

Email: [info@hindutemplemd.org](mailto:info@hindutemplemd.org)

<https://www.facebook.com/TheHinduTempleMD/>  
A Non Profit Religious And Cultural Organization



**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 conveniently located and visible from Capital Beltway. The temple is a beautiful, modern, yet traditional, 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 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 Parvati, 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. We added two outdoor covered temples with prayer areas: one temple with a 6 foot tall Hanuman Ji statue added in 2012 and second temple with Navgrah added in 2017.

**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, Vivah Sanskar, Graha Pravesh, Grahashanti Paryog, Anteshthi Sanskar, Shanti Paath and other religious services as needed.

### RELIGIOUS SERVICES SCHEDULE AT THE TEMPLE:

Temple Hours: 8 AM to Noon & 5 PM to 9 PM	Every Third Saturday – 6 PM to 9 PM JOGA Bahjan/Kiran
Daily Arti – 8 AM and 8 PM	Monthly – 2nd Saturday – 4 PM to 7 PM - Sunderkaand Paath
Every Sunday – 5 PM to 7 PM - Ram/Krishna Katha	Monthly – Last Sunday - 4 PM to 7 PM Bhajan Sandhya
Every Tuesday – 7.30 PM to 8.30 PM – Hanuman Chalisa	Monthly – Purnima – Satya Narayana Pooja & Katha
Every Thursday – 7 PM to 9 PM - Sai Baba Prayer Service	Monthly – 4 PM to 5 PM – Baba BalakNath Service
Every Sunday – 5.30 PM to 6.30 PM – Bal Gokulam	Every Saturday & Sunday - 9 AM Mahavir Jain Services
Twice a Month – Ganesh Chaturhi, Ekadashi & Pradosha Poojas	Every Saturday & Sunday – YOGA Classes – 7 AM to 9 AM







# Association of United Hindu and Jain Temples

Maryland, Virginia and District of Columbia  
Founded in 1993

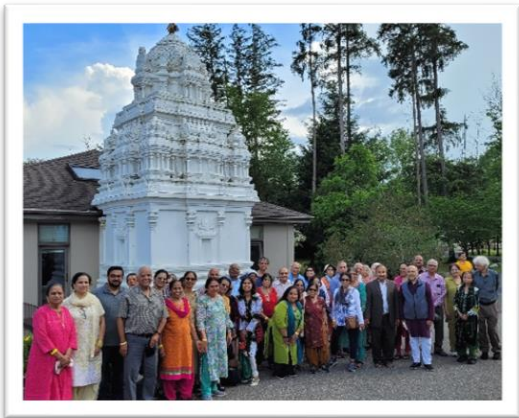
Supporting Hindu & Jain community and promoting Interfaith



## Annual Yatra Trip

The Yatra Trip has become a signature event of the UHJT. This year, it will be 3<sup>rd</sup> time this event has taken place and has been successful and inspiring with divine feeling, visiting Temples, 14-17 hours trip. Mira and I took Yatra trip last year. It was 17 hours trip, we never felt as how the time went by.

The Leader of this project Kamlesh Shah ji, took care of everything very well. He puts lot of energy in planning, coordination and things come out almost perfect. I appreciate dedicated leadership of Kamlesh ji. Thank you, Kamalesh ji, doing again this year. His wife is also part of his team sharing the responsibilities. Below are some of the moments captured during the Yatra trips







ISKCON of DC



# ISKCON OF DC

**International Society for Krishna Consciousness**

**Founder-Acarya A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Srila Prabhupada**

**SUNDAYS 12-3PM, POTOMAC, MD**

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!

 10310 Oaklyn Drive, Potomac, MD

 [iskconofdc.org](http://iskconofdc.org)



# Association of United Hindu and Jain Temples

Maryland, Virginia and District of Columbia  
Founded in 1993

Supporting Hindu & Jain community and promoting Interfaith



## Unity Walk 2024

UNITY WALK on Sunday, Sept 8<sup>th</sup> 2024 was one of the most successful attendances at a Walk. I congratulate Manimekalai Ji for her hard work and persistence in making this event a success. In all the years that I have participated from 2005 when the WALK started, this is one of the best from the UHJT perspective. Thanks Mani Ji 🙏

The event started with as usual with Interfaith prayers and talks. On behalf of UHJT Mythili Ji who is the current Chair of IFC talked about UHJT's involvement with IFC and introduced me to give Hindu Prayers. Jewish, Islam and Hindu Prayers were offered at the Synagogue with some group music and talks by Outreach Director Symi and the IFC Executive Director Dr. Sousan Abadian. Flagged off for the Walk around 2:30 PM. The walk had a total of 14 Places of Worship. Our station was 13 just before the closing ceremonies at Islamic Center around 5:15 PM with Bahai, Zoroastrian, Christian and Buddhist Prayers. Beautiful weather for a Walk. ❤️🙏

We had 5 of the UHJT representatives - Mani Ji, Padma Ji, Kamlesh Ji, Vivek Ji and myself + one visitor Nimi from another State. All of them did a remarkable job of explaining UHJT, their interaction with IFC, and invited each and every one to come to the Diwali Mela. We should come to these events in large numbers from our Board as well as the Temples and the diaspora especially if we need help in future for any reason. In other States similarly their Interfaith groups came to defend when some of the Temples were vandalized. So please make it a point to come and attend. The next event will be in November an Interfaith musical and Hindu Faith is always represented.

We also thank the Indian Embassy staff, Kamlesh Ronak, Vasavi, and the Protective service people who came on Sunday and helped so much including supplying Hot Tea for all the visitors and the volunteers! Thanks to Jag Mohan ji and others at the Embassy for their help in facilitating this event by UHJT/IFC. 🙏

Once again, I want to on behalf of UHJT thank Mani Ji for her hard work and persistence in making this a grand success 🙏🙏🙏

With Best Wishes,  
Siva Subramanian





### **Jainism: A Path of Peace and Compassion**

Jainism, one of the oldest religions in the world, is rooted in the principles of non-violence (Ahimsa), non-possessiveness (Aparigraha), and multiplicity of viewpoints (Anekantavada). Jains strive to live a life of harmlessness and renunciation, practicing compassion and respect for all living beings. The religion promotes self-discipline, ethical conduct, and spiritual development, guiding individuals towards liberation (Moksha) and eternal peace.

### **Jain Society of Metropolitan Washington (JSMW)**

The Jain Society of Metropolitan Washington (JSMW), established in 1980, is a vibrant and inclusive community dedicated to preserving and promoting Jain principles. Located in Silver Spring, MD, JSMW serves as a spiritual and cultural hub for over 635 families. Through religious, educational, and social activities, the society fosters a sense of unity and provides a platform for its members to practice and share Jainism's timeless values. JSMW is also actively involved in community service, extending its ethos of compassion beyond its own members to the larger community. Learn more about JSMW by visiting [www.jsmw.org](http://www.jsmw.org).

### **A New Jain Temple and Jain Center: A Symbol of Jain Heritage and Community Unity**

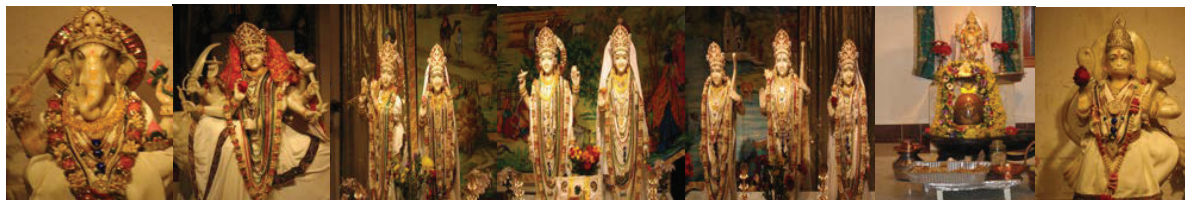
A new Jain Temple and Jain Center, currently under construction and scheduled to inaugurate in 2025, will be a landmark of faith, learning, and community for Jains in the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area. Designed with modern facilities and traditional architecture, this temple will feature beautiful worship spaces, meditation rooms, and a knowledge center to engage all generations in the teachings of Jainism. The center will also include a state-of-the-art kitchen and a multipurpose hall, serving as a venue for spiritual gatherings, cultural programs, and community events.



# Shri Mangal Mandir



<b>Temple Hours</b>	<b>17110 New Hampshire Avenue, Ashton, MD 20861</b>	<b>Aarti Hours</b>
<b>8:00 am – 12:00 noon</b>		<b>At 11:45 am</b>
<b>4:00 pm – 8:00 pm</b>		<b>At 7:00 pm</b>
	<b>301-421-0985</b>	<b>www.mangalmandir.org</b>



Shri Mangal Mandir has been a beacon for last 31 years for the ever growing Hindu community in the Washington DC/Baltimore Metropolitan area. Ever since its inception in 1981, Shri Mangal Mandir has always been and will always be an institution for ALL the people who believe in pursuing and practicing the SANATAN DHARMA (Eternal Way of Life). With the support from community, Shri Mangal Mandir was built and inaugurated in June 1993; with continued support, it acquired adjacent 16 Acres of land later.

Pranpratistha ceremony of deities of the Hindu Pantheon: Shri Ganesh, Shiva-Parvati, Mataji, Rama-Sitaparivar, Radha-Krishna, Laxmi-Narayan and Hanuman was performed by Shri Krisnasankar Shastri. The present growth and structure was possible because of the continuous support from the devotees of metro area. Today, the Mandir is flourishing with the devotees of all ages visiting for prayers, celebration of Hindu festivals, gathering for family events etc.

Mandir encourages rental of its auditorium along with state of the art kitchen facility at attractive rate for weddings, baby-showers or family celebrations. It encourages rental by non-profit organizations.

**ACTIVITES:** Throughout the year, Mandir celebrates all Hindu festivals based on the Vikram Samvat calendar. Below are highlights of major activities performed through out the year:

- Several religious discourses(katha) presentation by renown Kathakar from India during summer
- Hindu and English calendar New Year celebration
- Annual free health fair
- Balgokul - Activities for children ages 5– 18      Every Sunday      10:30am -12:30pm
- Senior Club - Members gathering every      1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday      6:30pm - 9:30pm
- Bhajan/Kirtan      Every Sunday      5:30pm -7:00pm

**To be notified of upcoming events, please subscribe to our email list by sending your email address to [shrimangalmandir@gmail.com](mailto:shrimangalmandir@gmail.com)**

## 2024 Diwali Celebration

Thursday,	October, 31	5:30PM	Samoo Lakshmi and Chopda-Poojan
Saturday,	November, 2	9:00AM	Govardhan Pooja
		4:30PM	Annakut Aarti

### Directions to Temple:

**From Washington Beltway I-495,** take exit for New Hampshire Avenue North (Route 650). Mandir is located 9 miles on the left after Ednor Road Traffic light.

**From Baltimore:** take 95 South, take exit at Rte.198 West, drive about 4-5 miles, Make right turn on New Hampshire Avenue. Mandir is on the left after Ednor Road Traffic light.

**Jai Shri Krishna**





Murugan Temple of North America (MTNA) was established in 1982 to maintain the culture, long history and traditional values of Hindu religion, our forefathers have left for us in the past. MTNA located near Washington D.C at Lanham, Maryland, was built in 1999 on an area of 13 acres of land according to Agama Sastra. It is a traditional Saivite Temple serving the Hindu Diaspora across the globe.

Lord Murugan is the son of Lord Siva also called Lord Subramanian and Lord Karthikeyan. He is the most important deity in South India, mostly in Tamil Nadu. Lord Murugan has hundreds of Temples in South India, Sri Lanka, Singapore and Malaysia

Daily poojas with Oman in the morning are done as per tradition. The temple is unique in true sense. Most of the devotees are from all over North America especially from the eastern region of United States of America.

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://murugan temple.org/about/about-temple/>.



**Signature events:**

Major functions especially Thaiposam and Skanda Sashti are conducted on a grand scale and attended by ~2800 devotees. Most of them come from various states other than Maryland,

Washington DC and Northern Virginia. The Temple hosts the annual Nallur Kathirkama Kanthan celebration, with chariot run for Lord Muruga with Sri. Valli and Devasena, a festival widely attended by the devotees from all over North America. Loka Rakshana Sri Rudra Maha Yagnam and the festivals of “Murugan Arupadaiveedu” are unique celebrations at our temple.



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 bi-weekly classes in Tamil, Hinduism, Hatha Yoga, and bhajans with particular emphasis on imparting the great wisdom of our sages to our children.

### **Donation and Special Services at Murugan Temple**

Your kind contributions for the temple growth are welcome. Please visit our Donations webpage online: <https://murugantemple.org/about/donate-online/>

NOTE: If you are sending any checks for various services offered at the temple or donations, please write down your Murugan Temple Membership ID (if you know the ID) or at the very least ensure that your latest address is noted on your check. This helps us in ensuring that when we send you your tax donation receipt. Please note that you will be redirected to our secure site for all services. To view all details of the **special services** provided by the temple please visit the following webpage <https://murugantemple.org/about/our-services/>.

### **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](http://www.murugantemple.org). Please reach us at [info@murugantemple.org](mailto:info@murugantemple.org) or 301-552-4889.

**Washington Muruganukku, Haro Hara!!**

# Six Abodes of Lord Muruga

As the 6 Days of Muruga (Skanda Shasti) are near, it is a good time to revisit our understanding of Muruga's mythology to more fully access his negativity-destroying warrior power in our life.

A significant portion of Muruga's history and mythology relates to the Six Abodes of Muruga (Aarupadai Veedu), given the important events that took place at each location. Presented below is a brief overview of the Muruga mythology behind each of the Six Aarupadai veedu(temples) to aid us in understanding Muruga in terms of his mythology.



## 1) Palani Murugan Temple

The [Palani Murugan Temple](#) in Pazhani is one of the most visited temples in Tamil Nadu, India, and is one of the most revered shrines of Muruga.

It is said that Sage Narada once visited the celestial court of Lord Shiva at Mount Kailash to present a fruit, the gyana-palam (literally, the fruit of knowledge), that held in it the elixir of wisdom. When Lord Shiva expressed his intention of dividing the fruit between his two sons, Ganesha and Muruga, the sage counseled against cutting it.

So, Shiva decided to award it to whichever of his two sons first circled the world thrice. Accepting the challenge, Muruga started his journey around the globe on his mount peacock. However, Ganesha, who surmised that the world was no more than his parents, Shiva and Shakti combined, circled them three times. Pleased with their son's discernment, Lord Shiva awarded the fruit to Ganesha. When Muruga returned, he was furious to learn that his efforts had been in vain. He then left Kailash and took up his abode in the Palani hills in South India. It is believed that he felt the need to mature from boyhood, hence he chose to remain a hermit, discarding his robes and ornaments and going into meditation to learn more about himself.





## 2) Pazhamudircholai Murugan Temple

The great Tamil poet and saint Avvaiyar was tested by Lord Muruga at [Pazhamudircholai Temple](#). In an episode of Divine Play with Avvaiyar, one of the most famous devotees of Lord Muruga, he enacted the following drama:

One day, Avvaiyar sought refuge under the shadow of a fruit tree, when a boy sitting nearby asked her whether she wanted fruits from the tree. When Avvaiyar told him that she did, the boy asked her if she wanted roasted fruits or unroasted fruits.

Avvaiyar, who was incredibly knowledgeable, scoffed silently at the very thought of the existence of a “roasted fruit” and decided that the boy didn’t have knowledge even about a fruit. However, tired as she was, she decided that she didn’t want to argue with the boy and asked him to pick unroasted fruits for her, which he then did. Several fruits fell out of the tree, and Avvaiyar picked them up and blew on them to remove the sand. Smiling, the boy asked Avvaiyar if she was blowing on his “roasted fruits” to cool them down.

Avvaiyar was amazed at how a small village boy could have played such an intelligent drama. Blowing on the fruit to remove the sand was indeed poetically comparable to an attempt to cool “roasted fruits.” Humbled by the immense poetic knowledge and clever wordplay of the boy, Avvaiyar begged him to reveal his true identity, unable to reconcile herself with the fact that a simple cowherd could have such profound thoughts.

The boy then disappeared and, in his place, Lord Muruga appeared. The stunned Avvaiyar bowed in obeisance and prayed to Lord Muruga to bless her and continue bestowing his Infinite Grace on her to aid her endless quest for knowledge.



### 3) Swamimalai Murugan Temple

The history of the temple at [Swamimalai](#) is called the “Sthala Puranam:” Lord Brahma, creator of living beings, disrespected Muruga, son of Lord Shiva. The child Muruga got angry and questioned him about his creating procedure. Lord Brahma answered that he was creating living beings with the help of the Vedas (Hindu scriptures). Upon hearing his reply, Lord Muruga asked Lord Brahma to recite the texts from the Vedas. Brahma started by reciting the holy word “Om,” the Pranava Mantra. When Muruga asked him the meaning behind the word “Om”, Lord Brahma did not have a solid explanation. The annoyed Muruga punished him with imprisonment and took over the role of creation himself.

Shiva came to Muruga and asked him to release Brahma from imprisonment. Muruga refused on the grounds that Brahma was unaware of the meaning of the Pranava Mantra. Shiva asked Muruga to explain the meaning of the Pranava Mantra, and so he did. Shiva behaved like a student to a teacher, listening with rapt attention to his son, and giving Muruga the name “Swaminatha Swami,” “The Teacher of Shiva.” Following the legend, the shrine of the son Muruga is atop the hillock, while the father Shiva’s shrine is located at the basement.



### 4) Tiruthani Murugan Temple

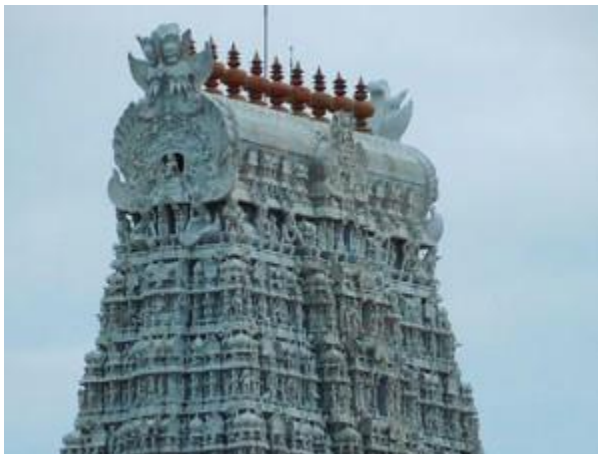
[Tiruthani](#) represents the site of Muruga’s marriage to Valli. It is also said that Sri Muttuswami Deekshitar, who lived 200 years ago, had his inspiration in Tiruthani, when Muruga (in the disguise

of an old man) met him on the steps of the temple and sweetened his tongue with the temple's Prasad, which inspired him to sing his first song on Lord Muruga of Tanikai.



### 5) Tiruparamkundram Murugan Temple

The temple at [Thiruparamkundram](#) offers a mystic beauty. It is carved in rock and is monstrous in size for such architecture. According to the legend, it is where Muruga married Deivayanai, the divine daughter of the king of heaven, Indra, and he is said to have worshipped Shiva here as Parangirinathar.



### 6) Thiruchendur Murugan Temple

According to mythology, the six-headed Muruga emerged as six sparks of flame from the Third Eye of Lord Shiva to command the divine forces in the fight against evildoers on the earth plane.

When the child Muruga grew into a young god, Lord Shiva asked him to destroy the evil forces (asuras) and free the angels (devas) from their cruel bondage. Lord Muruga reached Tiruchendur with his huge army and encamped there. He sent his lieutenant Veerabahu to the asuras as an emissary to ask Surapadma to release the devas. When Surapadma turned down the request, a war began.



The intense battle continued for six days. During the first five days of the war, the brothers of Surapadma and all the other asuras perished. On sixth day, during the battle between Lord Muruga and Surapadma, the Vel (lance) of Lord Muruga pierced Surapadma, whose broken pieces transformed themselves into a mighty peacock and a chanticleer (rooster). Muruga took the peacock as his vehicle (vahana) and the chanticleer on his banner.

After the Destruction of Surapadma (Surasamharam), Lord Muruga desired to worship his father Lord Siva, so the Divine Architect, Mayan, constructed the shrine at [Tiruchendur](#).



# Rajdhani Mandir



## Best Wishes on Diwali

A major Mandir expansion has been initiated with



**Another  
Large  
Prayer Hall**



**Classrooms, Community  
Canteen, Auditorium,  
New Temple Office, Library  
and More**

**Additional spaces for free:  
Medical Services, Seniors'  
activities, to other community  
non-profit organizations to  
conduct their meetings/events**

**Contact Mandir Office at  
703.378.8401 or write to  
Info@RajdhaniMandir.Org for  
more details**

**[www.RajdhaniMandir.Org](http://www.RajdhaniMandir.Org)**

**FB Rajdhani.Mandir**





## Sri Siva Vishnu Temple

6905 Cipriano Road, Lanham Md 20706

Tel: (301) 552 3335; Fax: (301) 552 3335

Email: [ssvt@ssvt.org](mailto:ssvt@ssvt.org) Web: <http://www.ssvt.org>



Sri Siva Vishnu Temple (SSVT) is the Premier Hindu Temple in the Washington, DC metropolitan region and is in Lanham, Maryland. The primary objective of the temple is to provide religious and spiritual, cultural services according to Hindu (Sanathana Dharma) religious beliefs, scriptures, instructions, traditions, and practices.

SSVT serves as the focal point of religious activity for the Hindu population in

Washington, DC, Maryland, Virginia (DMV) and other states in the east coast.

As the name suggests, Siva Vishnu Temple houses both Siva & Parivaras and Vishnu & Parivara under one roof. This reaffirms the monotheistic principles of Hinduism, that God is one, but may be worshiped in many forms. At the entrance of SSVT, there is an inscription: “ABEDHA DARSANAM JNANAM” meaning Having Unity



Aerial View of SSVT

Consciousness is Wisdom. This theme of UNITY IN DIVERSITY is reaffirmed by ONE RAJAGOPURAM (entrance tower) for both Lords Siva and Vishnu, unique among Hindu temples. This is depicted by the Sankara Narayana (Siva & Vishnu) figure on the top tier, Vrushabha Kunjaram (bull & elephant) in the first tier and Maha Sadashiva on the South side and Mahasudharshana on the North side of the tower.

SSVT is based on Ishta Devata (one’s personal choice of form). The Temple Trust established in 1981 has seventeen shrines housing all deities most commonly worshiped by Hindus. These 17 deities, consecrated between the years of 1990 and 2002, represent deities from well-known temples in South India. For example, in SSVT Sri Siva is Sri Ramanathaswamy representing the presiding deity of the famous South Indian Temple at Rameswaram, one of the twelve Jyotirlingas, Sri Balaji from Tirupati, Rama Parivar represents the deity at the famous temple at Badrachalam, Sri Ayyappa represents Ayyappa of Sabarimala, and the Yoga Nidra form represents Sri Ananta Padmanabha of Thiruvananthapuram, Sri Krishna represents the Deity from Udupi and Andal from Srivilliputtur. To fulfill the longtime desire of a segment of our congregation we are completing the Sai Mandir, at the site where Balalaya once stood, and in the upper level of this building a shrine for Vasavi Mata (Kanyaka Parameswari).

This temple’s architecture is a harmonious blend of six different styles of temple architecture employed in temples of South India. The shrines housing these deities are built in different architectural styles from the South that includes Pallava, Chola, Vijayanagara, Kerala, and Costal Karnataka temple architecture.

Five Pillars that SSVT has focused on from the beginning are Religious, Cultural, Education, Seva, Outreach. As our Founder Chairman helped in the formation of United Hindu Jain Temple group, we would like us to lead in our efforts to unite the Hindu community in the DMV region.



12501 & 12519 Braddock Road, Fairfax, Virginia 22030

[www.svlotustemple.org](http://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](http://www.svlotustemple.org) or contact the temple management for additional information. May Lord Sri Venkateswara’s blessings be always with us!



# Vishwa Hindu Parishad of America, Inc

(World Hindu Council of America)

[www.vhp-america.org](http://www.vhp-america.org)

A Non-Profit Tax - Exempt Organization



- To promote **unity among Hindus** through a network of chapters and like minded organizations.
- To establish VHP as the voice of Hindus everywhere and **represent Hindu organizations** and institutions on matters of Hindu interests.
- To raise Hindu awareness through seminars, **conferences, publications, media and audio visual aids.**
- To cultivate a spirit of self respect in **Hindu way of life** and respect for the people of all colors, creeds, races and religions.

Vishwa Hindu Parishad of America aims to create a dynamic, vibrant Hindu society inspired by the eternal values of *Dharma*, and the lofty ideal of *Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam*, meaning, "the entire creation is one family".

VHPA works to preserve, protect and promote the Hindu way of life. The *Parishad* is of the view that Hindus are those who believe, practice and respect the religious principles and practices having roots in India. Thus, Hindus include Jaina, Bauddha, Sikh and people of different sects and traditions within the Hindu ethos.

- To establish world-wide contacts with Hindus through need-based projects and programs.
- To provide **community service to the people** in distress, without consideration of race, religion and nationality.
- To create a team of dedicated **assertive volunteers** for the community service.
- To create opportunities for imbibing Hindu values based on Hindu scriptures and heritage through Bala Vihars, camps, family retreats and educational institutions

## PROGRAMS AND PROJECTS

The programs and projects are defined by the local community needs within the broad framework of the Parishad mission. The ongoing projects are: **Bala Vihars, Youth Camps and Conferences**: they offer opportunity and forum to learn about Hindu Religion, culture and heritage. **Support-A-Child**: The Hindu Americans support the education of children in India by contributing \$250 per child per year. There are 700 boys and girls under this program. **Hindu Calendar**: It provides Hindu festival dates and provides pictorial resource on the spiritual knowledge. **Publications**: Hindu Vishwa, Souvenirs, Chaitanya Bharati that is a theme oriented annual publication providing the insight of Hindu Dharma, culture, history and heritage of *Punya Bhoomi* Bharat, curriculum-books for the education and other resource materials. **Emergency Seva Programs**: VHP of America undertakes the programs to galvanize efforts to muster resources to help people under distress as a result of natural calamities. The typical examples are active volunteering and fundraising Katerina disaster relief efforts in USA, cyclone relief in Orrissa and earthquake relief in Uttara Kaashi in Uttara Pradesh, Lathoor in Maharashtra, and a recent one in Gujarat. **VHPA** is responsible for creation of following institutions in USA to serve the needs of Hindu society **Hindu Student Council**: A student organization functioning in 50 universities and colleges in the USA. It offers the Hindu youth a forum to discuss and learn about Hindu Dharma, history, culture and methods to manage the challenges they face as Hindu youth in America. **Global Hindu Resource Center (GHEN)**: Network of Internet websites ([www.hindunet.org](http://www.hindunet.org)), which is the best site for Hindu resources and research. It provides authentic research materials on all aspects of Hindu Dharma. **Ekal Vidhayalaya** (One Teacher School): To open 'One Teacher School' in every remote villages of India with tribal-poor population. **American Hindu Against Defamation (AHAD)**: An ever-vigilant coalition of the largest Hindu organizations - a Hindu watchdog group, dedicated to preserving the sanctity of Hindu symbols, icons, culture and customs.

Come, join your helping hands in the great mission of '*Dharmo Rakshati Rakshitah*' - sustaining Dharma sustains the Universe. For more information, please contact:

**Metropolitan Washington, DC Area**  
Shardanand or Shivaram Sitaram  
301 Saybrooke View Drive  
Gaithersburg, MD 20877-3780  
Phone/Fax: (301) 917-1555

Emails: ☎ [pres\\_metrodcc@vhp-america.org](mailto:pres_metrodcc@vhp-america.org)  
☎ [Prayagraj1952@gmail.com](mailto:Prayagraj1952@gmail.com)

### Other Parts of the USA

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Email: [gensecy@vhp-america.org](mailto:gensecy@vhp-america.org)  
Web Site: <http://www.vhp-america.org/>