



4th Annual HINDU MANDIR EXECUTIVES CONFERENCE

Sept 11-13, 2009
Holiday Inn BWI Airport
Linthicum, Maryland

Record of the Proceedings

Recorders

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॥ *Narayanaya Namah, Namoh Arihantaya, Buddhah Sharanam Gachhami, Sat Sri Aka* ॥

Hindu Mandir Executives' Conference
HMEC - An Initiative of VHP of America
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FOURTH HINDU MANDIR EXECUTIVES CONFERENCE Sept 11-13, 2009, Maryland/DC

Record of the Proceedings

(All presentations are available at <http://mandirsangam.vhp-america.org/hmec09/>)

Introduction

Hindu Mandir (Temple) executives representing 113 temples and Hindu organizations from more than 25 states of US and Canada converged in Linthicum, MD, a suburb of Washington, DC, to attend the fourth annual Hindu Mandir Executives Conference (HMEC), from September 11, 2009 through September 13, 2009.

The temples and Hindu organizations were represented by individuals from British Columbia-Canada, Hawaii, and California on the west coast to Texas, Florida, and the Carolina in the south and the New-England-states on the East Coast, plus many states in the heartland of America.



This extremely successful fourth annual HMEC-2009 was another step in the development of networks and relationships between Mandir executives to meet the goal of creating a cohesive and focused Hindu-American community with Mandirs as its nucleus. The participants were focused on developing programs to provide leadership to nourish, protect and sustain Hindu Dharma in North America.



Participation by several large Hindu organizations like Art of Living, Arsha Vidya Gurukulam, Arya Samaj, BAPS Swaminarayan Sanstha, Chinmaya Mission, Gayatri Pariwar, ISKON, Yogi Divine Society, Kauai's Hindu Monastery, JKP and JK Yog, Bharat Sevashram Sangha, Sikh Center of Virginia, as well as by devotees of Narayani Peetam and Sadhu Vaswani, and Hindu temples all over North

America made HMEC an inspiring experience for the attendees.

The Mandir executives represented a wide cross-section of the Hindu community. These attendees, who numbered over 250, are physicians, scientists, businesspersons, homemakers, engineers, etc., by profession, besides being temple executives. They displayed a deep commitment in fulfilling the spiritual and social needs of Hindu-American community and an urge to create a legacy of which the next generations can be proud.

The group was diverse in terms of age, race, generation, as well as national origin. HMEC 2009 had a strong participation from the youth. The conference had several parallel sessions for the youth who represented temples from across the nation. Pooja, Shaily and Jemin representing 'Shri Mangal Mandir' in Silver Springs , MD , were happy to have met youth just like them and said, "We gained new perspectives within our own religion; we learned things that we can implement in our Mandirs and help our community"



Addressing the temple executives from across the country, Swami Dayananda Saraswati of the Arsha Vidya Gurukulam,, who was the keynote speaker, emphasized that the Hindu Mandirs are "forms or manifestations" of tradition that can be handed over to the next generations. These 'forms' are very

important and the next generations should be made aware of these to preserve ancient traditions. Swami Mukundananda of JK Yog talked about the application of management science in Mandir development in his inaugural address.

Hindu Mandir executives collectively deliberated on the evolving social, religious, cultural, spiritual, and next-generational needs of 2.5 million strong, confident, diverse and vibrant Hindu-American community. Dr. Michael Busch of the Bramhananda Saraswati Trust mentioned, "It is very inspiring to see the depth of understanding and devotion to the Vedic tradition of India. The cohesion and cooperation among all the temples to strengthen the enlightenment of Vedic knowledge in North America is encouraging."

The Hindu perspective of service was discussed through ideas shared by Anju Bhargava of the 'Hindu American Seva Charities' and Divya Selvakumar of the

Hindu NGO, 'American Hindu World Service (AHWS)'. Hindu-Jewish dialogue was continued through a presentation by AJC.

This conference was striking in its use of multimedia presentations. A multimedia video presentation by Dr. Michael Busch of 'Brahmananda Saraswati Trust', IA, on 'Maharishi Vedic City' was awe inspiring for its effort, ideals and objectives. Another moving presentation was made by Mrs. Cathy Wenuk a devotee of 'Narayani Peetam' of Sripuram Golden Temple and its beautiful soul-nourishing environment and surroundings.

Proceedings FRIDAY 9/11/2009

Session 1 7:50 PM Inaugural Session

Moderator - *Shri Brahmaswarup Verma, Lakshmi Narayan Mandir, BC, Canada*

This session set the stage and the tone for the conference with introduction of the hosts. It piqued the interest of the attendees with a few thought provoking talks and the inaugural address by Swami Mukundananda Ji.



Ekatmata Mantra, by students and Deep Prajjwala by the Michigan Mandir Executives was followed by invocation by the priest from SSVT.

The children from SSVT Viya mandir recited the opening shlokas.

Word from the Host Mandirs

Shri Sant Gupta, Durga Temple, Fairfax Station, VA, Sushri Mythili Bachu, SSVT, Lanham, MD, Shri Bhargava Desai, Silver Springs, MD

Shri Sant Gupta talked about the history, programs and activities at Durga Temple, Fairfax Station, VA. The mandir celebrates all Hindu festivals and conducts weekly



poojas. It regularly hosts Swamis and Acharyas and Artists. Meditation & Yoga Classes, BalGokul, Gita Study Group and SAT classes are conducted regularly. There is a free bhandara every Sunday and all major events.

Mythili Bachu gave a brief introduction to the SSVT. Earlier in its history the focus was on

establishing and growing the temple. Today it has a volunteer base of 400, working with managers, cooks and others. The programs are focused on educating adults and youth, publishing and Seva activities – Feeding homeless. Plan to intensify young adult involvement into administration, School and College curriculum changes.

Bhargav Desai introduced the Mangal Mandir. The primary objective is to help preserve the culture and rich heritage of the Hindu Religion and to reaffirm in the community the high values of life that they have always believed in. There is celebration of all Hindu festivals based on the Vikram Samvat calendar. Balgokulam - activities for children ages 6 – 16, senior club, weekly Bhajan / Kirtan, Yoga classes are conducted regularly.

The American Mandir: a Youth Perspective

Sushri Shivi Chandra, Gayatri Parivar, NJ

Shivi Chandra spoke about youth and their involvement in mandirs being more social and less spiritual illustrated by a Hindu student group's campus flier that invited people to arthi where there would be free Dunkin Donuts and coffee, with a Christian flier that asked "Do you make time in your life for God?" And she quoted a Hindu student's response to what are some significant aspects of the Hindu faith, that "We have garba and bhangra!"



The Why and How of Mandir Worship,

Dr. Kumar Nochur, Sri Lakshmi Temple, Ashland, MA

For American Hindus of the next generation, it is not always clear why they have to worship in a mandir. Even adults find it hard to explain the rationale of temple worship to our children. Mandir executives often have to explain to non-Hindus the significance of our temples and deities. If the rationale for deity worship in temples is known, Hindu mandirs become powerful theaters of darsan – divine vision and communication. If the value and power of temples is not known, their sustenance and viability is uncertain.

How Should We Worship at a Temple? Understand the power of sanctified deities Know the symbolism of the deities. Every aspect of a deity: body, hands, feet, mudras, ornaments, objects carried, posture, etc. has an inner significance. Observe, ask, and learn from knowledgeable priests and devotees. Know the mandir's history – the stala purana. Learn basic slokas, mantras, and worship methods. Cultivate bhakti (love of and devotion to god) so that the act of darsan becomes a blissful moment of communion and spiritual evolution

Model Youth Programs at BAPS Swaminarayan Centers,

Dr. Mayank Amin, BAPS Swaminarayan, NJ

Mayank gave a very informative and lively presentation on the youth programs at the BAPS centers. He detailed the key reason why the BAPs youth programs are so successful. It is the commitment of the parents, the children and the Acharyas. That is something worthy of imitation.

Inaugural Address - Application of Management Science to Help Mandir Development, *Swami Mukundananda, JY Yog*



Swami Mukundananda Ji, senior disciple of Jagadguru Kripalu maharaj of JKYog, spoke on the application of management principles to mandir management. He is an IIT and IIM grad, who said management is maya, that we should consider both paravidya (spiritual) and aparavidya (material) matters in temple management. He spoke of Kirthan, Shravan, Smaran and is the first one who convinced

me that we should have (Sunday) prasad without strings attached. He also recommended that we distribute copies of arthi when we sing it, that we invest in expansions, and establish a Hindu Credit Union. Complete transcript of his speech is available on the website.

Proceedings SATURDAY PRE-LUNCH PROGRAM 9/12/2009

6:00 AM Yoga, Meditation, Devotional Singing, *LIYF, AOL, Sripuram*

Session 2 7:50 AM Welcome Session

Moderator - *Dr. Nangali Srinivasa, Sri Venkateswara Temple, Pittsburgh, PA*

Welcomed participants and invited keynote speaker Pujya Swami Dayananda Saraswati. Ekatmata Mantra & Bhavgeet by Bal Vihar, Deep Prajjwalan, Host Temple Executives.

Opening Remarks

Shri Jyotish Parekh, VHPA

Shri Jyotish Parekh commended Mandir effort on health share programs and urged audience to support such Mandir initiatives. For leaders, he spoke movingly on the duty of coming together to fulfill challenges in the Hindu-American community.

Keynote Address

Swami Dayananda Saraswati, Arsha Vidya Gurukulam, Salosburg, PA



Engaging Youth with Dharma Through Mandirs, Pujya Swami Dayananda Saraswati Pujya Swami Dayananda Saraswati highlighted key points from his presentation: that mandirs are forms of passing tradition, our ancestors paid taxes to stay Hindu, that forms of passing the tradition are very important, that body is a moving temple, and that we have to understand, not just practice the form. On engaging the youth to be active in mandirs, he said that teaching our tradition to them is a responsibility and that we should not worry about the youth becoming involved, but that we as Temple executives and leaders need to change ourselves.

Session 3 9:00 AM Review of HMEC Vision and Selected Action Items

Moderator - Dr. Umesh Shukla, VHPA

Dr. Umesh Shukla, convener of HMEC, clearly outlined many of the challenges facing Hindu mandirs in the U.S., including an uninvolved second generation, fragmentation along regional/sectarian/generational lines, and a lack of a cohesive collective identity. He laid the framework by reviewing the vision and mission of HMEC and reporting on selected action items from the past.

Vision of HMEC

Dr. Pawan Rattan, Sanatan Mandir (Hindu Samaj), Tampa, FL

Dr. Pawan Rattan shared vision of Hindu Mandir executives to disseminate knowledge to all communities and to create a national community of Hindu leaders. The vital goals of these efforts would be: productive networking, involvement of volunteers, and recognition of an institution devoted to clarity in Hindu teaching; not simply for ourselves but for the entire American community.

Antyeshthi Samskar Book,

*Shri Vittal, Durga Temple, VA,
Shri Kumar Dave, Hindu Temple
of Central Indiana, IN*

Shri Vittal, Shri Kumar Dave shed some light on the unique challenges of performing the antyeshthi samskar, Hindu funeral rites,



in the U.S., including limited family assistance and ritual guidance. The book provides detailed guidance on the specific procedures involved, as well as an explanation of the mantras and materials needed for the samskar.

Health Shared Pool Update

Shri Lalit Goel, Hindu Temple and Cultural Center of Iowa, IA

HSP objective is to provide self sustaining affordable health care plan that is high quality, low cost, affordable, flexible, and is mutually benefits to all the plan's participating members of Mandirs and Hindu organizations. The concept was shared in 2007 HMEC meeting. All expressed the need of the program and expressed high level of interest in participation. We are currently short by 188 participants.

National healthcare service provider network is active till March 2010. BAPS have decided to stay with their present health insurance policy for now. No major Mandir or other organizations have come forward to participate in the program.

How Technology Can Make Mandirs Efficient

Shri Ravi Kundru, Bharatiya Hindu Temple, Powell, OH

Shri Ravi Kundru began with an introduction of the aims and members of the HMEC technology committee, presented the database and portal envisioned by the committee and elaborated upon its uses for different age groups. He outlined a detailed plan for national online connections and management services between temples.

Session 4 10:00 AM Legacy of Hinduism in America

Moderator - *Dr. Ram Belagaje, Hindu Temple of Central Indiana, IN*

This track traced the migration of Hindus over past 40 years. In the early days, their focus was to establish themselves in their professions and become financially secure. As Hindus became prosperous and recognized a need to have a place to worship, the Hindu temples came up. Today, the focus for the temples must be to sustain and

strengthen Hindu Dharma, and pass on our tradition and culture to the next generation. In doing so the temples must cater to a wide cross section of the society. Are they set up to take up the challenge?



The Temple Landscape in North America: All Should Prosper

Dr. Siva Subramanian, SSVT, Lanham, MD

Dr. Siva Subramanian spoke of how before temples were established, Hindu traditions already existed in the work of Ralph Waldo Emerson and Henry David Thoreau and continued to grow with Swami Vivekananda. The purpose of the conference and the most important aspect in developing Hinduism lies in helping generation 1 and 2 strengthen the Hinduism legacy. The key in growing is to work together and encourage temples to cooperate with each other on all levels to unite.

The Hindu Mandir

Shri Sant Gupta, Durga Temple, Fairfax Station, VA

Shri Sant Gupta emphasized that change is not easy and readjustments need to be made in regards to physical structure, compliance with the law and governance of Hindu Mandirs. The structure of a Mandir should be run as a company with a structure with the proper budget, communication, staff/volunteers, and external outreach in order to inspire the next generation.

Vedic Temples: Making Them More Effective,

Swamini Janeshwari Ji, Barsana Dham, Austin, TX

Swamini Janeshwari Ji made five keys points: 1. The mandir should be a holy experience; 2. Seva is the core of outreach activities and empowers people; 3. Engaging the youth by bringing scriptures alive and giving older children responsibilities empowers them as well; 4. Engaging the society through Hinduism basics programs; 5. Raising funds is necessary to sustain the temple.

Session 5 11:00 AM Coordination and Cooperation Among Mandirs

Moderator - *Shri Dwarka Persaud, Radhakrishna Mandir, Cambridge, Canada*

Many temples tend to operate in isolation with no regular connections to the other Hindu temples in the region. They focus on specific elements of the worships and religious practices. Going beyond these aspects can benefit the Hindu community in the region. One such example is UHJT (United Hindu Jain Temple Association) in greater Washington DC area. Benefits include: sharing of resources and participation in major events; coordination of visiting Gurus and Swamis; assisting each other during the time of need.



Why Compete, When We Can Collaborate: Protocol for Sharing Resources

Dr. Shardanand, VHPA, MD

Dr. Shardanand explained that Mandirs should collaborate and sustain Hinduism to encourage nonviolence through dynamic and effective ideas. By creating a pool of experienced people with wider participation at regular intervals, Hindu dharma can be sustained.

Obstacles and Opportunities for Hindu Temples in America

Dr Chander Shaykher, South Florida Hindu Temple, Miami, FL

Dr. Chander Shaykher outlined the obstacles – rapid temple growth and absence of spiritual leaderships - and the manifestations - conflicting goals – as some of the strongest reasons why the next generations loses interest. The opportunities lie within the unique background and awareness that Hinduism brings by discarding biases and engaging in a paradigm shift (thinking universally instead of originally).

Community Building in a Dharmic Environment, *Sushri Anju Bhargava*

Sushri Anju Bhargava addressed the issue of how Indian are doing economically well and are organizing themselves for various temple services, but there is a lack of infrastructure to take care of everyone at large. The talented Hindu community can transform through seva and educate not only ourselves but the government in keeping the Hindu dharma alive.

Proceedings SATURDAY POST-LUNCH PROGRAM 9/12/2009 (Parallel Tracks)

Session 6A 1:00 PM Social Services – Hallmark of Hindus

Moderator - *Shri Navin Kadakia, Hindu Jain Temple, Monroeville, PA*

Generally conservative, most Hindu families do not seek professional help in resolving issues such as nutrition, fitness, depression, care of the elderly, domestic violence, child abuse, and disability. Even the social services provided by the county, state or federal governments are not fully availed of. Mandirs, working with trained counselors, can play a critical role in serving the community in such situation.



Manava Sevaye Madhava Seva: Toledo Case Study

Dr. Sudershan Pasupuleti, Hindu Temple of Toledo, OH

Service to our faith community and service to larger community is --- service to mankind. The Toledo Hindu community is active with 450 families (about 2500 population) within and

outside. Since what we do is learned by our children, parents and grand parents need to be role models for our children. Building our community through our service activities is a great way; create more opportunities for bringing our community together for a cause. Undertake incremental steps to initiate and institute Seva activities because they build and reflect the character of our community.

Hindu Service Perspectives in International Development through AHWS

Sushri Divya Selvakumar, American Hindu World Service, Silver Springs, MD

An NGO aimed towards education of the Hindu faith - an organization of international development that is currently being designed to utilize the Hindu concepts of service. It aims to provide international humanitarian services to people of all races, classes, and ethnic groups, including those individuals affected by HIV/AIDS, marginalized groups, youth, indigenous groups, and LGBT communities. The emphasis is on prevention, advocacy and education and working towards the Millennium Development Goals. It seeks partnerships with Hindu mandirs and from religious organizations of a variety of faiths i.e. development of Interfaith-related dialogues in the collaboration of service projects across the globe

Hindu American Community Service Inc

Dr. Ram Nagula, Sri Siva Vishnu Temple, Lanham, MD

Service is more than just giving money or clothing or food to the needy. It encompasses: Imparting Knowledge, Teaching Yoga, Educational Assistance, Medical Assistance and Services to seniors. We need to provide physical and psychological support. Establish Funds: emergency benevolent fund, food for the homeless and needy fund, refugees resettlement fund, general fund. We need to communicate, educate, and encourage community service. Create Website, Community Service Newsletter, provide networking facilities for employment, and computers for the schools in India

Restoration of Braj: How Can We Help

Sushri Arunima Sinha, Hindu Temple & Culture Center of South Carolina, Columbia, SC

Gave an update on a project presented at HMEC 2008. After introductory remarks a brief introduction of Shri Ramesh Baba was presented. A summary of the current nature of events in Braj and the restoration efforts for those who are not aware was provided. A video clip of Shri Ramesh Baba was shown followed by a passionate appeal: What we can do.

Session 6B 1:00 PM Educating Hindus in America

Moderator - *Dr. D. C. Rao*

Are temples placing sufficient emphasis on Hindu Education? Are institutions such as VHP of America, Chinmaya Mission, Hare Krishna, Jagadguru Kripalu, Vedantic Society, HSS, JCC, AOL meeting the needs of the community adequately – for Hindu

adults and their children and beyond? What role can Hindu temples take in coordinating with them to serve our common goal?

Critical Role of Education in Temples: Sharing Good Practices

Dr. Raghavan Pratiwadi, Dr. MG Prasad, Sri Guruvayoorappan Temple, Morganville, NJ

Trustees of Hindu mandirs should become aware that educational activities focusing on Hindu rituals, values and scriptures are essential to the future of mandirs. Educating the next generation with proper knowledge to meet the challenges of multi-cultural environment is imperative. We need to create a curricula for various classes offered at temple that can meet accreditation requirement of High Schools with the eventual goal of creating a Hindu High School. Home is the first place but mandir plays an essential role. Hindu Mandirs should have educational programs to teach: Parents & Priests.

Dharmic Education and Activity in Mandirs

Shri Ramnarine Sahadeo, Sanatan Dharm Education Foundation of Canada Inc, Brampton, ON

There is a need for mandirs to devote more time, energy and resources to dharmic education and activity, to involve youth at all educational levels and give them the freedom and independence to initiate educational programs. Mandirs must provide a forum for all professionals who serve the public to share their knowledge and experience as to what is happening in the community. The Gitas can be used by devotees at their private religious functions as part of the gift they give to others.

Resources for Teaching Hinduism in American Schools

Shri Raj Manickam, Kadavul Temple, Kappa, HI, Hinduism Today,

A very well researched presentation (16 minute) introducing the history lesson published in the October, 2009, issue of Hinduism Today. The lesson is part of the magazine's series on Hindu history presented from the Hindu point of view in an academically sound manner. Also includes additional resources on Hindu history and comments on the "digital classroom" which may eliminate the need for printed books with the implications for teaching of Hinduism. Please visit:

http://www.hinduismtoday.com/modules/wfchannel/index.php?wfc_cid=20

Discovering My Identity through My Involvement in the Mandir

Sushri Keya Bhatt, Hindu Center of Charlotte, NC

Taking an active role as a youth coordinator - Teacher in the Mandir Balagokulam/CROP has allowed me to discover my identity and opened my eyes to the future. Hindu Center of Charlotte's Children's Religious Oriented Program (CROP) is a 30-year well established Balgokulam program for



children grades Kindergarten-12th. My involvement is as the lead 4-5th grade teacher. I was involved in the Mandir initially because of my parents. I am involved now because of Me. This is an opportunity to make a difference. There is no greater reward/satisfaction than knowing you made a difference in someone's life - by setting an example. An active participation allows me to become a Role Model for children. It also helps in my spiritual upliftment and growth. I notice a lack of dedication/interest amongst other youth and retaining youth currently involved in the Mandir is an issue. There is a lot of Western influence. Through my involvement in the Mandir, I have discovered my identity as a Hindu.

Session 6C 1:00 PM-3:30 PM Youth Session

Moderators - *Sushri Keya Bhatt, Shri Samir Asthana*

Mini-Session 1: Youth Involvement in the Mandir/Beyond Bal-Vihar, Youth camp. Discussion on how to retain youth once they have "graduated" from bal-vihar or have reached the age when they feel they are too "old" to come anymore. Part of this comes from the values instilled during Bal Vihar itself, so a strong Bal Vihar is crucial to the success of retention.

Mini-Session 2: Outreaching Through Seva. Focused on the role seva plays in the mandir. Why is seva important, how do we start seva programs at our mandirs, and why is the mandir the most appropriate vehicle for seva? These are questions to be addressed. The national seva day will also be revisited as a starting point.



Strategy to build Hindu Mandir Youth Network

The youth session was particularly well organized. After a lot of talking and sharing our ideas, the youth group came up with some great suggestions and conclusions. Now its time to put the thoughts in to action!

An invitation to join the group will be sent out to all the youth and once a majority have joined we can begin discussing and go from there. We can also invite more people to join once you are a member of the group. The material can be viewed by non-members, but to have any privileges you must join.

<http://groups.google.com/group/hindu-youth-network>

We also had two attendees in HMEC from Toronto, Canada: Sonia and Parthiban. They were there representing the widely successful Hindu Youth Network in Canada. They were not able to attend our youth session as they were presenting in a parallel session. The HYN in Canada has over 6,000 members and is flourishing. Please check out their website, as this is our inspiration.

www.hinduyouth.net/

**Session 7A 2:15 PM Worship
Practice and Priest Welfare**

Moderator - *Shri Vikas Chawla, Art of Living, USA*



Most Hindu temples in the United States focus only on the worship aspects of Hinduism. Hindu temples will not be sustainable in the long run if our younger generation does not understand, appreciate, and carry on the traditions of Sanatana Dharma. Temples can proactively play an important role in the education of all Hindus, but especially of our youth. As more and more non-Hindus come in contact with Hindus, many would like to know more about Hindu way of life. A qualified purohita should be able to help non-Hindus in this quest.

Giving Contemporary Context to Our Rituals

Shri Madhur Kadari, Art of Living, DC

Most Hindus are unaware of the significance of the rituals. How can we effectively communicate about our culture and rituals? Too much emphasis on rituals sometimes can make it un-interesting. How we can train our priests for US temples? What can we learn from the western model? Youth want to understand everything. They do not want to just believe in what is told. The goal is to make Hinduism "Cool!" and it is. Priests need to first understand that they can play a big role in furthering the cause of Sanathana Dharma. They need to have the zeal and enthusiasm to do more than just perform rituals. Priests should be equipped with practical advices to problems people are facing. In the church, the priests are trained for more than just performing rituals and speaking from bible. They are very much involved with lives of the people; connecting with congregation especially youth. Friendliness, compassion, just enquiring about their well-being can be good enough. We can conduct a retreat for the priests in the presence of HH Sri Sri Ravi Shankar at one of our ashrams near San Antonio or Montreal or any other place. Work with HMEC to create a booklet which can give significance of rituals, murtis, festivals in a simple language. Conduct special sessions with the youth to instill pride in them about our culture and heritage. Provide sessions in Yoga, Pranayama, guided meditation and Bhajans.

Role & Training of Priests

Shri Abhinav Dwivedi, Hindu University of America, Orlando, FL

Priests are principal custodians of Dharmic traditions, who are vital for keeping the traditions alive and easily accessible to all. So far in N.A. the needs are mostly met by bringing qualified priests from India. Smaller communities meet their needs by someone learning on his/her own. What is the required minimal set of priestly activities? Major areas: Rituals (Karma-kand), Education (moral/religious/spiritual), Spiritual counseling. Hindu University has evolved an academic program for Priests training, an advanced Diploma and Master of Hindu Divinity program (M.H.D degree). Overall focus is on enhancing the priests' abilities to function more efficiently in the N.A. society. Enhance their stature/status in the society and their profession by providing proper training and certification (compare with how a Christian priest, Jewish rabbi or Muslim Imam is respected in their community). Finally, attract younger generation into this profession.

The Full Revival of Vedic Knowledge, Vedic Life

Dr. Michael Busch, Brahmananda Saraswati Trust, Fairfield, IA

Modern science has verified ancient Veda for enlightenment and invincibility. Veda is knowledge and experience together. Transcendental Meditation (TM) provides the direct experience of the Unified Field. It has been learned by over 6 million people. It is a simple, natural and effortless procedure which has been validated by over 600+ scientific studies, 200+ independent research institutions. A wide range of benefits for the individual and society have been demonstrated. Thousands of students from around the world are learning Transcendental Meditation and Yogic Flying. In Brahmasthan of India we are assembling 8,000 Pandits now in perfect vastu for World Peace and World Affluence. 1,050 Vedic Pandits at Maharishi Vedic City, Iowa, USA are being trained today.

Making Mandirs a "Go To" Place

Sri Sahajananda, LA

Gave the message of Swami Nithyanand Ji: What Swamiji taught us: Temples are universities, distinction between Pujacharya and a Priest, inspire – don't preach, temples are where we discover "Aham Brahmasmi."

Session 7B 2:15 PM Building a Community

Moderator - Shri Vinay Vardhana, India Temple Association, Berlin, NJ

In many temples, women are very active in management and administration aspects of temples. What role should the women play in attracting the young and the youth to our dharma and temples in the society we are living where the distractions and peer-pressure abound? A well-run mentorship program can attract people with skills and experience to act as role models for those needing guidance. Temples can provide an ideal setting for initiating and sustaining it very effectively.

Role of Women in Preserving and Promoting Hindu Dharma

Sushri Sachi Lamb, Hindu American Foundation, DC

We can make our community stronger by making the younger generations feel more connected to Hinduism. The group includes: American born and/or raised Hindus, Non-Indian born Hindus and converts to Hinduism. Women are nurturers and must play a significant role in changing the current culture to integrate Hindu youth and non-Indian born Hindus into the Hindu family. I was born in Hawaii, USA to non-Indian parents. I was raised with Hindu traditions and beliefs and never felt like I belonged anywhere – found it hard to label my beliefs. I learned about Hinduism in college. The college going Hindu youth would have like a network of people to share beliefs or answer questions, and not feel different or alienated. They often do not understand the meaning behind traditions – particularly rituals. They are often unsure how to explain Hinduism to their friends. They have limited access to faith based activity. They face pressures to convert. We need to reach out to those who are new and seeking to understand Hindu faith – offer friendship, mentorship, or simply acceptance. Create a welcoming environment in the temple community including events or gatherings that would be attractive to youth. Explain all aspects of Hinduism – beyond rituals - to children or others who want to know.

Mentorship Programs for the Youth and Recent Immigrants

Shri Fred Stella, West Michigan Hindu Temple, Ada, MI

The children of Hindu/Indian immigrants face challenges similar to those of several other groups who have made America their home. Can we learn from their efforts? The issues are similar to the Jews: Different Religion, Different Ethnicity, Culture of Ambition, and an Insular Social Structure. What we can learn? Make religion relevant without diluting essence. Foster an environment of spiritual inquiry, allow for the many expressions of Sanantana Dharma, live your faith without hypocrisy. Combine ambition with compassion. Strive for balance in life. Allow young adults to follow their Bliss. A superior culture embraces nonconformity. Encourage continuity of Hindu families without bigotry. From early age promote ideals of happy marriage. Accept final decision with love & surrender. Mentoring for success: Spiritual Leaders > Parents > Young Adults/Teens > Children. Tradition has a vote not a veto. Welcome youth from outside community. Allow youth a say in their programs. Understand our values & who we are. Learn from both the successes & failures of our religious neighbors. Create an environment that fosters inquiry, honesty & teaching by example. Include youth in important decisions in programming.



Cooperation Between Temples and Youth Groups
Sushri Sonia Chanana, Hindu Youth Network, Canada

The Hindu Youth Network is a spiritual, cultural and networking group for students and young professionals (15-30). Our core goals are friendship, faith and community. To build a grassroots, national community space, sharing the philosophies and virtues of Hindu Dharma among young people, without division based on language, sect or nationality. With 6000+ registered members, we are Canada's largest & fastest growing Hindu youth movement. For the very first time, along with our extensive grassroots network of HYN chapters (12 city-based chapters in 3 provinces across Canada) we have also brought together most Hindu youth organizations, all major temple youth groups and 80% of the Hindu university associations in Canada.

Developing & Nurturing Next Generation Mandir Leadership

Shri Shree Patel, Anoopam Mission, Coplay, PA

Engaging and developing next generation leaders is critical for our future. The 2nd Generation's mindset and needs are significantly different than that of their parents. It's important to take a systematic approach to nurturing the next generation. Progress can best be made by actively involving them in mandir activities/leadership at an early stage. They are usually more liberal than their parents. Blind faith doesn't work – they need scientific explanations. They detest hypocrisy. Role models that they respect are supremely important. They often feel stifled by older generation. Social interaction with other youth and fun activities are KEY.

A positive peer group creates a virtuous cycle. Once focused, they are extremely determined. Their first bridge to bhakti is their parents. Annual & semi-annual Youth Camps serve as a focal point. Quality time with saints and sadhus personalizes the philosophy. We need to specifically involve the youth in planning and execution of mandir activities increases involvement. Utilize technology such as weekly sabha conference calls, discussion boards, Facebook to maintain continuous contact. Formalized leadership training helps them to take the next step.

It is important for them to feel like their voices are heard. Delegation of responsibility to them encourages a sense of ownership. Patience and understanding are important for they will make mistakes. We must keep an open mind for many of their ideas are novel. Creating a mix of seva, education and fun achieves a variety of developmental aims. The 2nd Generation has a thirst for spirituality but struggles to connect. We can aid them by providing: Positive role models in the form of saints, sadhus & peers. Create: scientific explanations regarding our philosophy, a nurturing environment geared towards their needs and mindset, opportunities to serve and take leadership with patience and acceptance

Workshop Break Out Sessions

Session 8A 4:00 PM Management & Administration of Mandirs

Moderator - *Dr. Sharma Tadepalli, Sri Meenakshi Temple, Pearland, TX*

There are several common elements as to how majority of temples in the US came into existence and flourished. However, only a small percentage has spent the time to develop strategic planning and tangible metrics to measure their attainment. This approach will necessitate assessment of their current state, revaluation of their practices and make appropriate changes for sustained growth. What are the best practices that have been used by successful mandirs, large and small. What are the constraints under which mandirs operate? What are the practical issues facing the mandirs and methods for their resolution?

Common Problems in Administration of Mandirs: Problems, Conflicts & Solutions
Shri Ravi Shetkar, Sri Ganesh Temple, Nashville, TN

Ravi Shetkar presented the history of Ganehsa Temple and the lessons learned.

Managing Growth: Issues that arise in scaling mandirs from a small scale operation/facility to a large scale operation

Dr. Bapineedu Kuchipudi, Venkateshwara Temple, Bridgewater, NJ

Super size the temple? From fast foods, large vehicles and mansions, the American mindset favors everything BIG. Hindu Temples are not immune to this ideology. Temple administrators need to be grounded with a disciplined and restrained approach: "Needs of the community" versus "needing to build for the community." RUN - Resources, Utilization, Needs. Winning over the bureaucracy is key to smooth construction. Temples should retain local counsel/planner that knows the code. We should respect the system and work with the system. Educate the township board, neighbors, and anyone who shows up at town meetings to oppose. Learn how to counter "Not in my backyard," opposition with expert testimonials, DOT studies, and if all else fails look at RLUIPA Federal Statutes. Finally, we must contribute with a SEVA attitude and take care of our Priests. We should institute policies for recruiting qualified priests, monitoring priest services and devotee satisfaction. Ensure that priests follow established guidelines set by your religious committee. Review and train them in the right way to perform services based on practices and Agama requirements. All operations must be based on Accountability and Transparency. Do not grow the temple beyond its means. Discourage borrowing!

Which Panchangam We Should Follow in NA?

Dr. R. S. Venkatachalam, SSVT, Lanham, MD

People trust the Indian Panchangam that they are used to and are confused about changing the Panchangam for another location. Who Needs a Panchangam, and why? Temples, religious functions, religious services for people, people to determine auspicious timings for events. There are five limbs: Vara, Thithi, Nakshatram, Karanam, Yogam. Leadership of the Hindu body should: Work with Temples to help them transition into the use of North American Panchangam, leverage on the North American Panchangam to develop Panchangams for the different localities, especially Time Zones.

Challenges for Hindu Temples: An Outsider's Perspective

Dr. Ram Pandey, Sankat Mochan Temple, Adairsville, GA

Temple is a center for devotion to God, a center for education, of culture and religion. It is a holy place for performance of rituals and a center for guidance to society and new generations.

Source of religious information: 1. Qualified Priests – Knowledge of Vedas, rituals and Jyotish as well as English language to be able to explain the importance of rituals, religion and Dharma to the new generation. 2. Parents/Teachers – Need to be role models – Engage in activities that uphold Dharma. 3. Food habits – Influence person's thoughts and actions. 4. Independent Living – Increases selfish behaviors and family/community values are lost. 5. Proper religious education – Mandirs need to take lead in proper religious education. Encourage involvement of new generation in management of temples. Parents must take interest in preserving their culture and get actively involved in the community affairs.



Session 8B 4:00 PM. Are we inward looking? Reaching Out to the Local Community

*Moderator - Dr. Prakasa Rao
Velagapudi, Datta Yoga Center,
Hanuman Temple, Frisco, TX*

To achieve greater acceptance of our places of worship and Hindu religion, many temples have placed great importance on connecting with the local communities. Public service (Seva) is an integral part of Hindu Dharma. Many civic welfare projects such feeding the hungry (soup-kitchen), health clinic, yoga classes, meditation, lecture series on Hinduism – spirituality and philosophical aspects have led to harmonious relations and helped connect to our youth.

Community Service Through Yoga to Increase Temple Relevance

Dr. Rajan Narayanan and Shri Ramesh Deshpande, Yoga for Life Foundation, DC

Dr. Rajan Narayanan and Shri Ramesh Deshpande state that yoga is not just a physical activity, but a spiritual activity which is the foundation of all religions. Yoga poses questions such as 'Who am I? Why am I here?' which help find the meaning of life. The Life in Yoga Foundation provides the tools to help begin teaching and training yoga at temples.

Reaching Out to the Larger Community: Health Care

Dr. Vipin Kalia, Hindu Temple of Central Indiana, Indianapolis, IN

Dr. Vipin Kalia spoke of the underlying medical problems and the lack of knowledge and assistance in the Hindu community. Biggest problem is lack of funds which can be solved through creative ideas like a HMEC credit card, mutual funds or credit unions to build a better financial structure.

Reaching Out to the Local Community

Sushri Padma Kuppa, Bharatiya Temple, Troy, Michigan

Sushri Padma Kuppa emphasized that Hindus need to become more involved in the outer community through libraries, historical commissions and parent teacher organizations. Through interfaith work and seva, Hindus need to take pride in their identity while adapting to the surroundings.

Current Science, Hindu Way of Living, and the Role Temples Can Play

Dr. Dinesh Sinha, SSVT, Lanham, MD

Dr. Dinesh Sinha said that the Indian American population is not healthy and happy because the proper balance of physical, mental, emotional, social and spiritual well being are missing. Some simple steps, like healthy diet and regular exercise will help the Hindu philosophy of vegetarianism come to life in the temple community.

Session 8C 4:00 PM. Education and Integration - Ways and Means for Integrating Youth Into Hindu Temples

Moderator - Sushri Chitra Ravindran, Hindu Temple of Florida, Inc., Riverdale, FL

A society's strength is only as deep as the extent of its shared common values and morals. Educating our youth about a common set of Hindu values, concepts and traditions in a planned and systematic way will go a long way in instilling pride in their hearts about our traditions, values and Dharma. The challenge is to infuse the message with sufficient fun so that enjoyment and learning go hand-in-hand. Explore ways of anchoring Hindu Dharma's eternal values in the hearts of coming generations and roles which mandirs can play to make that happen.



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Posters (Phalaks) & Videos: Dharma Education Through Temples

Sushri Bhavna Shinde, Forum For Hindu Awakening, Mount Laurel, NJ

Bhavna Shinde stressed the importance of Dharma Education Dharma Education through Phalaks (Posters). Phalaks are an attractive visual medium. Phalaks are in simple English. There are videos on over 50 topics on Dharma. Hindi videos subtitled in English are gaining popularity on TV and cable. The Hinduism concepts are explained in a simple manner.

Bhagavad Gita for Hotels and Motels

Shri Akururanatha Dasa Ji, Shri Milan Doshi, ISKCON, Silicon Valley, CA

Panchajanya program places English version of Bhagavad-Gita at various motels in the US. Any motel owner interested in allowing us to place the book can avail this facility. Prominent Patel Motel owners have whole-heartedly welcomed and supported this program. Panchajanya team members deliver the books at their establishments and will follow up at a later date for further restocking. Indian Moteliers, especially Patels, own almost 60% of motels in the US. AAHOA alone represents over 1.3 million rooms. Once around 200,000 copies are placed, franchisors, rather than franchisees, can be approached to directly place books at all their franchisees. Millions of Bibles are placed free of cost. Moteliers have similar expectations for Bhagavad Gita. Contacting, marketing, follow-ups, execution etc needs manpower, resources, infrastructure and team. Bhagavad-Gitas taken away by motel guests need to be restocked. You can help by sponsoring books to be delivered to various motels. You can help by getting orders from moteliers who you know. Help by logistic and administrative support: like website support, participation in conventions, deliveries etc.

The Mandirs & Challenges of Pluralism: A Plus for Mandirs

Shri Tej Tanden, OM Temple, Carlisle, MA

Where do we stand: "On familiar grounds?" Vedic Philosophy permeates throughout the world; in their languages, grammar, customs, cultures, S. Knapp's "Proof of Vedic Culture's Global Existence." First we need to educate ourselves. Set the stage. Study & Learn the meaning of OPPS GOD - Use the Concept of Monistic Singularity to remove the artificial distance "God-Human."

Explaining Hindu Dharma to our next Generation- Objectives and Strategies

Sushri Kamlesh Kapur, Shri Sharda Mandir And Sanskrit Paathshala, Chesapeake, VA

Given the Freedom of faith and the freedom to follow any set of traditions, we as parents have to decide the choices we are going to offer to our next generation. Choices: Assimilation in the mainstream culture, becoming another ethnic ingredient in the melting pot, rejecting cultural diffusion and insisting to maintain distinct identity. Learn about Dharma as a subject. Keep converting Missionaries at Bay. How to reconnect- that is the subject under discussion. Learn basic concepts. Learn to be Hindus by convictions. Learn to be practicing Hindus. Prove how spirituality meets science in Hindu Dharma. Prepare modules of lessons for different age groups. Remove English categories. Teach our version of history. Explain Vedic knowledge and its relevance in the contemporary world. Separate social sciences from Dharma.

Being on the defensive or the offensive? Choice: Ask pertinent questions and prepare those questions. Show your antiquity and demand their's. Ask about the myths and unscientific aspects of Christianity. Make them uncomfortable. Be prepared with quotes about their early history. Never be on the defensive. Have positive idea of your identity. How to build self esteem? Knowledge about the key concepts and philosophy are crucial to build self esteem.

Circumvent the Educational system. Reach American student body to clear the fog of their total ignorance. Create a united front on terms and definitions. Go to schools and colleges. Go to churches and synagogues. Approach the public libraries and demand books - by law they are supposed to procure the book for research within the next ten days. Know your rights and privileges.

Certification Program for Language Courses at Bal Vihars

Pandit Ramdheen Ramsamooj, Saraswati Mandiram, NH

A MOU was passed between Three R's Foundation, Saraswati Mandiram, & University of Massachusetts. Degrees and certificates can be awarded to students in a SALT School Model. Credits can be given to students for courses registered in intersession. Mandirs have educational classes in Hindi, Philosophy, Music, & Yoga. These classes are being taught by professionals with the sole purpose of educating our children to preserve our heritage. Children are spending an enormous amount of time on weekends and sometimes weekdays acquiring information. The children are not being credited for his work at high school or college. If the Mandirs become part of the Three R's Foundation their students will be certified to receive credit for these courses. Level 5 & 6 allows the students to get college credit, not only in Hindi but all subjects. i.e. Mathematics, Chemistry, etc.

Session 8D 4:00 PM Inter-Racial Marriages

Moderator - *Shri Nanik Lahori, Chinmaya Mission, Washington Regional, Center, MD*

Look around and you will see the explosion of Hindus youths – both boys and girls are marrying outside their faith. On one hand the concern is: Will it dilute the preservation of Hinduism? On the other hand many non-Hindu spouses find Hindu religion fascinating and may even wish to adopt it! Are Hindu Temples prepared to cater to their needs and the needs of their children? Hindu Dharma and the spirituality it espouses must be promoted to preserve their bond to the Temples.

Marriage and Multiculturalism

Shri Krishna Kirti Das, Samprajña Institute, Albuquerque, NM

There is Exogamy among Hindu-Americans. 50% of Asian-American men and 55% of Asian-American women between the ages of 25 and 34 years of age married non-Asians. 54% Asian-American men and 66% of Asian-American women under 25 years of age married non-Asians. "Members of small, widely dispersed groups often have little choice but to marry outside their group, as well as incentives to do so." Hindu-Americans marrying outside their group appears to be the rule, not an exception. There are two approaches to life: 1) Universalist Approach in which tenets of religion apply to all people irregardless of belief or faith, beliefs and values



are fundamental to identity, promoting own religion is an ethical imperative. 2) Multiculturalist Approach in which tenets of religion are limited to self or group, culture is fundamental to identity, promoting religion is not an ethical imperative. There are two Approaches to Marriage. 1) Universalist Approach in which religion is central to ethics and behavior, religion governs behavior in marriage, passing on religious beliefs and values to children and others is an ethical imperative. 2) Multiculturalist Approach in which religion is not central to ethics and behavior, pop culture governs behavior in marriage, passing on culture is not an ethical imperative. Exogamy as a general trend among Hindu-Americans will not change in the foreseeable future. ***Exogamy under a multiculturalist conception of religion will further weaken the Hindu identity of Hindu-Americans.*** Exogamy under a universalist conception of religion is likely to strengthen the Hindu identity of Hindu-Americans and expand the number of Hindu Americans. Revising educational materials and instructional programs to further support a universalist conception of religion will positively reinforce a Hindu identity through marriage.

Retaining Hindu Identity: Caribbean/Trinidad & Tobago Experience and Learnings

Dr. B. Doobay, Vishnu Temple, Richmond, ON, Canada

Shared his thoughts and real life experiences on how to be an assertive Hindu in North America.

Procedures and policies to welcome/initiate willing individuals into the Hindu fold

Dr. Darshanand Ramdass, Arya Spiritual Center, Briarwood, NY

What are the procedures/policies in place to allow willing individuals to adopt the Vedic/Hindu fold? A simple havan ceremony is performed and the old name is changed to a Sanskrit name. Should we accept others if our children choose to marry them? Yes, based on common values, if one's goal is a successful marriage. A verse from Atharva Veda inspires us: all powerful Divine One! Inspire this couple to live here in this world like sparrows. May this benevolent couple enjoy the joys of this world and longevity with their children (14, 64). Temples should be flexible in accommodating willing individuals who sincerely want to adopt Vedic/Hindu fold. Temples should educate them in our way of life, belief system, sacred ceremonies. Children should encourage their friends to join them at various functions in the temple, home so that others may gain a direct experience of various traditions and rituals. We have to accommodate those who do not speak Hindi or other Indian languages. Therefore, our texts should have English translation and transliteration of Sanskrit mantras and bhajans.



Youth Networking Programs at Chinmaya Mission

Shri Kaushik Joshi, Chinmaya Mission, Chicago, IL

He presented the youth activities at Chinmaya Centers and how they facilitate networking amongst youth: Yuva Kendra Activities, weekly study of Vedantic Text, Annual Summer Camp. Promotes social networking. An annual Maha Samadhi . (July-August Camp) is held. There are many volunteer services (Seva) projects



Evening Program 8:00 PM Cultural Program

Emcee - *Sushri Charu Narsimhan*

Welcome Remarks, *Mythili Bachi*

- Parmeshananda Ji, *DVD*
- Bhajans & Video, *Devi Narayani - Sripuram Group*

- Scholarship Award, *Tej Tanden*
- Kathak Performance, *Purvi Bhat*
- Ashraya - Bhutanese Resettlement Project, *Sneha Mehta*
- Maharishi Vedic City (Video), *Dr. Michael Busch*
- A word about HMEC, *Ravi Kundru, Padma Kuppa, Keya Bhatt*
- “Laya Lahari” - A Percussion Ensemble, *Gautam Sudhakar – Mridangam, Ghatam and Konakkol, Vivek Chellappa – Khanjira, Ajay Ravichandran – Western Drums, Vinay Mallikaarjun – Tabla*
- A Vote of Thanks, *BAPS, ISKCON, 3 HOSTS*



Proceedings SUNDAY 9/13/2009



6:00 AM Yoga, Meditation, Devotional Singing, *LIYF, AOL, Sripuram*

Session 9 7:50 AM Summary of the Youth & Workshop Sessions

Moderator - *Shri Vijay Parsad, Siva Mandir, Oakland Park, FL*

Summary of Youth Session, *Sushri Bhakti Mehta*

The youth discussed how to build better relationships and retains the exceptional youth of the Mandir while encouraging seva activities. Additionally, this conference initiated the start of the Hindu Youth

Network which will connect youth across North America and offer a resource where youth can share resources.

Session 10 8:30 AM Continuing the Hindu Jewish Dialog

Moderator - *Dr. Siva Subramanian, SSVT, Lanham, MD*

This builds upon the Hindu Jewish dialog that was initiated by Acharya Dharma Sabha. The Jewish people faced some of the same challenges about 100 years ago when they began to migrate to the US as Hindus face today. Our friends from the American Jewish Committee will share some administrative aspects of Jewish life in the United States. What works well? What doesn't? How do various Jewish organizations collaborate with each other? How do Jewish organizations handle sensitive political, religious, and cultural issues -- both internally and externally? The AJC has been a powerful political force for more than 100 years and has been extremely supportive of the organized Indian community in the United States.



Role & Structure of AJC was nicely presented by *Melanie Maron Pell*. A very informative presentation on "Synagogues Meeting Generational & Identity Challenges: Models of Engagement for Youth," was provided by *Steven Roy Goodman*. The subject of Indian – Jewish Relations: Domestic and International was covered by *Nissim Reuben*. The session was a great learning experience for all.

Session 11 9:30 AM Is Media

Covering Us Adequately and Fairly

Moderator - *Dr. Ajay Shah, AHAD, CA*

The main stream media shapes the public opinion on almost every aspect of American thought process. It is sophisticated and effective. Religious Institutions and other entities have 'manipulated' it for their benefit. Do you have a formal Public Relations person through which all media must go thru? Are you aware of local media coverage strategies? Should the mandirs set up a joint media watch task force? More than anyone Hindus need to counter serious image problem and dispel distortions and biases.

Media Treatment of Hindus

Shri Ravi Joshi, Hindu Temple of Toledo, Sylvania, OH

A weak sense of identity means inadequate projection of the Hindu worldview. Getting message out to media is critical. Temples are a credible local source. They need to leverage this by dedicated outreach efforts at all temples, especially in the major metro areas. To do this we need to develop kits and train local volunteers. This further establishes the need for inter temple networking.

Political Activism is Necessary for Religious Freedom

Shri Sanjay Puri, Dr. Surabhi Garg, USINPAC, DC

Political recognition reduces the perception of minority religions being cults. Political activism is important for dealing with authorities on the issue of zoning, approvals etc. which come up due to lack of awareness and a vulnerability perception. In a democracy, a minority community needs to be politically active to get its view points across e.g. the Jewish American community, Cuban Americans etc. Political activism leads to bridges with other religious organizations and reduces communication issues. Temples have a built-in grassroots base for creating a perception. This can be used to invite local political and community leaders to key events, not to discuss politics but to recognize a community that worships! Your average worship base is 5,000 and to a successful politician 5,000 votes is a very large base. Get your worshippers in the habit of calling/writing and building relationships with their local politicians. Do NOT go to your local leader only when you need him to do something for you! Get involved with your local leaders. Do NOT just accept things, SPEAK UP & SPEAK OUT! Activate your worshippers to speak out on local/national issues. If your local Congressman/Senator or leader knows about your culture/religion/practices he will be much more capable to fight for you and your causes! Make it easy for your leaders to find you by establishing an outreach committee! Like everything else Politics too is about relationships and USINPAC has built relationships at the Federal/State and Local level. USINPAC effectively pools the political contributions and voices of its members. USINPAC helps you to dramatically multiply your contribution impact on the political process.



Session 12 10:30 AM Closure

Moderator - *Shri Sanjay Mehta, VHPA, Hindu Jain Temple, PA*



Everyone Can Serve -- Parting Thoughts - Blessings

Swamini Sarvaanananda, Satchidananda Ashram, Yogaville VA

A hallmark of Hindu tradition is serving and respecting our elders. Where: At home, at the Temple, in the community and abroad. Whom should we serve? Serve those that are well, aging, infirmed, handicapped, diminished in body, mind, or spirit, all!

Educate ourselves and others: Teach our youth about Seva, Dharma, respect for generations and learning from seniors.

Teach all temple participants regarding: End of Life issues, Dementia/Alzheimers, how and when to provide home care and housing options: Assisted Living, Nursing Homes. We must be aware of financial expectations for care, insurance, etc. Educate about Health Services. Produce and Distribute: (hard copy and through Internet).

Prepare Booklets: Tips on Indian Culture (related to health care), Beliefs regarding End of Life, Afterlife, Law of Karma, Whom to address and how, family attendance, food needs, items for comfort in room, bhajans and chants, formal Hindu prayers, malas, etc.

Create Pamphlets on: Specific Prayers for Special Events (health related, for chaplains and other medical staff), birth, naming, first food, still birth, near death, death, more. There should be a Hindu “Box” for Chaplaincy Department (also offer instruction on above, on Puja, on Deities, etc.

Nursing Homes, Assisted Living Facilities: Cultural Concerns, Family and Friends, Temple Members Visits, Food Needs, Worship items in room, including music.

Funeral Homes: How to prepare body, How to display body, What kind of service is needed, importance of the Puja, types of prayers, etc. Symbolic lighting of the funeral pyre in service, pushing of the button, Interment/ Disposal of ashes, KEY Points:

Produce and Distribute: (consider hard copy and internet), Booklet, Hindu Culture Tips for Health Care Providers, Readings, Prayers for Special Events, Provide Hindu Box for Chapels/Chaplaincy Depts.

Educate: Health Facilities, Funeral Homes on Hindu culture, spiritual concerns. Instruct All in Seva Dharma and Opportunities.

Volunteer: Provide for own Seniors, Open Temple for groups. Become Trained Volunteer or Certified Chaplains



Resolutions & Next Steps, Shri Sanjay Mehta

In the concluding session of the conference, the delegates agreed on a series of action items which emerged as a consequence of the deliberations and presentations:

- Hindu Seva Diwas: Conduct Seva (service) activities in large number of Mandirs on a single

chosen day.

- Develop software and e-services for Mandirs. Apply readily available state of the art software technology to streamline routine Mandir operations.
- Develop training camps for Hindu Ambassadors in Mandirs, training Mandir adults and youth on essentials of Hindu Dharma and Hindu society, so that they can effectively articulate the richness of our traditions to larger public.
- Distribute Hindu textbook supplements to US school districts on the history of India which have been prepared by Hinduism Today.
- Develop a Samskar Manual for Young Couples. Write a clear, simple and attractive book on Vivah Samskar.
- Establish a Hindu Mandir Youth Network in USA.
- Establish Hindu Mandir communication channel, through a Hindu Mandir Newsletter.

The delegates also agreed, and unanimously passed the following resolution for consideration of their temple's boards, in the concluding session of the conference.

Resolution:

We the delegates of the Hindu-American Mandirs at HMEC will help in all material ways possible to accelerate the restoration process of Hindu heritage sites world over. In particular, we appreciate and wholeheartedly support Dr. Animesh Sinha's efforts in preserving and restoring the sites of Braj.

2009 HMEC Host's Acceptance Speech

Dr. Sharma Tadepalli, Sri Meenakshi Temple, Pearland, TX

Houston, TX, with an active and vibrant Hindu community, captured the honor of holding the 2010-Hindu Mandir Executives' Conference(HMEC). Dr. Sharma Tadepalli, of Sri Meenakshi Temple, Pearland, TX, while accepting the honor of holding the next conference in Houston

on behalf of Houston Hindus, said, "HMEC is uniting Mandirs while resolving issues and challenges facing the Hindu community. We want to unite temples in Texas and create a united front of all temples in Texas."

Vote of Thanks was presented by Shri Shivaram Sitaram



Proceeding compiled and submitted by: Abhaya Asthana