



H T G W



**Commemorating 15 years of
Hindu Temple of Greater Wichita**



It is good to have devotion, however it may be, but devotion accompanied by understanding is better. Then whatever happens is seen as a blessing - Swami Veditatmananda, Arsha Vidya Gurukulam

Our Best Wishes to the Hindu Temple of Greater Wichita
on its 15th Anniversary

Ragu, Suparna, Varsha & Vikas
Tirukonda

COMMEMORATING 15 YEARS OF
HINDU TEMPLE OF GREATER WICHITA

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PROCLAMATION
of
The City of Wichita, Kansas
Founded in 1870

Whereas, temples, churches and mosques are the cornerstones of families, neighborhoods and the community, and play a vital role in steadying and stabilizing our families; and

Whereas, the new Hindu Temple of Greater Wichita, serving the religious, social and cultural needs of the followers of the Hindu Faith, is a tangible sign of a great new beginning for the Hindu community in the Wichita area; and

Whereas, this magnificent structure will have an unquestioned positive impact upon Wichita and will be a tremendous asset to the cultural development and understanding of the entire community; and

Whereas, in these days of religious disharmony, suspicion, and fear, it is important to concentrate on our similarities, our families and our community, and come together for the good of all people;

Now, Therefore, Be It Resolved, that I, Bob Knight, Mayor of the City of Wichita, Kansas, do hereby proclaim June 16, 2002, as

Hindu Temple of Greater Wichita Inauguration Day

and extend official and personal congratulations for the successful completion of this magnificent building to the Board of Trustees, the Interim Executive Committee and the entire Hindu community.

June 14, 2002

Date



Bob Knight
Mayor, City of Wichita

Chairman's Address...

“Strive On! With tireless enthusiasm, strive on to reach your goal. Without a goal, the best in you can never come out to express “

This year, which marks the fifteenth anniversary of the founding of Hindu Temple of Greater Wichita, shows us how far we have traveled and where we are standing now. It has been an amazing journey. Our entire community, and especially our younger generation, has been the winner in this endeavor. We hail our Volunteers' commitment and Panditji's contributions for this success. It is wonderful to have witnessed the blossoming of community involvement and the expansion of the children's program, “Balvihar” from 2002 to 2017. I often recall what Vijay and Meena Khurana's about 10 years old daughter, Monica, said to a newspaper reporter on inauguration day in 2002: “Now we have a place to call our own and have our own Sunday school, like everyone else!” Looking back on all those years, we faced some hurdles from the beginning to the present day, but it is clear that it was worth it.

Standing at this junction and viewing our growth, it feels that we have entered the second phase of our progress, and that even more expansion is required. While we have a place to congregate for our spiritual festivals, poojas and celebrations; our hallways are overflowing with devotees. We often do not have enough space to sit down and worship peacefully.

In addition, one of the main functions of this temple is to teach our children and future generations about their roots, culture, and identity. To expose them to our traditions and our philosophy of life we have our Balvihar, but so many children attend these courses that we require an expansion in the number of classrooms. Our Temple grounds are large enough to accommodate a community hall for our activities and a greater number of classrooms for our crowded Balvihar classes. With the construction of a community hall and classrooms, this place can truly be the center of the Hindu community in this region for generations to come. We must start today to satisfy tomorrow's desires and needs of the community. Let's band together on this amazing journey and make this vision a reality.

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"One" Temple

By Suja Mathew

As the ideas and enthusiasm poured from the palette of IAGW,
We became one colour.

As we carried each other through the years of planning,
We became one class.

As the board members and volunteers knitted their minds,
We became one gender.

As we gave donations and endless hours of wisdom,
We became one body.

As we worked together through ups and downs,
We became one family.

As we knelt in prayer for strength and perseverance,
We became one faith.

As we supported each other at times of uncertainty,
We became one soul.

As we whispered or shouted words of encouragement,
We spoke one language.

As we lit incense of waiting and hope,
We became one generation.

As we saw the structure slowly coming to life,
We became one entity.

As we retell with pride, the achievements of our members,
We became one people.

We are:

One colour, One class, One gender, One body, One family,
One faith, One soul, One language, One generation, One entity
One people

We are the Power of One

We are Indians

We are "One" Temple



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BEST WISHES FROM THE
RAGHAVAN FAMILY

Congratulations on 15th Anniversary of HTGW

The History and Legacy of Hindu Temple of Greater Wichita

by Amruta Joshi

(based on interviews with Board chairperson, past presidents and other volunteers)

Coming together is the beginning. Keeping together is progress. Working together is success. – Henry Ford

How did the Hindu Temple of Greater Wichita (HTGW) come to be? Where was the nearest Temple to Wichita before we had HTGW? What have been the most significant achievements in the journey so far? If you have ever wondered how this place of worship and center of cultural activity was established, here's your chance to find out the remarkable story behind it and the vision that led to it.

Before there was HTGW (1970-2000)

Wichita has been home to a fair number of Indian families and University students for at least the past 40-50 years. As you can imagine, even before the HTGW was established in Wichita, enthusiastic community members got together and celebrated cultural events. However, there was no common center of activity for everyone to gather. The venue usually was the basement of someone's house or clubhouse of an apartment complex. For larger festival celebrations like Mahashivratri, Ramnavami, Mahavir Jayanti, Ganesh Chaturthi, Janmashtami and Diwali the families used to rent Boston Park Hall for a few hours. Indian community at the time was around 150-200 people and that was a good place for everyone to get together but that hardly compared to having a dedicated place of worship. If you wanted to visit a Temple, you would have to travel to Kansas City or Oklahoma City, and as you can imagine that would be once or twice a year for most families.

Families raising children in Wichita desired the next generation to have an understanding of our culture and values. A *Sanskar* (Values) class was formed with the desire to impart knowledge and understanding of Hindu principles and some families took turns hosting it at their homes. When the kids were in their teens, their families formed a Youth Group with the purpose of getting the kids together, answering any questions they may have and ensuring they had a good foundation in Indian principles. However, with all these activities occurring, there was still a piece missing, a piece that would tie in the social, the cultural and the spiritual aspects of people's lives. There was always a need for a place where everyone could come together, worship, socialize and feel connected to something bigger.



Hindu Temple Of Greater Wichita

Initial Steps, Construction and Deities

In 1998, Dr. Raghu and Mrs. Rekha Reddi, having recently returned from visiting Kedarnath and Badrinath in India, thought about having a Temple in Wichita. The Reddi family has always been a great supporter and the driving force behind establishing HTGW. They approached a few families in Indian community with this idea and the group started looking at various options to bring this vision into reality. They looked at several churches to see if they could purchase one and re-purpose it as a Temple. Finally it was decided that procuring a piece of land & getting the Temple built would be the best option. The piece of land originally acquired was a huge 5 acre lot for \$65,000 in a residential area near Greenwich & Pawnee. The Priest from Kansas City Temple was invited, *Bhoomipujan* was completed on June 24, 2000 and initial work began. However, the surrounding community came to know about the plans for that piece of land and they opposed it on the grounds that it would increase traffic in the residential area. The case went to court and was settled with the families in the community buying out the piece of land for the same price. The Temple plan didn't materialize at that place and time but, undaunted, the group continued to look for other suitable properties.

After some more research, Plaza Real Estate firm suggested the current lot on Zelta St., a 2.5 acres semi-commercial property, which seemed perfect for Temple. The deal was signed on March 29, 2001 and planning and construction work began. Reddi family visited several temples in Chicago, Kansas City, Oklahoma City, Dallas, etc. to look at various designs and reached the decision to have HTGW designed after the Kansas City

Temple model. Suja Mathew & Shyam Singh offered their expertise and served on this project as honorary architects with David Burke of Marketplace Properties as the official architect. The Reddi family took personal loan in their name from Sunflower Bank to support this great cause. In addition, significant contributions from members of our community enabled construction to begin in full swing!



Then the momentous task of obtaining impeccable idols or *murtis* of deities began, not to mention having them shipped to Wichita in perfect condition! The first Sri Balaji Temple in US is in Pittsburg, PA and they had approached expert sculptors at the Tirumala Tirupati Temple in India to have the Venkateswara idol created in 1972. So while construction for HTGW was in progress, the Reddi family visited Tirupati and requested the Balaji, Sridevi and Bhoodevi statues to be carved by the sculptors there. The white marble idols were commissioned from a place in Jaipur that is well known for its skilled sculptors. The Reddi family visited Jaipur, accompanied by Sensarma family

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and Bhargava family and found a sculptor who could carve beautiful deities in white marble. And that is how the idols of Durga, Radha Krishna, Ram-Laxman-Sita-Hanuman and Mahavir were obtained from Jaipur. Another devotee in Wichita volunteered to obtain the deities of Ganesha, Kartikeya and Shiva from Mahabalipuram.

All of the statues were shipped carefully and delivered through customs as per schedule. With the help of a moving company, the deities were delivered and positioned in the appropriate spaces at the Temple. The mover even agreed to follow Hindu rituals of taking a shower & wearing clean clothes prior to helping with positioning the deities. Sculptors from India were invited to ensure the idols were installed correctly.

Meanwhile, other activities were in progress to ensure successful establishment and operations of the newly formed Temple. Much before the physical work for the temple started, by-laws were finalized on October 7th, 1999 by the law firm Fleeson Gooing in order to set up HTGW as a non-profit organization.



HTGW logo: Before inauguration, a competition was held for designing HTGW logo. There were several beautiful entries but the one that was selected as winner was designed by Shyam Singh and you can see it in all HTGW-related material to this date.

An Executive Committee was formed in Fall 2001 to lead further efforts. Mr. Chittur Venkatasubban, who was the Committee President at the time, & his wife Rema, were instrumental in bringing people together and coordinating various activities. They had a supportive team in Vice-President (Mohan Kulkarni), Secretary (Viswanath Madhavan) & Treasurer (Srikrishnan Lakshmanan) as well as several other volunteers. To build up enthusiasm in the community, a Satyanarayana puja was organized by the Committee and it was met with great response. It was performed in a Church at the time; over 500 people attended the puja and helped raise about \$7,000 in donations that day! .

Temple Inauguration and Early Days (2002-2004)

An Inauguration Planning & Coordination Committee, consisting of several community volunteers, worked enthusiastically for months to organize ceremonies and activities around inauguration. It was a wonderful 3-day celebration, June 14-16, 2002 and people in and around the Wichita area attended this event. Pran-Pratisthapana was completed with the capable service of Chief Priest from Oklahoma City Temple and 6 other priests from various parts of USA.

Each sub-committee, from Facilities & Maintenance to Public Relations played a big role in the success of this event. A 24-hr armed guard was hired for 3 days to ensure security of the premises. The Police Commissioner was extremely helpful in guiding the committee through safety and security of the event.

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City dignitaries were invited on the final day; City of Wichita declared June 16 as Hindu Temple of Greater Wichita Inauguration Day. Food was donated by Gopuram and Passage to India, as well as prepared by volunteer families in Wichita and Hutchinson for the 3-day event. A strong contingent of students was involved in the success of this event as well. With such a large number of attendees anticipated, parking was arranged at Beech (Raytheon) and a valet service was organized with the help of around 50 WSU students.

Anyone who has organized an event can relate to feelings of the volunteers when there was a thunderstorm on the day of inauguration! The event was outdoors under huge tents and guests had to evacuate to the basement to ride out the storm. Fearing the tents would fly away, groups of students braved the storm and held on to the tents. Next day, the Homakunda was supposed to be outside as well and the rain-sogged ground had to be made suitable for Homam to proceed. Again a group of volunteers and WSU students worked fervently and with the help of plywood sheets and mulch prepared the

area for Homam. No event happens without a few obstacles but how you overcome those obstacles really defines the event, not to mention the camaraderie created in the process!



Soon after inauguration, the priest at the time left due to health reasons. Around this time, Mohan Kulkarni became President and continued to serve in other roles of the committee until more members were selected. But how do you ensure ceremonies of the temple continue in the interim without a priest? It was again that student volunteers stepped up. Krishnan Krishnaiyer and Pradeep Nagaraja who were WSU students at the time and were learned in temple rituals, volunteered to serve as interim priests. They performed the duties with enthusiasm and diligence until the Board of Trustees could find the Chief Priest. Our current priest, Sriraman Kadambi is originally from Tamil Nadu. He studied at the Vedic Research Institute in Tirupati for 15 years. In 2002, he was working with his brother at a Temple in Florida. The Reddi family approached Panditji through his brother and requested him to move to

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Wichita and take up the position as Chief Priest at HTGW. Mohan Kulkarni worked with an immigration lawyer to obtain the appropriate priest visa for him.

Another challenge in the early days was the perception of the neighborhood. The residential community around the Temple was a bit cautious about this new development. But Mohan Kulkarni personally visited the neighborhood homes and explained to the residents that ours is a congregation, not much different from theirs, and this is our place of worship and community center. That slowly helped build trust within the surrounding community.

One should always think about progress, about scaling new heights. In your personal life, you would think about gaining financial security, buying a bigger house, making life better for your family. Similarly as a community we should always think about opportunities for growth and ways to enrich our lives. The means will follow. As they say, God is always listening and says 'Tathastu' (So be it).

-Vasudha & Mohan Kulkarni

The Temple was built with the help of generous donations from the Trustees but was still paying off the bank loan and had very low income in the beginning. Indian community within the Greater Wichita area was relatively small; the funds collected were very limited and sometimes insufficient to cover the loan payments. The Trustees were always there to support when needed but the Temple really wanted and needed the community's support to thrive and flourish.

Key Milestones (2004-2009)

By 2004, the Temple still owed about \$212,000 to the Bank and HTGW Committee took a more strategic approach towards the loan amount. The idea was to ask for interest-free loans from individuals in the community to raise enough funds and pay off the remaining amount as soon as possible. This would get rid of draining expenses in the form of bank loan interest and get the community more engaged. Suparna & Ragu Tirukonda successfully led this significant effort. Some business owners offered interest-free loans. Some devotees, instead of loaning the amount, offered it entirely as a donation to the Temple. You can see the names of these generous individuals on the plaques in Temple lobby. Notably, Subash and Meeta Shah, with their donation of \$60,000, were instrumental in attaining this milestone. The Committee had begun asking for donations in June 2005 and by December 2006 the amount of \$212,000 was completely paid off! Raju Sheth and Nayan Patel played a pivotal role in this endeavor by reaching out to multiple donors. This was a historic milestone for HTGW when it became debt-free. By 2009, HTGW had paid off the interest-free loans of the community as well. This really put HTGW on a stable financial footing.

There are so many initiatives and programs at the Temple, so many ways to serve and participate. Come find an activity that is meaningful to you and get involved. If every family donated 1 hour of their time twice a month, it is not a struggle for any one person.

Suparna & Ragu Tirukonda

Hindu Temple Of Greater Wichita

Then came the important milestone of buying house for the priest and his family and that was not lacking in obstacles either! When the house right next to the Temple was up for sale, committee thought it would be the perfect property. However the owners refused to sell it to the Temple even though the offer was for the exact asking price. Soon after, another house nearby was up for sale and this time the committee approached it more cautiously, made a preemptive offer and were successful in obtaining the house in July 2008. It was now time to spread the word, get more people involved and bring in more cultural and social activities to the Temple. That was the thought behind starting community lunches, quarterly newsletters and the extremely popular Anand Bazaar!



The community lunches were organized in an effort to attract and engage Indian community and to raise some funds for the Temple. Volunteers would cook traditional Indian food and serve it at the Temple for a suggested donation of \$2 per plate. The funds generated by this initiative may have been small but it was a great way to engage the community and spread the word about

Temple. It is in no small part due to efforts of devoted volunteers that HTGW has flourished. May it be pitching in for routine tasks in maintaining the Temple premises or inspired ways of reaching out to community; the HTGW has always relied on dedicated volunteers.



As word got around, and interest in traditional activities grew, the role of Temple started evolving into more of a cultural center for Indian community. Various activities such as classical dance classes, yoga classes and art training sessions led by volunteers grew around the Temple. Yogesh Parikh had been teaching Kathak in Wichita for several years before the Temple was established. He began teaching at the Temple in 2002 and continues to do so till date. The number and variety of religious activities and festival celebrations in HTGW was increasing as well and all of these played a huge role in increasing community engagement.

The HTGW website was developed around 2005, which helped a lot as a source of information. It was also around this time that the idea of Balvihar took shape. Suparna Tirukonda led the effort and gathered more information from the Chinmaya Mission and the committee that had started Balvihar at

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Sri Venkateshwara Temple in Chicago. Tirukonda family visited Arsha Vidya Gurukulam in Pennsylvania and decided their curriculum based on annual pattern was perfect to launch Balvihar in Wichita. The idea was to make learning about Hinduism fun for the kids and build the foundation for our values. While it may seem intuitive now, it took a while for the community to catch on to the idea at that time. There was some anxiety in letting someone else teach your kids about faith and values. But gradually, as everyone got to see what and how the kids were learning, the idea caught on and more classes were added as students increased. It has now grown to a point where we need more space to accommodate all the classes!

Building on the foundation (2010 – 2014)

HTGW celebrated the 10th and 12th anniversaries on a grand scale with special puja and cultural events. For 12th anniversary, Prayer hall was renovated and *punar-prana-pratisthapana* was performed for all idols. Temple arranged for *ShataRudram* in 11th year and 100 *SatyaNarayana puja* in the 12th year with significant support from community.



Temple also saw an increase in the number of *puja* (rituals) performed and festivals celebrated on a larger scale such as 10-day annual Ganesh festival. Anand Bazaar and community dinners continued as regular features. Communication through website, emails, and social media ensured increased patronage from the community.

It is worth mentioning that since the beginning of HTGW, several of the tasks in Temple operations were voluntary, including lawn mowing, trash services, floor & carpet cleaning as well as cleaning of kitchen & bathrooms. Devotees just considered HTGW as an extension of their own homes, took certain tasks upon themselves and executed them without expecting anything in return or anyone to know. By 2011, the Temple was financially in a secure place and hiring professional services was possible. Newer generations had arrived in Wichita, the role of Temple as a community center was established and having additional help was appreciated.

To gauge public opinion about Temple expansion and possibly adding a community hall, a survey was conducted around 2010. It received a mixed response but word was certainly spreading. At the time when Temple lot was purchased in 2001, the piece of land adjacent to it was available for purchase as well. However at the time, the Temple did not have enough funds to procure the additional property. Over time, the Temple accumulated enough funds through various fundraising events and generous donations to be able to purchase this adjacent lot. The deal was finalized in 2013 and the new 2.5 acres lot was purchased by HTGW without taking any loans from the bank!

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The Journey Continues (2015 – Till date)

To celebrate the 15th year, Temple has offered 10-day *Ganesh yaag (homam)*, 9-day *Durga puja* with *havan*, and *Kartika month ShataRudram* this year and received great response from community. With the initiative from volunteer groups, HTGW continues to add more events such as *Balaji Prasad*.



In recent times, there has been a significant contribution from the community in organizing variety of cultural events such as MSMT fundraising programs, Balvihar's annual day, and classical dance workshops to name a few. The role of HTGW as an organization has grown beyond what was initially envisioned and it needs to expand further physically to support the growing needs and size of the community. With this goal in mind, the community has again stepped up to ensure that the new lot is developed and utilized appropriately and that much-needed additional space is provided for devotees. The room next to the prayer hall, that has picture frames of deities, was initially intended and designed to be a small museum. The plan was to add books and scriptures about Hinduism and an exhibit of

deity idols. The plan did not fully materialize and, with the growing needs of the community, the space is now used for Balvihar classes and other temple activities.

Today the Temple provides a wonderful forum for people to connect with each other and serves as a center of spiritual and cultural identity. Since inauguration, making the Temple debt-free was undoubtedly the biggest milestone in the journey so far. Purchasing the 2.5 acres of adjacent land was another significant event. Currently, with strong support from community, work is in progress to develop the new lot to expand parking and playground area. HTGW Board of Trustees and Executive Committee are evaluating various options and will make a decision about building expansion soon.



Looking ahead...

The journey so far would have been impossible without the support of devoted volunteers and it certainly can't move forward without the zeal and creativity of more volunteers. Except the position of Chief Priest, all other positions or roles at HTGW are voluntary. Each and every person brings with them their own set of expertise and their own approach to offering *seva* or service.

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They may be motivated by the desire to help new generation learn about our culture or by the drive to meet and connect with fellow devotees. They may see this as a service to God or as a means to serve the community; but they all have something in common and that is dedication. This value is personified by Nayan Patel, who has been actively involved for over 30 years, in not just HTGW but sister organizations such as CAI & AHINSA as well.

I enjoy working at the Temple because I enjoy meeting and working with people and learning new things. The more I do, the more I learn from different experiences. Get involved, observe others, ask questions, that's how you learn.

- Nayan Patel

Community members offer their services in whichever capacity they can, work diligently to organize events, assist priest and committee, cook and serve *Prasad bhojan* (meals), maintain Temple premises or serve on the committee in various roles. To expand further and support the growing needs of the community, the Temple needs more volunteers to step up and help out where they can.

Any organization is only as strong as the collective strength of its members. The Temple belongs to all of us and is therefore a responsibility of entire community. Each fresh perspective brings with it something valuable, either a new initiative or a better way of doing things or a new way to engage the community. If you haven't yet found an opportunity to attend or participate in events, do not hesitate! Activities that are both enjoyable and religiously significant make it really easy to participate. If you notice an area that needs help or have an expertise that can help Temple in any way, take an initiative and propose the idea, or talk to one of the committee members and see how you can get involved.

While commemorating past 15 years, HTGW takes this opportunity to express deep gratitude to all the devotees and volunteers who have supported and continue to support its mission. It has not been possible to name all the volunteers that have supported HTGW over the past 15 years but please know that your service is truly appreciated.

THANK YOU to ALL those who serve and inspire others to serve!

We are responsible for what we are; and whatever we wish ourselves to be. We have the power to make ourselves.

– Swami Vivekananda



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Jainism

One of the oldest religious traditions of India, Jainism has existed side by side with Hinduism throughout its long history. With fewer than 5 million adherents. Jainism has demonstrated a remarkable tenacity and endurance and continues to exert an influence far beyond its small numbers. The name Jainism derives from a Sanskrit word meaning "follower of the Jina, or conqueror". Jina' or 'Arihant' literally means 'Conqueror' - He who has conquered love and hate, pleasure and pain, attachment and aversion, and has thereby freed 'his' soul from the karmas obscuring knowledge, perception, truth, and ability, is a Jina.

Jainism was established by Mahavir (the Great Hero) in the sixth century B.C. It teaches us to reduce vices like rāg (attachment), dvesh (aversion), krodha (anger), mān (pride), māyā (deceit) and lobha (greed), which are the key elements in accumulating karmas and endless reincarnation. As all human activity accumulates karma, the force that perpetuates reincarnation, the only way to free one's soul from the bondage of material existence is by reducing this activity through ascetic practice. The goal of life in Jainism is to reach liberation by a life of purification, discipline and nonviolence as taught by the *Tirthankaras*.

The path or Dharma (truth, teaching) that Mahavir advocated was one of strict asceticism, renunciation and moral cultivation. Mahavir established a monastic community of both nuns and monks. This community is the oldest continually surviving monastic community in the world. He instructed his followers to cultivate the three jewels of - Right Belief, Right Knowledge and Right Conduct. Emerging from these three jewels and relating to the jewel of Right Conduct are the five abstinences, which are the vows of:

1. Ahimsa (non-violence): Concern for life is extended to all creatures, even minute microbes that are not visible.
2. Satya (truthfulness): Even at the cost of your life, one should always be truthful.
3. Asteya (not stealing): Do not take even a small needle without permission.



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4. Aparigraha (non-acquisition): Follow with mind and body.
5. Brahmacharya (chaste living).

There are two forms of the five vows:

1. Mahavrata: the 5 great vows followed by Jain monks and nuns.
2. Anuvrata: the lesser vows followed by Jain lay people (shravakas). These are less strict version of the code of conduct.

Ṇamōkāra mantra is the most significant mantra in Jainism. This is the first prayer recited by the Jains while meditating. The mantra is also referred to as the Pancha Namaskāra Mantra, Navakāra Mantra or Namaskāra Mantra and consists of 35 letters. While reciting this mantra, the devotee bows in respect to the Panch Parameshti (the Supreme Five):

1. Arihant— Those who have destroyed the four inimical karmas
2. Siddha — The liberated souls
3. Acharyas — The spiritual leaders or heads of the monastic world (Preceptors)
4. Upadhyaya — Preceptor of less advanced ascetics
5. Sādhu — The monks or sages in the world

The prayer is done towards the guṇa (the good qualities) of the gods, teachers and the saints. There is no mention of any particular names of the gods or any specific person. Jains do not ask for any favors or material benefits from the tirthankaras or monastics. This mantra simply serves as a gesture of deep respect towards beings whom they believe are spiritually ahead, as well as to remind the people of their ultimate goal i.e.

moksha (liberation). Jains reject belief in a creator god but refer to the Jina as God. According to Ratnakaranda śrāvakācāra, a major Jain text:

आप्तैनो च्छिन्नदोषेण सर्वज्ञेनागमेशिना।
भवितव्यं नियोगेन नान्यथा हयाप्तता भवेत्॥

In the nature of things the true God should be free from the faults and weaknesses of the lower nature; [he should be] the knower of all things and the revealer of dharma; in no other way can divinity be constituted.

क्षुत्पिपासाजराजरातकड जन्मान्तकभयस्मयाः।
न रागद्वेषमोहाश्च यस्याप्तः स प्रकीर्त्यते ॥

He alone who is free from hunger, thirst, senility, disease, birth, death, fear, pride, attachment, aversion, infatuation, worry, conceit, hatred, uneasiness, sweat, sleep and surprise is called a God.

Jain religion is unique in that, during its existence of over 5000 years, it has never compromised on the concept of nonviolence either in principle or practice. Jainism upholds nonviolence as the supreme religion (Ahimsa Paramo Dharmah) and has insisted upon its observance in thought, word, and deed at the individual as well as social levels. The holy text Tattvartha Sutra sums it up in the phrase 'Parasparopagraho Jivanam' (all life is mutually supportive). Jain religion presents a truly enlightened perspective of equality of souls, irrespective of differing physical forms, ranging from human beings to animals and microscopic living organisms. Humans, alone among

Hindu Temple Of Greater Wichita

living beings, are endowed with all the six senses of seeing, hearing, tasting, smelling, touching, and thinking; thus humans are expected to act responsibly towards all living beings by being compassionate, non-egoistic, fearless, forgiving, and rational.

In fact at the end of their annual paryushan festival Jains serve penance and ask for forgiveness from the minutest organism to the highest form of 'jivas' if they might have knowingly or unknowingly caused harm to them, by thoughts, words or actions, extending a hand of friendship towards all.

Mahavir Swami's teachings.....

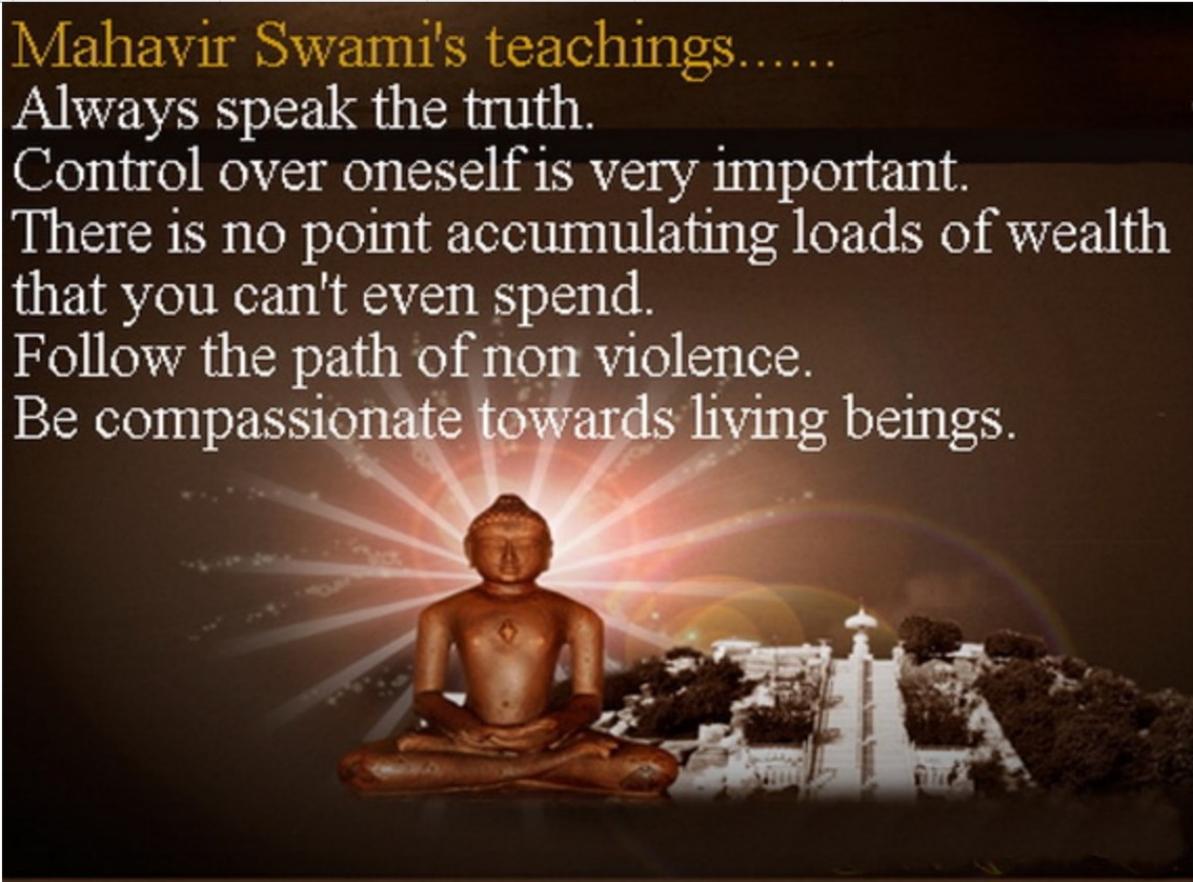
Always speak the truth.

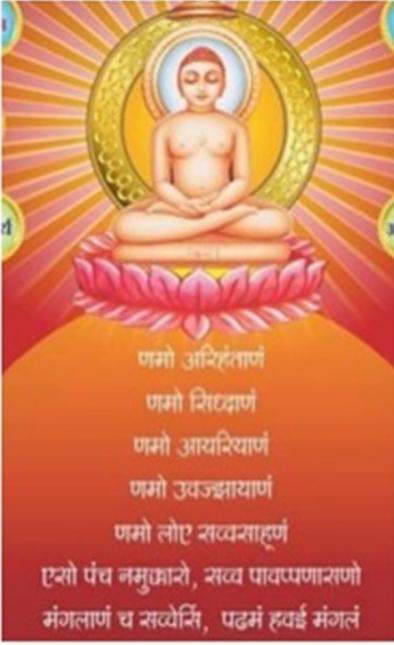
Control over oneself is very important.

There is no point accumulating loads of wealth that you can't even spend.

Follow the path of non violence.

Be compassionate towards living beings.





Even a moment's association with
an enlightened soul
is like a boat to traverse the ocean
of material existence.

- Shrimad Rajchandra

"क्षणमपि सज्जनसंगतिरेका,
भवति भवार्णवतरणे नौका"
शंकराचार्यजी



BEST WISHES...

RAJU, PARUL, KUNJ, POOJA

Who am I.....?

by Nayan Patel

Sitting on porch swing on one beautiful evening while light rain was soaking everything around me, encouraged me to admire creations of the God. Just thinking to myself, admiring plants, insects, birds, all God's creations and wondering what is their role in the world we live in? Knowingly or unknowingly every creation of God is giving their fair share whether generating oxygen, or providing food, pollination etc. The picture would be incomplete, imperfect, if one of the creations was missing.

As I was thinking about this, I naturally thought about myself. Who am I? Do I care about the society I live in? I may not want to admit it, but do I call myself a selfish person who focuses only on me and those close to me? God has given me a beautiful life, I have been very lucky. There are many people in this small world who have not been that fortunate and yet, you see them helping others because they know the pain. Some others, facing more hardships, are unable to help even themselves.

I had a great childhood and grew up without any financial responsibility. As a kid, I used to spend some time each morning with my Grandma, hearing her stories and experiences, usually with the selfish motive of getting a piece of sweet from her. One of her guidance that has always stayed with me is that do something in your life that people will appreciate you and remember you even after you are gone, just like your Grandpa.

As I grew up, I began accepting my social and financial responsibilities. But was I making my living *worthwhile*? Was I able to give my fair share to the community? With

my Grandma's advice in my mind, I have always made an effort to give back to the community. When you are living in a society, you will come across all types of people, some may help you, some may leave you and some may even hurt you. So how do you deal with them?

Just be yourself and remember that you are your best friend. Don't be afraid of anybody unless you are lying, stealing or cheating. I have had my fair share of challenges too and I have struggled from time to time. But I learned from those challenges and I am proud of it. Enjoy what you are doing and treat every day as a learning experience; learn from every person, young and old. And yes. Just ask yourself "who am I"?

The community we live in is nothing but our own family and friends. In good times and difficult times, we are always together and supportive of one another. We have come a long way from India, leaving behind our childhood memories, family members and friends. The few times when we connect with each other through social or cultural activities, is when we feel that connection to our land of origin. It is also natural that we want to share our culture and traditions with our upcoming generation. It is the same feeling of sharing and giving back that has prompted the thought of a new community hall. A place where we can meet and share our culture and traditions, a place that can accommodate everyone, will be a great investment for the future generation. If you think of it as an investment, you might find that it was well worth it. No donation amount is too small and no effort is too little. Just think positive and May God be with you.



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Phase I Expansion Donor list

Total Donations Received: \$116,500

Diamond level (\$5,000 and above)

Raju & Parul Sheth	Dr Raghu & Rekha Reddi
Mitesh & Ariadna Patel	Ragu & Suparna Tirukonda
Rekhama, Smita & Shrikrishna Sharma & Family	Dr Chivukula Subbarao & Ushashri Challa
Dr P. J. & Nalini Reddy	Dr Pronab & Mithu Sensarma

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Dr Ralph & Nalini Bharati	Olive Garden
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Dr Hemanth & Geeta Reddy	Hasu Bhakta
Hemalata, Kishor & Neeti Patel (Kumon)	Shyam & Rani Bhagat

Golden level (\$500 to \$999)

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Mohan & Vasudha Kulkarni	Rupen Dev (Redrock)
ICT Kathak	Mohnish Mittal & Rachana Kalia
Dr Viswanathan & Ranjini Madhavan	

Proposed Expansion Plan

Phase I: New Lot improvements (Work in progress; estimated completion Dec 2017)

Ground cleaning and leveling: remove trees and weeds, level ground to make a play-ground for kids and adults

Gravel parking: Add gravel parking to allow more cars

Fence: Remove fence between the two lots and put fence around new lot on East and West side

Concrete cricket pitch: Prepare rebar and concrete pitch with protective coating on the top

Seeding: Add the grass to maintain playable condition on the ground

Light poles: Add sufficient lighting between old and new gravel parking lots.

Phase II: Community Hall Need Extensive Community Support

Generate awareness and gauge community interest for Indian Community Hall on Temple premises. Partner with other Indian organizations in Wichita such as CAI, Business community and AAPI for fundraising to build 10,000 sqft community hall.

Stage, Green/Media rooms

Kitchen & Restrooms

Balvihar classrooms on mezzanine

Phase III: Gardens and children's play area Need volunteers and support from Balvihar parents

Garden: Relocate and expand current garden area. Add more trees on current and new lots.

Install mats and new equipment for children's play area

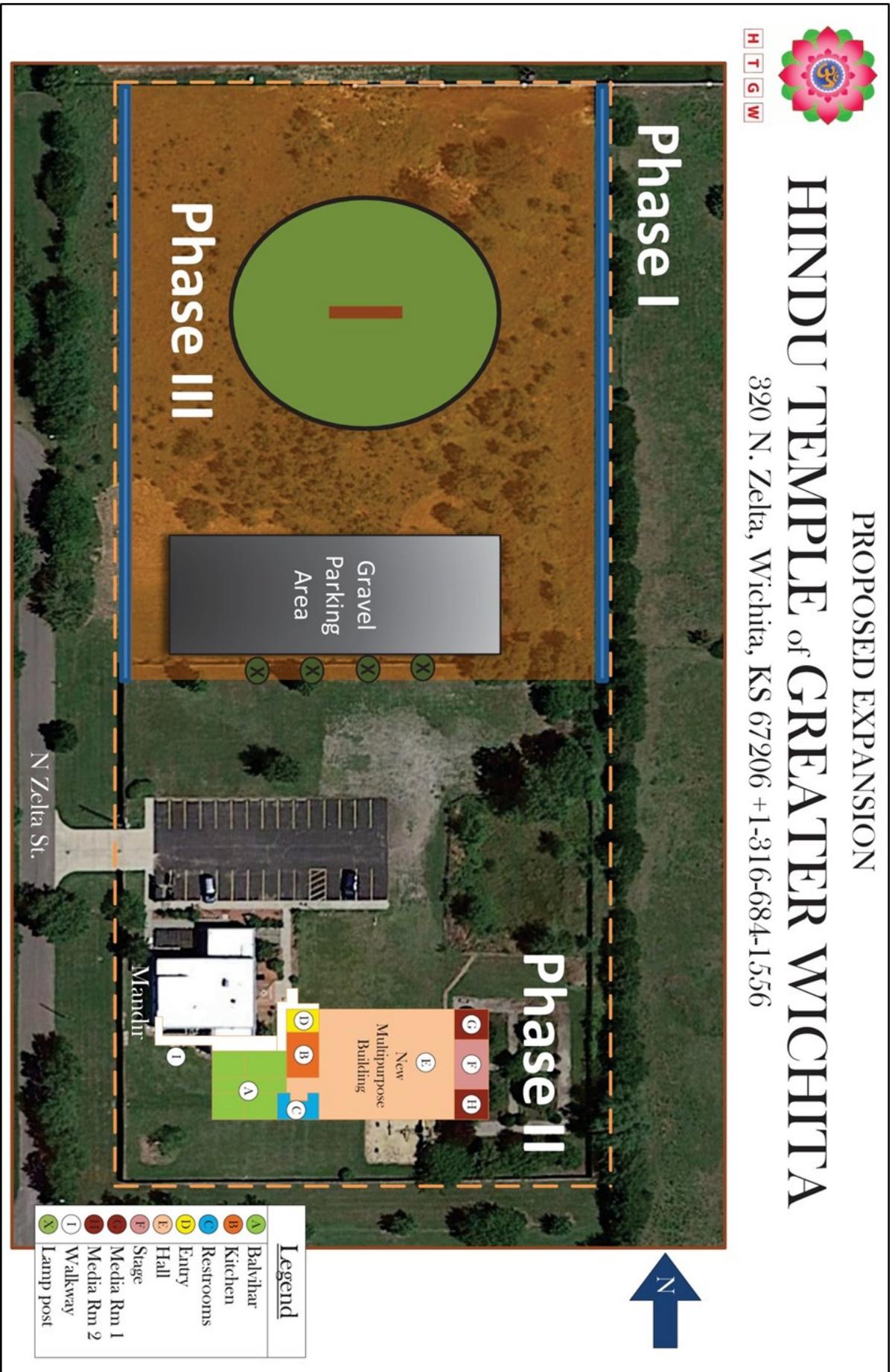


H T G W

HINDU TEMPLE of GREATER WICHITA

PROPOSED EXPANSION

320 N. Zelta, Wichita, KS 67206 +1-316-684-1556



N Zelta St.

Mandir

Legend	
A	Bakvihar
B	Kitchen
C	Restrooms
D	Entry
E	Hall
F	Stage
G	Media Rm 1
H	Media Rm 2
I	Walkway
X	Lamp post

Phase I Expansion Donor list

Total Donations Received: \$116,500

Silver level (\$250 to \$499)

Dr Vijay & Veena Khurana
Anonymous
Ravindar & Sailaja Polam
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Dhananjay & Amruta Joshi
Ranjit & Amruta Patwardhan
Hareesha Mayyala & Vinaya Kini
Ramesh & Daksha Shura
Dhagash & Sheetal Shah
Jason & Deepa Madhu
Piyush & Vrinda Jhaveri
Sreeraman & Vijayarani Rangarajan
Dr Prakash & Bharathi Ramanan
Harish F Gandhi
Gopal & Sushila Sudarshan
Arvind & Beena Sharma

Sunder Singh & Meenakshi Pradhan
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Interfaith group
Bhargava D.D.S
Madhu & Rashmi Patel
Siddharthan Shivamurthy
Deepa & Savithri Sangapu
Achutha Kalidindi
Atul Arora & Bharati Gupta
Mehul & Unnati Gandhi
Dr Pavan & Madhavi Reddy
T. K. Reddy
Ushi & Dron Chaturvedi
Dr. Shilpa Kranthi

Bronze level (\$100 to \$249)

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Samir & Sneha Shura
Vasu Mardana & Kavitha Gorantla
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Prasanna & Nikita Bhonge
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- * Social events for networking with global-minded professionals.
- * Volunteer opportunities to make a difference in the lives of less fortunate internationals.
- * Mentoring and shadowing opportunities for international professionals.

Our committee views Wichita as a community where
international professionals thrive.

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The Holy Vedas

सर्वस्य चाहं हृदि सन्निविष्टो मत्तः स्मृतिर्ज्ञानमपोहनं च ।
वेदैश्च सर्वैरहमेव वेद्योवेदान्तकृद्वेदविदेव चाहम् ॥

*Sarvasya chāham hṛidi sanniviṣṭomattaḥ smṛitir jñānam apohanam cha
vedaiśh cha sarvair aham eva vedyovedānta-kṛid veda-vid eva chāham*

I am seated in the hearts of all living beings, and from me come memory, knowledge, as well as forgetfulness. I alone am to be known by all the Vedas, am the author of the Vedānt, and the knower of the meaning of the Vedas.

Bhagavad Gita, ch. 15, verse 15

The Holy Vedas are believed to be the eternal truths revealed by God to the great ancient Rishis. These are the fundamental scriptures of Hindu teachings, containing spiritual knowledge encompassing all aspects of life. The word Veda means wisdom, knowledge. The Vedas do not owe their authority to anyone, as these are the Knowledge of the Supreme Lord itself.

The Vedas are classified into four volumes: RigVeda, YajurVeda, SamVeda, and AtharvVeda. Each Veda consists of four parts - the Samhitas (hymns, mantras), the Brahmanas (rituals), the Aranyakas (theologies) and the Upanishads (philosophies). Some consider the Upasana (worship) as fifth part. The RigVeda provides hymns for describing and praying to the Lord in monistic yet polytheistic fashion. The YajurVeda serves as a practical guidebook for the priests to execute their duties. The hymns in the SamVeda, used as musical notes, were drawn from the RigVeda and have no separate distinctive lessons of their own. The AtharvVeda consists of spells and charms prevalent at its time, and portrays a clearer picture of the Vedic society.

The Essence of the Vedas - Vedanta

Live your life in the spirit of teachings of the Vedas. Learn to discriminate between the permanent (the Self or Atman) and the impermanent (body, mind, intellect and ahankara). Know that the Self in you is part of the Supreme Self—the creator, the sustainer and the reformer. There is nothing but the Supreme Self everywhere. Behold the Self in all beings. Names and forms are illusory, hence sublet them. Destroy the unruly desires and body-idea by constantly thinking of the Self. Surrender your mind (feelings) and intellect (understandings) to the Supreme Self All the Time and discharge your duties diligently.

Be equanimous in dualities of life — happiness and sorrow, victory and defeat, gains and losses. Know that those have definite beginning and end, and are impermanent. Pursue *Dharma* (virtue), *Artha* (material prosperity), *Kama* (desires in-line with dharma) by following these teachings and you shall attain *Moksha* (liberation), which is the **Ultimate Goal of Life**.

Deities at HTGW

by Ragu Tirukonda

Hinduism or Sanatana Dharma is defined as “a way of life”. Even though it might look like a polytheistic religion (multiple gods), Hindus believe that all the gods are manifestations of the ultimate God “Brahman” as described in Vedas and Upanishads-the holy books. By worshipping any of the deities, one is worshipping Brahman. The Brahman is nothing but the creator of everything, and is the life force present in every animate and inanimate being. Goal of every Hindu is to attain “moksha”, to become one with Brahman. **Aham Brahmasmi** means “I am Brahman”, or God is within me, to understand this process is called “self-realisation” and is how one attains moksha. According to Vedas, this can be achieved, by living an exemplary life, offering prayers and seva (helping others) and meditation. The following deities can be worshipped at the Hindu Temple of Greater Wichita.

Lord Ganesh

Lord Ganesh or Ganapati (on the left in picture) is remover of obstacles and he is worshipped first before any pooja or ritual is started per Holy Vedas. He is the eldest son of Lord Shiva and Goddess Parvathi. He is considered to be the lord of knowledge and the remover of obstacles. At our temple he is portrayed with his younger brother Lord Kartikeya.

Lord Kartikeya or Murugan

Lord Kartikeya (on the right in picture) is a hunter, warrior, and philosopher. He is typically represented as a youthful god, dressed as a warrior and praised as a



teacher of ethical life. Lord Kartikeya has a fierce following in South India, Sri Lanka, Singapore and Malaysia.

Lord Ram Parivar

Lord Vishnu is said to have taken different avatars (meaning reincarnation as a human) to protect humanity from evil. Lord Rama is one of his avatars. Born as a crown prince of Ayodhya, Lord Ram lived an exemplary life teaching restraint and discipline.



Hindu Temple Of Greater Wichita

He is depicted with his wife Sita, his brother Lakshman, and loyal friend and devotee, Hanuman. Life of Lord Ram is well known to all the Hindus, in the form of the epic Ramayana.

Lord Venkateswara/Balaji

Venkateswara literally means "Lord of Venkata (a hill in Andhra Pradesh)". Venkateswara is an avatar or form of Vishnu (part of the Hindu Trinity Shiva, Vishnu & Brahma). As the legend goes, the goddess Lakshmi, consort of Lord Vishnu, had a fight with her husband and came to the earth. Vishnu also came to earth, looking for his wife, and was in the Tirumala region when he fell in love with the local princess Padmavati. He had to borrow huge sums of money from Kubera (God of wealth) to pay dowry to the King in order to marry Padmavati. At HTGW Lord Venkateswara is depicted with both of his wives, Goddess Lakshmi (Sridevi) and Padmavati (Bhoodevi).



Lord Sri Krishna

Lord Krishna is also an avatar of Lord Vishnu. Depicted with his flute in the hand, and consorts Radha and Rukmini. Born as a prince, and raised as a cowherd, he sided with the Pandava princes in a war against the Kauravas, for the throne of Hastinapura. This story is well known to all the Hindus, in the form of epic Mahabharata. During the war, Lord Krishna played charioteer for Prince Arjun. When Arjun was conflicted over fighting with his teachers, cousins and other relatives, Krishna advised Arjun about the meaning of life. That advice Krishna gave is referred as Bhagavad Gita (Song of the Lord) is applicable to every person today. Bhagavad Gita is the most widely read Hindu sacred book and has been translated in most of the major world languages.

Hindu Temple Of Greater Wichita

Lord Shiva

Lord Shiva is part of holy trinity, also known as Maheswara or Mahadev (Great Lord). He is portrayed as the Aadi Yogi who practices balance in life: - as a destroyer and a benefactor, an ascetic as well as a householder, and even as Ardhanarishvara shows him as half male/half female (with his consort Parvathi). At HTGW, Lord Shiva is in the form of Shiv Lingam, along with his ever present devotee and companion Nandhi.



Goddess Durga

Durga, also known as Shakti and by numerous other names, is a principal and popular form of Hindu goddess. She is the wife of Lord Shiva, as another form of Parvati depicted as the warrior goddess,

whose mythology centers around combating evils and demonic forces that threaten peace, prosperity and dharma of the good. She is the fierce form of the protective mother goddess, willing to unleash her anger against wrong, violence for liberation and destruction to empower creation.



Lord Mahavir

Lord Mahavir was the twenty-fourth and the last Tirthankara of the Jain religion. According to Jain philosophy, all Tirthankaras were born as human beings but they have attained a state of perfection or enlightenment through meditation and self-realization. They are the Gods of Jains. Tirthankaras are also known as Arihants or Jinas. The ultimate objective of his teaching

Hindu Temple Of Greater Wichita

is how one can attain the total freedom from the cycle of birth, life, pain, misery, and death, and achieve the permanent blissful state of one's self. This is also known as liberation, nirvana, absolute freedom, or Moksha. He preached that right faith (samyak-darshana), right knowledge (samyak-jnana), and right conduct (samyak-charitra) together will help attain the liberation of one's self.



ॐ सर्वे भवन्तु सुखिनः सर्वे सन्तु निरामयाः ।

सर्वे भद्राणि पश्यन्तु मा कश्चित् दुःखभागभवेत् ।

॥ ॐ शान्तिः शान्तिः शान्तिः ॥

Om sarve bhavantu sukhinah sarve santu niraamayaah |

Sarve bhadraaNi pashyantuu maa kashchit duhkha-bhaag-bhavet |

|| Om Shaantih Shaantih Shaantih ||

Meaning

May all be happy, may all be free from illness.

May all see auspiciousness everywhere, may none ever feel sorrow.

|| May peace prevail in the universe ||

Hindu Temple Of Greater Wichita

HTGW Events and Festivals

Event/Festival	Hindu Calendar	Roman Calendar	Activities
New year's day		January 1st	Balaji Abhishekam
Pongal/ Makar Sankranti Goda Kalyanam	Paush Krishna Dvitiya	January	Puja, Goda kalyanam
Thaipusam	Magh Purnima	February	Murugan Abhishekam
Maha Shivaratri	Magh Krishna Chaturdashi	February-March	11 Rudrabhishekam
Ugadi/Gudhi Padwa	Chaitra Shukla Pratipada	March-April	Balaji Abhishekam
Sri Ram Navami	Chaitra Shukla Navami	March-April	Ramayana path , Sri Rama Abhishekam, Sri Ram-Sita Kalyanam
Sri Hanuman Jayanti	Chaitra Purnima	April	Sri Hanuman Abhishekam
Mahavir Jayanti		April-May	Bhajans
Balvihar Annual day		Second Saturday of May	Anand Bazaar, Balvihar programs and award ceremony
Temple Anniversary		Saturday following June 15	Balaji Abhishekam, Bhajans
Sri Krishna Janmashtami	Shravan Krishna Ashtami	August	Sri Krishna Abhishekam, Bhajans
Mahavir Swapna Darshan	Shravan Krishnapaksha	August- September	Celebrate dreams of Mahavir's mother
Ganesh Utsav	Bhadrapada Shukla Chaturthi till Anant Chaturdashi	August- September	Sri Ganesh Abhishekam, Sthapana, Aarati for 10 days, Cultural program, Procession, Ganesh Visarjan
Navaratri – Dussehera Utsav	Ashwin Shukla Pratipada till Vijaya Dashami	September - October	Ghata sthapana, Daily Durga Puja, Ashtami havan, Dashami Abhishekam, Bhajans, Garba
Diwali / Annakut	Ashwin Amavasya - Lakshmi Pujan	October- November	Gowardhan Puja, Bhajans, General Body meeting
Skanda Shashthi	Kartik Shukla Pratipada till Shashthi	October- November	Shashthi kavacham chanting for six days Murugan Abhishekam
Tulsi Vivah	Kartika Shukla Dvadashi till Purnima	October- November	Tulsi Vivah ceremony, Puja
Rudrabhishekam	Every Monday at 6 pm		
Satyanarayan Puja	All Full Moon days (evenings)		
Sankashti Chaturthi	All Krishnapaksha Chaturthi: Ganesha Abhishekam		
Balaji Abhishekam	First Saturday of every month		

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*Congratulations
on
15th Anniversary
of
HTGW*

*From,
Rekhama, Shrikrishna, Smita,
Shefali, Sia, Aman and Ninad*



Recipes of Prasad

compiled by Amruta Joshi

अहं वैश्वानरो भूत्वा प्राणिनां देहमाश्रितः ।

प्राणापानसमायुक्तः पचाम्यन्नं चतुर्विधम् ॥

*Aham vaiśhvānaro bhūtvā prāṇinām deham āśhritaḥ
prāṇāpāna-samāyuktaḥ pachāmy annam chatur-vidham*

It is I, who take the form of the fire of digestion in the stomachs of all living beings, and combine with the incoming and outgoing breaths, to digest and assimilate the four kinds of food (to provide energy to living beings).

- Bhagavad Gita, ch. 15, verse 14

Traditional food is an integral part of any Indian festival or cultural event. We have several festival celebrations and cultural events at the Temple that include lunch or dinner prepared by volunteers from the community. Here are estimates for some of the most common food items prepared in large quantities for cultural events at the Temple.

Following are tried and tested recipes for typical food items that are offered as special Prasad for specific events at the Temple. With the variety and richness of Indian cuisine there are several more items / sweets that may be offered as Prasad but here is an attempt to include the most widely used and appreciated ones.

Recipe for Prasad Sheera (Sooji Halwa)
usually offered during Satyanarayan Puja

Courtesy: Amruta Joshi

Yield: Prasad for about 20 people

Cooking estimates for 100 people

10 cups rice (uncooked)
15 lbs. vegetables (uncooked)
7 lbs. lentils (uncooked)
1 gallon milk for yogurt in Raita
100 chapattis
10 cups Sooji for sweet Prasad

Courtesy: Vasudha Kulkarni

Ingredients:

1.25 cups semolina (sooji/ rava)
1.25 cups sugar
1.25 cups pure ghee
1.25 cups milk + 1 cup water
1.25 bananas, sliced
1 tsp cardamom powder
Raisins, chopped almonds

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Instructions:

1. Roast semolina until it becomes very light. Add ghee and roast until the semolina gets a deep golden color.
2. Add banana slices to the semolina mixture and roast it for about one minute.
3. In another pan, mix milk & water and bring it to a boil.
4. After the semolina-banana mixture is roasted, lower the heat and add milk mixture to it.
5. The milk will get absorbed in semolina. Cover and cook on low heat for 4-5 minutes.
6. Once semolina is cooked, add sugar to it. Mix well, cover and cook for another 4-5 minutes.
7. Add cardamom powder, raisins and chopped almonds. Serve hot.



Recipe for Modak

Usually offered during Ganesh festival in quantity of 21

Courtesy: Vasudha Kulkarni

Yield: Recipe makes around 30-35 medium sized Modak

(1 cup = 235 ml = 8oz)

Ingredients for saaran (filling):

3 cups of grated coconut
(approximately 1 fresh coconut)
2 cups sugar
350 ml milk (1.5 cup)
100 gm almond powder (0.6 cup whole almonds)
50 gm dry milk powder
Cardamom powder, per taste
Saffron strands, optional, per taste

Ingredients for covering:

3 cups all-purpose flour (*maida*)
0.5 cup oil
A pinch of salt
Oil for deep frying

Instructions:

1. Add grated coconut, milk, sugar and cook until the mixture is semi-dry. Then add almond powder and milk powder and cook it further until the mixture turns solid but not too dry.
2. Add cardamom powder and let it cool down. Make 30-35 equal-sized filling portions of this mixture.
3. Mix all-purpose flour, oil and salt. Add enough water and knead it into dough. Make 30-35 equal sized portions
4. Roll each portion into a circle, put a portion of the prepared filling mixture in its center and pinch the edges at regular intervals to create pleats. Bring all the pleats together at the top center and seal it; remove excess dough on the top. Prepare all modaks in similar way, cover with a wet cloth to prevent them from drying.

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5. Heat the oil in a deep pan and deep fry modaks until they turn golden brown from all sides. Drain excess oil on paper and store in an air tight container, in a cool dry place



Recipe for Venn Pongal & Sambhar

Usually offered on Pongal or Sankranti; traditionally served with Sambhar.

Courtesy: Suparna Tirukonda

Yield: 100 servings

Instructions: Venn Pongal

1. Use at least a 20 quart container. Heat oil and add mustard seeds and whole black pepper. Once the seeds start to pop, add hing, ginger, curry leaves and cashews.
2. Once the cashews have browned, add rice, moong daal, water and salt. Once the mixture comes to a boil, reduce the flame to medium. Keep stirring the mixture to keep it from sticking to bottom of the pan.
3. It will take approximately 30-40 minutes for the water to evaporate and the rice to be cooked. Once the rice is cooked, add the ghee. Serve hot with sambar or coconut chutney. This recipe can also be made in a pressure cooker. Optional: you can add some ghee at the end. Serve hot.

Ingredients for Venn Pongal:

10 cups extra-long grain rice, rinsed & drained
2 cups split moong daal, rinsed & drained
30 cups of hot water
4 tablespoons oil
2 tablespoons mustard seeds
2 tablespoons whole black pepper
1 teaspoon hing or asafetida powder
3 inch piece of ginger, peeled and chopped
Handful of curry leaves
1 cup cashews (optional)
12 teaspoons salt, adjust per taste
1 cup ghee

Ingredients for Sambhar:

4 cups toor daal, cooked and mashed
4 cans of whole, peeled tomatoes (28 oz), roughly chop tomatoes, keep juice
Vegetables – carrots (sliced), potatoes, green beans, chayote squash, drumsticks
6 tablespoons MTR Sambar powder or sambar powder of your choice
¼ cup oil
2 tablespoons mustard seed
1 teaspoon hing or asafetida powder
Handful of curry leaves
Tamarind juice to taste
Salt to taste

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Instructions: Sambhar

1. Use at least a 20 quart container. Heat oil and add mustard seeds. Once the seeds pop, add hing, curry leaves, and tomatoes. Cook tomatoes for a few minutes and add all vegetables, MTR sambar powder and 1 teaspoon salt.
2. Add tomato juice and water to keep mixture from sticking to the bottom of pan. Once vegetable are almost cooked, add daal, tamarind paste and salt.
3. Bring mixture to boil then simmer for 15-20 minutes until vegetables are fully cooked.



Recipe for *Peda*

offered at Temple during various festivities

-Courtesy: Jayshree Patel

Yield: 50 pedas

Ingredients:

1 gallon milk to make paneer using lemon or vinegar
2 cups sugar
2 sticks unsalted butter
2 cups Carnation milk powder

Instructions:

1. Make paneer of 1 gallon milk using lemon or dahi or vinegar. (Boil milk. Once milk begins to boil, add about 2-3 tbsp lemon juice or vinegar. As soon as milk completely curdles, remove from heat and strain the milk in cheesecloth.) Rinse paneer in cheese cloth.
2. Mix paneer, sugar and unsalted butter and cook it on medium heat.
3. Add the milk powder. Mix well. Cook until the mixture begins to solidify, then remove from stove and let it cool down.
4. Blend the mixture in a food processor until it takes somewhat smooth texture. Make 50 equal sized portions and shape them into pedas.
5. Optional: Use a thread spool or a fork or a toothpick to make design on top of each peda.



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Balvihar at HTGW

by Shashikiran Mysur

The HTGW Balvihar program from its humble beginnings in 2004 has burgeoned into the current enrollment of 68 students, and three branches of study: Mythology, Language and Programming. The purpose of the Balvihar program; since inception, has been to create an immersive experience in Hindu Culture and Heritage, principally for children of Indian ethnicity, helping them understand what it means to be a Hindu, and an Indian at large. Mrs. Suparna and Mr. Ragu Tirukonda lead a small but determined team of like-minded volunteers to give shape to their vision of Balvihar. They connected with the Chinmaya Mission Balvihar chapter in Dallas, and Arshavidhya in Saylorsburg, Pennsylvania, to learn how their programs are managed, and delivered to little children.



Suparna and family with a few friends visited the Arshavidhya ashram to learn their teaching methods, and decided to follow their age appropriate structured syllabus to teach Hindu values and mythology to

children. The foundation of Balvihar was laid. Ever-since untiring & motivated teams of volunteers, and ever enthusiastic children have helped grow Balvihar to be one of HTGW's premier initiatives.

The Balvihar program sponsors a six-course study in Hindu Mythology aimed at children in the age groups of 3 through 14. The classes focus on wisdom, morals, faith in divinity, and Indian history through the lives and works of its leaders.



Chota Balvihar classes for kids 5 years and younger helps the children learn about Hindu gods and festivals through hands-on activities. They learn songs, prayers and rhymes from across the country, and are introduced to speaking in Hindi. Jataka Tales & Panchatantra focus on cultivating everyday common sense & wisdom, and inculcating morals. Puranic Tales, Ramayan, and Mahabharath focus on the avatars of Vishnu, and the constant and ever ongoing fight of good and evil. Leadership & Values, the capstone class, focuses on helping children comprehend the connection between a common core set of values preached in Hinduism (and other religions)

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and Success in life, by studying the lives of prominent religious, political, and industrial leaders. A five level Hindi language course catering to children 5 years and upwards was instituted in 2012. The goal of the course is to enable children to talk, read and write in Hindi. The Computer programming course; launched in Jan 2015, is aimed at children 6 and upwards, and differentiates itself from other programming courses through the use of game development projects grounded in Hindu mythology. The programming class offers a novel method of combining the information from the Mythology classes, with current technologies, in it presenting the children with a fun opportunity to learn a new skill while retaining the core principles of Balvihar.



The Values class 'Seva' introduced in fall 2015 focuses on inculcating a culture of 'Giving' amongst children through participation in charity or service events. The program's success is highlighted by the initiative conceived and developed by students 'Host A Shocker' to invite Indian students of WSU to their homes to celebrate



festivals with their families. An initiative that speaks volumes of their sense of community responsibility. Balvihar program is structured to promote holistic development in children. Art and writing have been incorporated into the syllabus to go hand-in-hand with the scholastic requirements. Balvihar sponsors competitions: 'Spirit of Balvihar' T-Shirt design, 'Leadership & values' essay writing, 'Hindu Mythology' a Quiz, 'Shloka' recitation and Sports – 'Cricket', all of which attracted immense participation. Balvihar Sports aims to introduce children to games and sports popular in India. Balvihar's annual 'I Am India' program creates an opportunity for the children to showcase their learning and efforts from over the year, and provides the community a chance to celebrate the continuance of the Hindu way of life, 'Our Culture, Our Heritage'.

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Balvihar Award Winning Essay

‘Sarva Dharma Samanvaya’ (Equality of Religions)

by Nitya Jhaveri

“Religion should unite all hearts and cause the wars and disputes to vanish from the face of the earth, give birth to spirituality and bring life and light to each heart”

- Abdul Bahai

Man has always been perplexed with some intriguing questions – Where do we come from? What is the goal of our life? Why has our species, human race, been bestowed higher intellect than any other living thing on the planet? Is there life outside of the world as we know and feel it?

In pursuit of the answers to these questions we turn to religion – A particular system of faith and worship ; or mass belief in a common practice, as defined by the oxford dictionary. There are many religions practiced throughout the world civilizations. There are about 4200 different religions, spiritual traditions or beliefs in the world. Some

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religions are stringent and define laws of the land; other offer mere suggestions to practice particular way of living. Some religions have weathered time, usually by undergoing transformations while others have withered away.

Hinduism (Religions that have weathered time) - Hinduism has been called the "oldest religion" in the world, and some practitioners and scholars refer to it as Sanātana Dharma, "the eternal law" or the "eternal way" beyond human origins. This "Hindu synthesis" started to develop between 500 BCE and 300 CE, after the Vedic times. Hinduism prescribes the eternal duties, such as honesty, refraining from injuring living beings (ahimsa), patience, self-restraint, compassion, among others.

Atenism (example of a religion that no longer exists) - Introduced by Pharaoh Akhenaten (also known as Amenhotep IV) of Egypt, Atenism was a singular religion which was designated the official religion of Egypt during his reign (after he died, the old beliefs were gradually brought back). Aten was an obscure Egyptian god and the traditional name for the sun-disk itself. At first, Atenism was accepting of the other Egyptian deities but, over time, they were all rejected. Because of its restrictive nature (only Akhenaten could talk to Aten), ordinary Egyptians retained most of their old beliefs, which made the transition after his death much easier.

Religions have different practices and beliefs. Sometimes two sects of the same religion also differ in their opinions about a subject. But as we look closer at the different

religions we also are able to identify the commonalities between religions. The sharp resemblance in core values of every religion make it easy to understand the topic/concept of 'Sarva Dharma Samanvaya'.

In my humble effort to explain this concept I have chosen 4 religions - Christianity, Hinduism, Sikhism, and Zoroastrianism. According to me by identifying the similarities in these religions and comparing the tenements, the true concept of oneness can be derived upon.

Apparent commonalities in religions

Supreme Being/Force - Foremost all the religions worship/follow a supreme being or the infinite energy or force. Hinduism believes in the trident force (Brahma- the creator, Vishnu- the sustainer, and Shiva-the destructor), Christianity believes in the teachings of Jesus Christ (son of god), Zoroastrianism believes in Ahura Mazda (Avestan name for the creator and sole God), and Sikhism believes in teachings of Guru Nanak – the author of the Guru Granth Sahib.

Followers/worshippers - Another thing all religions have is a large amount of followers. The religion cannot exist without any followers. The percentages of 4 religions are: Christianity 33%, Hinduism 14%, Sikhism 0.32% and Zoroastrianism 0.04 %. This was per census of 2014.

Symbols/Signs - Most of these religions have a particular sign that symbolizes their beliefs. These symbols mean different things. For example: the cross in Christianity means that you should cut out the I ego.

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In Hinduism the aum or om is the sound that should be chanting in your heart always. In Zoroastrianism the fire symbol means that you should offer all the bitterness to the fire and come out clean. And in Sikhism the symbol mean that they believe in god.

Holy Scriptures/Sacred Texts - There are also many scriptures that explain what happened during our heritage. For example, Hinduism has the Bhagavad Gita, the Vedas, the Mahabharata, and the Ramayana. Christianity has the holy bible. Sikhism has the Guru Granth Sahib also known as the Adi Granth. And in Zoroastrianism the holy scripture is called the Avesta.

Place of worship/Holy place What about the places we go and pray or worship an infinite force? Well, this is one of the commonalities between the religions too. Every religion has a place where the followers go to worship an infinite force. Christians go to a church, Hindus go to a temple, Sikhs go to a Gurudwara, and Zoroastrians go to a fire temple.

Festivals/Celebrations - Another thing that most religions have in common is the festivals they celebrate to honor a cultural value in that religion. In Christianity there is Christmas and Easter. in Hinduism there is Holi and Diwali. In Sikhism there are Khalsa and Baisakhi which is also spelled Vaisakhi. And in Zoroastrianism there are Shahenshahi and Kadmi.

Rituals/Ceremonies - Rituals are also an important part of the religions around the world. An important ritual in Christianity is

becoming baptized. In Hinduism one of the important rituals is the Janoi or the Thread Ceremony. In Sikhism the important ceremony is called Amrit. In Zoroastrianism the important ceremony is called Surde – Pooshi. It is an initiation ceremony to the Zoroastrian culture. Many of the religions also ask the follower to practice charity to improve/uplift the entire society and human race in general.

Conclusion

While most people look towards the differences to reject other religions, the similarities found between all religions give evidence that they have commonalities that do not separate them but compliment them. All of these religions teach the truth, instill morals and teach their followers to pray, to meditate, to reunify themselves with their ultimate source. When the similarities of religions are placed side by side, it shows a profound “oneness” of the human spirit. The essential belief shared by all religion confirm that our differences are superficial and our similarities are deep.

‘*Sarva Dharma Samanvaya*’ literally means all dharma’s are equal or harmonious with each other. All religions are merely different paths that lead to god. Any path is as good as any other but the important thing is to follow the path. From the point of view weather one is Hindu, Buddhist, Christian, Muslim, or of another religious belief that is not important. If one goes to temple, church, or mosque it is all the same. Therefore, members of all religious groups should live happily together, realizing that there is no conflict in what they believe in but only

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superficial variation of name and form.

To be devoted to a religion, according to me is not to just follow rituals or remember teachings or follow a particular lifestyle. Religion beliefs must prompt us to rise beyond the superficial and change at a higher level to embrace the important core human virtues like treating others respectfully, leading a purposeful life and serving humanity. In a time where our world is growing smaller by the advent of technology we must endeavor to adapt lifestyles that more congenial, non-discriminating, sustainable and cohesive for the overall development of humanity.

According to me these are some of the preaching's of Sarva Dharma Samanvaya. No matter what religion we practice personally we should always respect other religions and live in harmony with all the living beings around us, be it humans, animals or plants.

Unity of faith prayer = There is only one religion, the religion of love. There is only one language, the language of the heart. There is only one cast, the cast of humanity. There is only one god, he is omnipresent.

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THEN, NOW and AHEAD

by Prem Bajaj

When I and my family came to Wichita in September 1968, there were about seven or eight families of Indian origin in Wichita. These families included Mr. and Mrs Balbir Mathur, Dr. and Mrs. C.G. Chacko and Dr. D.V. Chopra. Every family of Indian origin knew every other family. Whenever a new Indian family came to Wichita, a get-together was held to introduce them to others. There were frequent get-togethers of Indian families.

With more families arriving in Wichita, the get-togethers got larger and the need for formal co-ordination of events was felt. Particularly to celebrate large festival like Diwali, volunteers would collect funds, rent a suitable place and organize the event. Among the people who were foremost in volunteering for and organizing events, the names of Balbir Mathur, Dr. Mrs. Parula Raghavan and (Late) Anil Shah come to mind. Events were mainly focused around festival celebrations and other cultural activities.

The Prime Minister of India at the time, Mrs. Indira Gandhi, was assassinated on October 31, 1984. Indian community in Wichita wished to remember her and celebrate her life. The growing Indian community needed larger place to come together. Since there was no organization of people of Indian origin, none could speak for others. Luckily Dr. Harlen Henson, Foreign Student Advisor at Wichita State University, sponsored the meeting and the Indian community held a gathering to celebrate the life of (Late) Mrs. Indira Gandhi.

The immediate need was over, but people of Indian origin continued to feel the need for an association. Thus, an association was formed with the name, India Association of Greater Wichita (IAGW), on November 24, 1985 and Shyam Bhagat became the first president. Later IAGW became a tax-exempt 501(C)3 organization and changed its name to Cultural Association of India (CAI).

Indian Student Association (ISA) was established and started functioning on the same day as IAGW on November 24, 1985. Shanmugmani became the first president of ISA. I and another professor from Engineering, became Faculty Advisors.

After being established at the end of the year 1985, both IAGW and ISA held their first functions in the following year 1986. These organizations were not without any challenges. ISA faced some financial difficulties in the beginning, but help from Khichas and voluntary contributions from the students came at the right time and ISA was able to hold its first social event.

Around 2001, I noticed that there were various religious organizations on the campus of WSU, but there was none for the Hindus. So at my encouragement, the Association of HINDu Students in America (AHINSA) was formed. AHINSA held their first function, Shivratri, on February 24, 2001. Monal Merchant became the first president. Dr. Ravi Gururajan and I became Faculty Advisors.

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In 2002, through the efforts of Dr. Raghunath and Rekha Reddi, Hindu Temple of Greater Wichita (HTGW) was built.

The above outline gives you an idea of how various Indian associations were established in Wichita. Each time a need was felt, the community came together and found ways to take care of it.

As Indian community in Wichita continued to grow, newer initiatives were added. Soon Balvihar and other programs were started by HTGW. Each program, each initiative, each

association has been successful. With the growing community, the current space in the temple is not enough to accommodate everyone. Temple Committee is moving fast to remedy the situation and expand the facility. It has prepared plans for the different phases in which HTGW facilities will be expanded and made available to the community.

Looking ahead, the future seems to be bright. Every person has a reason to proudly contribute to the cultural life of Wichita.



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