

# SITALK

In New York

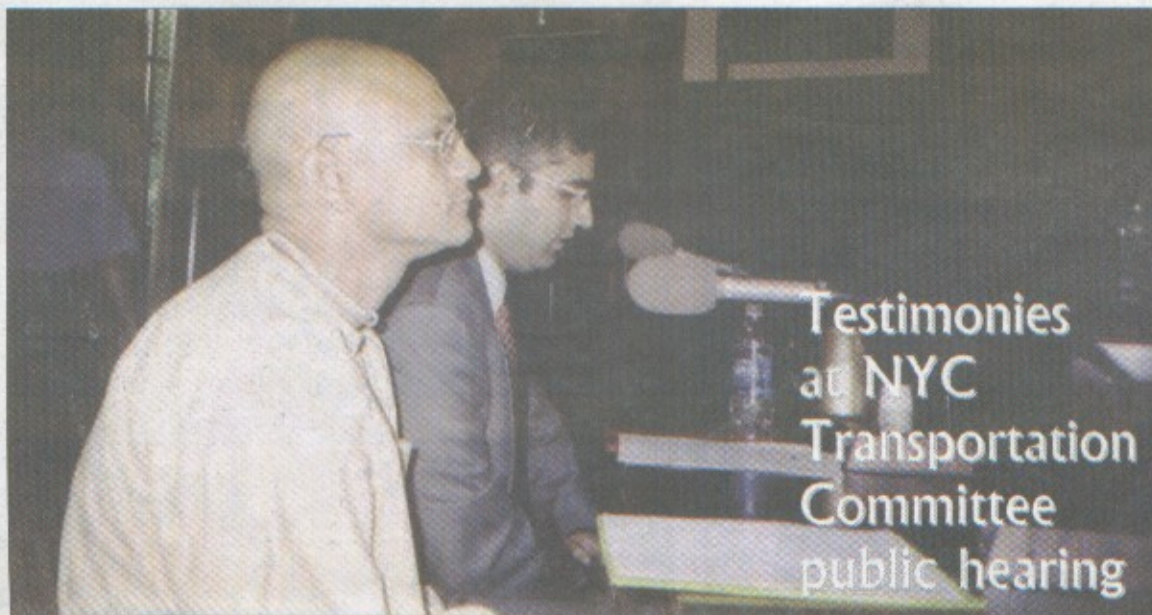
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## NYC STREET PARKING RULES FOR DIWALI

### This Nov. 1, Diwali day, New Yorkers may be free of streetside parking worries



PHOTO ABOVE, Councilwoman Gale Brewer, right, at the public hearing of the Transportation Committee of the New York City Council on Sept. 21 to decide on granting Diwali the status of a religious holiday in New York, which allows for the suspension of alternate side of the road parking rules. PHOTO BELOW, Hare Krishna Monk Gadadhara Pandit Dasa, left and IACPA Project Director Uday Tambar, presenting their testimonies at the public hearing. (Photos: Jyotirmoy Datta) Pages 10-12



## Gadadhara Pandit Dasa, Hare Krishna Monk

### 'Diwali is recognized by the House of Commons'

**M**y name is Gadadhara Pandit Dasa. I am a monk in the Hare Krishna movement, a monotheistic strand within Hinduism, and the chaplain for the Hare Krishna campus ministry at Columbia University. As with other Hindu temples, Diwali is seen as a very significant day of celebration within the Hare Krishna faith. The very large umbrella of Hinduism contains within it a very diverse set of philosophical beliefs, rituals and practices. Diwali, however, is one celebration which is common throughout all different sects of Hinduism and is celebrated by Hindus all over the world. In fact, in London, Diwali is recognized and celebrated in House of Commons.

Diwali literally means "a row of lamps." The purpose behind this festival, in which homes are thoroughly cleansed and oil lamps are lit throughout, can be found in the Hindu epic called the 'Ramayana.'

'Ramayana' describes the victory of Lord Rama over the evil king Ravana, who personified lust, envy, anger, greed and pride. Thus the epic serves to inspire Hindus and all others to focus on purifying their hearts of the Ravana-like tendencies so that God can reside within the temple of our hearts. ☺



**Gadadhara Pandit Dasa**  
(Photo: Jyotirmoy Datta)