



## HINDU CONNECTIONS

**October, 2007**

### Diwali Puaa and Celebration:

The American Hindu Association celebrated the Diwali festival with a special Lakshmi-Ganesh Puja conducted by Priest on Sunday November 4, 2007 at Shorewood Community Center, 901 Swarthmore Court, Madison, WI 53705.

The light of our Diwali celebration will last us for many weeks to come. The Goddess brought us many blessings and in spite of a few delays it was a great success. Many people came



and we had more prasad then we knew to do with. There is an old saying: You should not pray without light. This is the light of devotion in our hearts, our love for each other, and our determination to continue this sacred tradition in these chaotic times. We were more than successful and wait with patient optimism for the next great celebration. In this busy world we can continue the oldest and most profound tradition of the modern world. AHA's roving reporter; Dennis Murray

### Diwali: Hindus' festival of lights

[www.americanhindu.net/Diwali.doc](http://www.americanhindu.net/Diwali.doc)

Imagine a favorite holiday. Perhaps it's Thanksgiving. Passover. Christmas. Now imagine if that holiday never appeared on the calendar. No one other than you, your family, and your like-minded friends even knew it existed. Imagine a favorite holiday. Perhaps it's Thanksgiving. Passover. Christmas. Now imagine if that holiday never appeared on the calendar. No one other than you, your family, and your like-minded friends even knew it existed. The bulk of the community treated it like any other day: just 24 hours out of the 8,760 in a year. For most part, that's what it's like every autumn in the Hindu American Community when it comes time to celebrate Diwali. Observed in October or November (it falls on the 15th day of the dark fortnight of the Hindu month of Kartik, or the last day of the last month in lunar calendar), Diwali is the Hindu Festival of lights. It's the most significant religious holiday in the Indian Community. This year it will be celebrated on **November 9, 2007.**

As the festival of lights, Diwali is traditionally celebrated these days by gathering for a feast, wearing new clothing, setting off fireworks, and either lighting candles or stringing up lights. It's a New Year's Eve, basically, the time to wish others a happy new year. And while Diwali passes mostly unnoticed on these shores, that not the case in other communities that have large Hindu populations. In Trinidad, Guyana, Nepal, Malaysia, Singapore, the island of Bali, the United Kingdom, and more, Diwali is for lack of a better word, huge.

"It's important to us that Diwali be recognized. It's important not that everyone follow it or celebrate it, but that they understand it. We're not asking for time off work... just that people know about Diwali, instead of only finding out about it from a random story in the newspaper."

As is the case with most historically rich cultures, Diwali's roots run deep in the Indian Hindu Community. Diwali, a variation of the Sanskrit word Deepavali, refers to the rows of earthen lamps that celebrants place around their homes. Hindus believe that the light from the lamps represents the dispelling of ignorance and the illumination of truth.

While that's the significance of Diwali to Hindus, the day is also important to Sikhs and Jains. The ultimate hope is that Americans become more aware of how Diwali is celebrated: That Diwali is when women wear colorful saris and men wear either a traditional kurta or a dhoti, that Diwali is when homes are awash in candlelight or when wealthy homes are lit up by neon, as they are in India, that Diwali is when sweets are exchanged and fireworks ignited. Perhaps, in time, the rest of the country will be similarly illuminated.

A country like U.K. (United Kingdom) seems to be five or 10 years ahead of us. The House of Commons has a big celebration of Diwali.

While there were few Hindus of non-Hindus descent 50 years ago, today Hinduism is a global spiritual and religious movement, with 1 to 2 million adherents from nonethnic Indian backgrounds in the United States alone. Furthermore, spiritual and health practices from Hindu heritage, such as vegetarianism, yoga, meditation, and ayurveda have been adopted by those who do not identify themselves as Hindus, strengthening the spirituality of other religions.

At its core, Hinduism offers the diverse spiritual experiences of a civilization that is more than 5,000 years old. Within Hinduism, individuals will find a multitude of paths, books, gurus, and philosophies that lead to the same ultimate reality that is common to all of mankind. This reality may be unifying force, or as God (to whom we give various names), depending on how it is perceived.

### Appeal for Kidney Donation

My name is Pramod Agarwal, and I am in an urgent need of kidney transplant. I am a husband and father of two, and currently living in Glendale, Wisconsin. For more than a year, neither of my kidneys has functioned properly due to renal failure. I have been withdrawn from the ability to carry out even the most mundane of daily tasks since January, and have needed to undergo dialysis treatment three times a week.

I am appealing to you for a donation of a kidney for blood type "B". My doctors have advised me that in receipt of even one kidney will be sufficient for sustaining my life, which has progressively deteriorated during last year. Unfortunately, I cannot receive a kidney from my wife and sons due to mismatch of our blood group. With your kind donation, my life could be re-established. Per my physician, donor will be as active as before after a successful transplant.

My insurance will cover all testing and surgery costs. If you have any information or any further questions, please contact me at (414) 352-6737 (home) or (414) 659-8684 (cell), or email at [agarwap@netscape.net](mailto:agarwap@netscape.net). You may also contact Rita Singh at (608) 848-9046 (home) or (608) 695-3334 (cell), or email at [rita\\_2\\_singh@yahoo.com](mailto:rita_2_singh@yahoo.com).

### Tsunami Relief Efforts from AHA

[www.americanhindu.net/2005TsunamiRelief.htm](http://www.americanhindu.net/2005TsunamiRelief.htm)

Dear Members, As you all know, on December 26, 2004, a powerful earthquake hit the island of Sumatra in Indonesia and triggered tsunamis, which have hit South India and Sri Lanka among many other Asian countries. Thousands of people have lost their lives, thousands more are missing, and many thousands more have been injured.

The AHA, INC, raised disaster relief fund over \$30,000 for the Orphanage Building in Tricomalee, Sri Lanka. The pictures show some of the building work of the donation money.

Now we need more money to complete the project. Your support is important to us continue our charitable work. We thank you for your generous contribution and support towards a noble cause.

Contributions to AHA can be made through secure on-line credit-card deductions from AHA's website - [www.americanhindu.net/donation](http://www.americanhindu.net/donation). Please indicate that your contribution is for the "Orphanage Building Fund". Also you can mail your donation to the following address: AMERICAN HINDU ASSOCIATION  
P.O.Box 55405  
Madison WI 53705

### Diwali Recipe ~ Wheat Laddu **Contributed by: Shiela Talwar**

Here is a delectable collection of traditional Diwali Recipes to help you make this Diwali celebrations more zestful!! The collection includes Recipes for Diwali deserts and snacks. Choose and cook your favorite Diwali Recipe with love and delight your dear ones in a very special way!!

#### Wheat Laddu

Ingredients: 1 cup Ghee  
1 cup Wheat Flour 1/4 cup Gram Flour  
1 1/2 cup Sugar Powder 1/4 cup Grated Coconut  
1/4 cup Dry Fruit almonds, raisins, kaju etc

#### Preparation:

1. Heat the ghee.
2. Put both the flours in the heated ghee.
3. When nearly roasted put coconut and sliced dry fruit in the mixture.
4. Now put the ground sugar in the mixture and stir thoroughly.
5. Take off from the heat quickly and make laddus. You may also put the mixture in an oil based thali & make small pieces.

American Hindu Association

Disclaimer: Views of readers/column writers are that of their own and not of the AHA [www.americanhindu.net](http://www.americanhindu.net)

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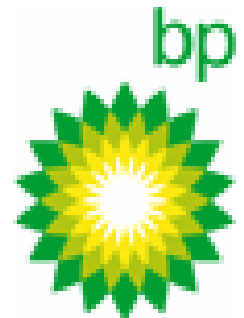


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