



Yugabda 5113
Shaka Samvat 1933
Vikram Samvat 2068

Vol. XXXX
No. 2
Apr - Jun 2011

HINDU VISHWA

Vishwa Dharma Digest

Are All Religions the Same?



Also Read

- From "Dignity to Divinity" Through Pluralism or Dharma?
- Tribute To Shri Bharat Bhai Gajjar
- Kite Festival Draws Over 3,000 People
- Seva (Service) To The Hindu Diaspora

U.S \$5.00

Non Profit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Houston, TX
PERMIT NO. 8376

Vishwa Hindu Parishad America Inc.
P.O. Box 441505
Houston, TX 77244-1505

To

Glimpses of VHPA Florida Youth Camp



Khel time



Invocation



Curious Young Readers



Dandiya Dance



Parental discussion



Learning to draw kolam



Discussion time



Food for the stomach



Fun with colors



Team work



Young participants


HINDU VISHWA
VISHWA HINDU PARISHAD (World Hindu Council) OF AMERICA, INC.

National Headquarter:
P. O. Box 441505,
Houston, TX 77244-1505

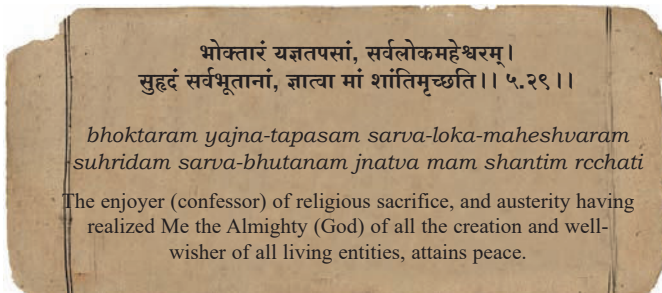
www.vhp-america.org

Tel.: (281)496-5676
office@vhp-america.org

Volume XXXX

No. 2

April - June 2011



President	Shree Jyotish Parekh	860-521-2173	president@vhp-america.org
General secretary	Dr. Abhaya Asthana	508-875-0432	gensecy@vhp-america.org
Treasurer	Shree Jayesh Mehta	856-751-2132	treasurer@vhp-america.org
Executive Vice President	Shree Gaurang Vaishnav	732-744-0851	evp@vhp-america.org
V. P. - Advocacy	Shree Girish Gandhi	561-244-5813	vp_seva@vhp-america.org
V. P. - Publications	Shree Shyam Tiwari	770-962-2669	vp_pb@vhp-america.org
Jt. General secretary	Shree Sanjay Mehta	412-276-2670	jt_gensecy2@vhp-america.org
Organizing Secretaries:			
Youth Development Programs	Smt. Nayana Modh	516-935-0002	orgsecy1@vhp-america.org
Great Lakes Region	Smt. Renu Gupta	513-860-1151	orgsecy4@vhp-america.org
Southeast region	Smt. Sneha Mehta	770-394-1353	orgsecy2@vhp-america.org
Membership & HAY	Shree Sanjay Kaul	781-893-4982	sanjaykaul@hotmail.com

Editorial Team

Managing Editor:	Shyam Tiwari	vp_pb@vhp-america.org
Editor:	Dr. Ashok Sinha	aksinha1722@yahoo.com , aksinha@sbcglobal.net
Copy Editor:	Sabitha Venugopal	raguv1@gmail.com
Assitant Editor:	Rachna Gupta	rgupta242@yahoo.com
Advisors:	Dr. Abhay Asthana	abhayaji@gmail.com ,
	Dr. Shardananda	prayagraj@erols.com

About the HINDU VISHWA

The Vishwa Hindu Parishad of America (VHPA) publishes the Hindu Vishwa issue quarterly except when combined with special publications. For subscription, please fill out the membership form on the last page.

For Advertising inquiries please contact:
Shyam Tiwari at 770.962.2669
or Email - srtiwari@hotmail.com

Vishwa Hindu Parishad (World Hindu Council) of America (VHPA), founded in 1970 and incorporated in the state of New York in 1974, is an independent, nonprofit, tax-exempt and volunteer-based charitable organization serving the needs of Hindu community in USA. It aims to build a dynamic and vibrant Hindu society rooted in the eternal values of Dharma and inspired by the lofty ideal of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam, i.e. the entire creation is one family.

The views expressed in the articles presented in this publication are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the organization, officials, editorial staff or the donors.
Copyright 2011 © Vishwa Hindu Parishad of America, Inc. All rights reserved. No parts and contents of this publication may be reproduced in any form without the written permission of VHP of America, Inc.

■ April- June 2011

1



HINDU VISHWA

CONTENTS

COVER STORY



Are All Religions the Same?

By Swami
Nikhilanand

page 17

EDITORIAL

A TIME FOR ABHAS

3

Kite Festival Draws over 3,000 People
By Nikita Zamwar and Karuna Kankani

4

Seva (Service) to The Hindu Diaspora
By Greesh C Sharma

8

A Call to be Vedic Ambassadors
By Stephen Knapp

11

Tribute to Shri Bharat Bhai Gajjar

13

Traditions Must be Examined
By Siddheshwari Devi (Didi Ji)

20

Conversion not a Constitutional right: SC judge
By Satya Prakash

21

From Dignity to Divinity Through
Pluralism or Dharma? By Dr. Mahesh Mehta

22

Krishna Consciousness Divine Love
and the Mirror By Omanand Koul

28

Centre changed personal laws of
only Hindus: SC By Dhananjay Mahapatra

30

Ekal Vidyalaya Movement
By Dr. Basant Tariyal

31

Tilak and the Star of the Vedas
By Jayant V. Narlikar

34

For India's survival Hinduism has to prevail
By Alexander Zinoviev

36

Key concepts of Hindu Dharma, Vedic ideas
about Creation By Kamlesh Kapur

38



A TIME FOR ABHAS

A number of local-level and national-level Hindu student organizations have emerged in the USA with different objectives and modes of operation.

Emergence of additional Hindu-American student organizations cannot be ruled out. At this critical juncture of history it may be worthwhile to encourage this trend and at the same time help develop a framework for or encourage the formation of a joint body. The body would be composed of a small number of representative students plus a few other community members including retired Hindu parents or grandparents residing in the USA. The body endeavors to offer a common platform for mutual cooperation and also acts in an advisory capacity - say, an Advisory Board for Hindu American Students (ABHAS). Such an ABHAS should prove to be helpful in interlinking diverse organizations without the individual organizations losing their intrinsic identity in any way. It would facilitate building of a larger network and also act as a formal representative entity of all Hindu American students with impact greater than the sum total of individual organizations. However, the primary utility and function of such an ABHAS would be in an advisory role without imposing regulatory powers so as to retain the independence of the individual organizations.

It is natural to expect that results of larger dimensions could be affected as demanded by changing circumstances under the presence of such a unifying entity (ABHAS.) There may arise issues which may be of common interest to more than one individual Hindu student organization; there may be circumstances where all such organizations might need or want to collaborate, but would not be able to do so in absence of such a unifying entity. An ABHAS would thus provide opportunities for extensive and comprehensive coordination in the programs and activities of individual organizations as per the need arising from time to time. It could also help evolve a long-term synergic policy and play the role of a think-tank not only for the Hindu American students but also for the Hindu American

HINDU VISHWA

EDITORIAL

community as a whole. Specific additional advantages of such an ABHAS may include, for instance:

- Cultivating a healthy spirit of mutual understanding, cooperation and coordination among individual organizations to achieve larger goals than possible through isolated and disjoint efforts of individual organizations;
- Fruitful utilization of the rich knowledge and life-long experience of judicially selected senior and prominent retired Indians visiting or residing in the U.S.;
- Contributing in and enhancing the outreach type of program proposed by the HMEC to educate the public, especially those in the neighborhood of Hindu Mandirs about Hinduism;
- Facilitating participation in Interfaith programs at various levels where Hinduism is usually poorly represented and helping to project a healthy and impressive image;
- Acting as a forceful voice against injustice to Hindu students in USA; for instance, the recent case of radio-tagging like animals or criminals of innocent Hindu students of the (sham) Tri-Valley University;
- Effectively interfacing with the media as a composite representative entity with the media, to respond in a timely manner to any slur or misrepresentation;
- Counteracting any religious extremism through balanced and peaceful action;
- Assisting in setting up of scholarship for interested and capable students for appropriate exchange programs on an international basis (including with Indian student organizations);
- If possible, facilitating effective professional assistance to pertinent organizations needing help, for instance, legal and fund-raising for the ISKCON, a victim of religious prosecution on the part of a few Americans, for their survival and success.

The overall role of the ABHAS may be similar to that of the Hindu Mandir Executives' Conference (HMEC). Periodic conferences among various Hindu Student organizations of North America may thus be organized in its auspices for exchange and sharing of ideas and for planning future programs in a coordinated fashion whenever desirable depending on coincidence of objectives of multiple organizations. Needless to say that such an ABHAS could fully enjoy close cooperation and positive relationship with VHPA and HMEC - all working toward a common goal of preserving and rightly propagating Hindu values, culture and spirituality and safeguarding legitimate Hindu interests in America. The time for such an ABHAS was never as ripe as now. ■


HINDU VISHWA

Kite Festival

Draws over 3,000 People

By Nikita Zamwar and Karuna Kankani

On January 23, 2011 at the George Bush Park, over 3,000 people attended the Makar Sankranti festival which was sponsored by the Vishwa Hindu Parishad of America, Gujrati Samaj of Houston, and Hindus of Greater Houston. Many families and other organizations also joined this event in small groups. They arranged potlucks and enjoyed this event as a picnic along with the kite flying. Fortunately the weather was good allowing a successful event.




HINDU VISHWA


The festival kicked off with 3 sets of Surya Namaskars, 39 in all which were performed from 11 AM till noon. Many people performed Surya Namaskars either on the blue tarp provided or on their own yoga mat. This was part of the Surya Namaskar Yagna, a 16 day yoga awareness program with the motto Health for Humanity. This was organized by the Hindu Swayamsevak Sangh. "It is easier to do Surya Namaskars in a group rather than alone, especially for me," said Hejal Soni a 10th Grader at Clements High School.

As the day progressed, kites of different colors, shapes and sizes filled the air as over 2000 kites were sold at the festival.

"The sky was full of kites and everyone was trying to cut each others' kite, which was fun," said Mark Kelly who celebrated this festival for the first time. Some like Sanjay Mediwala came back after a few years because this time his son was old enough to experience the joy of the festival with him. "He [son] is still a little young but he is enjoying watching them [kites] in the sky with different colors."

Representatives of various participating organizations join Pravin Vyas, president of HVPA-Houston chapter

Photos: Rajesh Thatte

But other people, like Jyotsna Patel come back every year.

"This is a festival you can come see each other, meet each other, and play with each other," said Jyotsna Patel.

Along with the kite flying, team sports like volley ball and cricket were also played.

This year, like every other year, the Gujarati Samaj served 1800 plates of Kichadi and butter milk along with Ekal Vidyalaya, which served over 2000 cups of masala tea for free. To serve kichadi on Makar Sankranti is a old tradition of the Gujarati Culture. "[Kichadi] It was delicious, it was fantastic actually," said Mediwala.

Many families and other organizations also joined this event in small groups. They arranged potlucks and enjoyed this event as a picnic along with the kite flying. ■



HINDU VISHWA

Voices

Kite Flying Festival at George Bush park is one of our family's most uplifting experiences in the winter. All ages enjoy the experience: the elderly bundled up from head to toe drink warm chai and eat hot kichidi, the parents enjoy passing on the delicate techniques of properly flying a kite, young guys trying to cut other's kites down while catching the attention of young women, and the kids imaginations taking flights along with their kites.

■ **Sandhya S. Thakkar**

This is the first time I have participated in Indian program. It was nice to see people from different nationalities flying kites and having lots of fun. For a dollar you get hot spicy kichadi with butter milk and pickles and free masala tea.

■ **Javed Ali**

This year we have increased number of policeman from 10 to 12 to effectively manage the traffic. Gujarati Samaj of Houston provided 3 Shuttles compared to two shuttles last year, this was done after listening to the people's concerns. We had a good crowd over 2500 people. There is plenty of room to improve in the parking area and next year we plan to increase our shuttles.

■ **Pravin Vyas**

President of VHPA, Houston Chapter

It is pleasure to see many organization getting together to organize very popular Kite festival. This year Patanjali Yog Peeth and Svyasa joined us in suryanamaskar Yagna. It was wonderful to see Suryanamaskar participation was from all age groups.

■ **Vinod Mantri**

Treasurer of Hindus of Greater Houston



Participants perform Surya Namsakar



HINDU VISHWA



Gujarati Samaj
served 1,800
plates of
Khichadi and
buttermilk

Ekal Vidyalaya volunteers supply tea

Ekal Vidyalaya Foundation served more than 2000 complimentary cups of hot masala tea. Weather was quite cold and all participants really enjoyed it. Ekal has been serving free masala tea at many community events. This created ton of good will towards Ekal cause.
*Prakash Shah,
President Ekal Houston.*




HINDU VISHWA

Seva (Service) to The Hindu Diaspora

By **Greesh C Sharma, Ph.D.**

Since 1970, I have been traveling all over the world. Whether it was Fiji, Mauritius, Kenya, South Africa, Zambia, Guyana, Trinidad, Suriname or Bali, the Hindu diaspora treated me

instantaneously like a long lost cousin. I felt safe, "local," and immediately part of the Vasudhaive Kutumbkam (The Whole World as One Large Family.) I will never forget that -- when I was watching a Hindu procession in Latoka, Fiji, heading to the local temple -- I was told not to go alone to downtown for safety reasons. This voluntary benevolence on part of a stranger instantaneously made me feel at home; and the next moment I found myself participating in this unique and intimate feast with hundreds of Hindus. In Durban, co-traveler Indians in the bus from Johannesburg did not even let me step out of the bus when they came to know I was going to hire a taxi for further travel. Instead they offered me a ride to my destinations, so that I would not face any danger. My inspiration to continue my journey and the Seva-mission comes from so many more beautiful personal encounters with Indians all over the world, from Haiti to Hindustan. I realized there is something rather unique about the Indian diaspora, confirming the dictum: 'You can take an Indian out of India, but never India out of an Indian.' During my encounters with compatriots from Argentina to Zimbabwe, and from Turkmenistan to Timboubktou, I felt protected, nurtured and very

much at home. India is a metaphor for pure uncontaminated spirituality, nonviolence, karma, dharma, hospitality, and, above all, Nishkaam Seva (service to others without expecting a return.) I have retraced Mahatma Gandhi's footsteps; traversed the places Jesus Christ did from his birth to



his death; visited many a milestone of the Asian campaign trail of Alexander-the-Great and of the historic Silk-Route. I have been to the holiest shrines and sites of Christians, Muslims (except Mecca), and



HINDU VISHWA

Jews and, of course, to many of the most sacred Hindus pilgrimages including the Maansarovar and the Mount-Kailash. But I feel that there is no pilgrimage greater than visiting the countries where the Indian diaspora has settled. It is always an inspiring and most gratifying; even though at times it may be excruciatingly painful due to local conditions. Nevertheless, at every step along the way, it always culminated in a personal transformation and rejuvenation.

Out of the 106 countries that I have visited, I was alarmed to notice, to my great pain and chagrin, that, underneath the smiles, hospitality, warmth and affinity, the Hindu diaspora unfortunately suffers from many ills including pitiable poverty, alcoholism, domestic violence, depression-incurred suicides, unemployment, alienation, isolation, and much more. Additionally, I have also witnessed that they constantly face severe threats from the Christian missionaries in the form of proselytizing, often resulting splitting of the Hindu families; from Islamic terrorism; and from blatant racial discrimination and blackmail. Even ordinary criminals treat Hindus as soft targets for monetary crimes.

On the average, one Indian is killed every month in Zambia, as they are the chosen targets for armed robbery by the locals. In Guyana, Hindus are picked at random when drug-addicts need money to buy drugs. In Pakistan and Bangladesh, Hindu girls (9 years of age and older) are freely kidnapped by Muslims for being forcefully married. Sharia (Islamic)-Law supports and even encourages such marriages, regardless of the man's age, while it deprives the girl's parents of any right over their kidnapped daughter. In Fiji, Hindu families undergo devastating despair and psychosis when their significant others are converted by missionaries. Alcoholism, breakdown of the family, and divorce has become the trademark of the Indian family. In essence, Indian diaspora in majority of the countries in Africa, Caribbean, Indian Ocean, Pakistan and Bangladesh is living under the threat of racial-religious-political oppression. They have little rights or choices; and they live in desperation beyond imagination.

There are 27 million Indians, living in 150 countries. Among these, there are 19 countries which are constitutionally Muslim, 9 Christian, and 1 Jewish; and there is not a single country which is constitutionally a Hindu country. Nepal used to be



Dr. Greesh Sharma in Guyana

one (Hindu country) until the communist takeover. This clearly points out to the need for the Hindu diaspora to work as a gestalt, regardless of the national boundaries, to spearhead its legitimate defense and to mitigate its inherent vulnerabilities. Hindu virtues of nonviolence, accommodating others even disregarding their own discomfort and others' ulterior motives, and downplaying their own faith, culture, and traditions makes them ineffective, less visible, and unmistakably a soft target. Yes, they are hardworking, law-abiding, family-oriented, entrepreneurial, and loyal to the countries and societies in which they have settled. But it will be an illusion to fantasize that they are prosperous, safe, empowered, and able to live freely and peacefully in the sanctuary of their families, homes, temples and communities.

It was this understanding that led me to establish, in 1992, the Vanaprastha Corps. Since then, a number of mental health/Medical/anti-Addiction treatment camps have been set up and related services have been carried out in many countries: Fiji (1997), Mauritius (1998), Zambia (1998), Cambodia (2003), Nepal (2004), Trinidad (2007), Guyana (2007), and Suriname (2007.)

The mission of Vanaprastha Corps has been to



HINDU VISHWA



**Shiv Mandir,
Temple in
the Sea in
Trinidad**

empower the Hindu diaspora when and where there is crisis, trauma, and alienation; to bring the rich, resourceful, and retired professionals with various specialties and interdisciplinary skills; and to coordinate their services - all in the spirit of Vasudhaive Kutumbkam.

Vanaprastha Corps has been reaching out to the individuals, professionals, as well as to the Hindu/Indian communities, in the affected countries by offering counseling, guidance, referral resource identification; providing medicines, books, and equipments; and arranging for lectures, training as well as direct treatment. The process begins when a professional or leader in the community, or someone from the government, or a University Mental Health Department, or an NGO, requests assistance. Then the exact needs for the type of service(s) and program(s) are identified and the service delivery program and timetable are planned. This is followed by recruitment of suitable interdisciplinary volunteers. Finally, the mental health/medical/anti-addiction treatment camps are organized. All volunteers pay their own expenses and are encouraged to bring supplies, equipment, etc., to share with the local professionals or with the needy in the community. No donations, contributions, or fees are collected from the beneficiaries. Only the local hospitality is accepted for the sake of safety, convenience, and an optimal and efficient utilization of available time. These programs take place usually either in university premises, government buildings (for example, Ministry of Health and Social Welfare), local community centers or Mandirs. Typically,

mornings are spent lecturing, training professionals/community leaders, and giving workshops on specific topics. The afternoons are utilized for providing direct treatment and consultation to the patients. Local professionals/community leaders are included in all these activities in order to promote networking and to facilitate follow-up services once the Vanaprastha Corps team leaves.

In the past, requests for the Vanaprastha Corps services have come from Local Vishwa Hindu Parishads, Governments (Ministries of Health and Welfare), mental health organizations, professionals, and community leaders. Programs and Services in the past have frequently taken place in large cities or the National Capitals.

Apathy is an anathema for the Hindu diaspora. If we protect the Hindu diaspora, it will protect us as well as our future generations. We are in it together; no matter what country we have chosen to make our home and to raise our children. I am convinced, if we protect the Hindu diaspora, it will give us more than protection. Let us begin the process of networking; identifying our needs and strengths; and searching for solutions collectively. We can, with proper priorities in our hearts and mind, probably serve mankind at large. ■

Contact-Information:

Greesh C. Sharma, Ph.D.

Director, Psychologist-Lower Bucks Institute of Behavior

Modification

699 W.Trenton Ave. Morrisville, Pa 19067 (USA)

Drgreesh@yahoo.com Tel.: (215) 295 3099



A Call to be Vedic Ambassadors

*By Stephen Knapp
(Sri Nandanandana Dasa)*

Now is the time when there is a growing need for Vedic Ambassadors, similar to the term Intellectual Kshatriyas, meaning those who are strong enough to stand up for Vedic Dharma. Vedic ambassadors are people who can represent and show the benefits of what the Vedic culture has to offer, and who can fairly and accurately represent the Dharma. When there is a concern for preserving, protecting, and disseminating Vedic culture and its vast knowledge on all aspects of life, there is a great need for those who follow Sanatana Dharma or Hinduism to be Vedic Ambassadors. As we see society entering various states of confusion and anxiety over the events that are happening all around the planet, the need for a deeper spiritual understanding is obvious. Thus, there is a calling for Vedic Ambassadors who can assist in this process. But how can we be Vedic Ambassadors? What are the requirements?

To be an Ambassador of Vedic culture, you must know the culture and realize how dynamic it remains in its ability to assist humanity. There are a growing number of people in the West who are especially



curious about the ways of making more personal spiritual development, and they often look to the Eastern philosophy for assistance. As a Vedic Ambassador, you should be

educated enough to assist others with proper advice when the opportunity arises. You should be able to explain what Vedic culture is and how it is a universal truth that anyone can utilize, and at least a little about what that truth contains. You must be educated in understanding the different avenues of study it contains and their purpose, such as Ayurveda, Jyotish (Vedic astrology), Vastu (the means of arranging the space of one's home or office), the



HINDU VISHWA

Vedic rituals and histories, especially yoga and sadhana or spiritual practice and philosophy. As an Ambassador for Vedic culture you should be able to show others how it has improved or made a difference in your own life, both materially and spiritually. Everyone likes a story, so tell your story of how you started following the Vedic tradition and some of your experiences along the way. You can do this by showing how the Vedic wisdom has assisted you in your search for truth, your connection with God, in finding your spiritual identity, or to see the spiritual similarities we share with all other beings. You can also discuss how it helped you in finding where you fit into this universe, in understanding the aim of life, improving your moral standards and learning compassion for others.

Assisting those who are sincerely interested and want to further their investigation of the Dharma is another important task. There will naturally be some who will want to investigate Vedic culture for themselves, especially after being impressed or convinced by what you have shared with them about it. So, you should be able to share the Dharma with them and empower them to begin following it. This may be nothing more than suggesting various books they may find useful or beneficial for them to read, or which web sites may be good to visit, instructions on how they can find a temple so they can start understanding the temple practice of Vedic sadhana, or how to begin their study of basic Vedic scriptures so they can increase their understanding of what it has to offer and how to apply it in their lives. Thus, they become empowered to continue their own practice of it in a natural way. Working together with other Dharmic friends who share the same concern for protecting and sharing the Dharma is a good way to encourage others in their own practice and understanding of the Dharmic culture, or even to accept the idea of being a Vedic Ambassador. Then working together to develop a network in which everyone shares with others a greater understanding of what is actually Vedic culture and what it can do for society. This does not mean that it becomes a plan for converting those who may not be interested, but it is to assist society in the same way that Vedic culture has always tried to guide humanity for a better and improved understanding of life. This is also the way to help establish an ideal global Dharmic family who share mutual respect for all.

In summary:

- As Vedic Ambassadors we should be educated in our culture,
- We show and share with others how it has improved our own lives,
- We do not proselytize, but we are ready and willing to open our doors to all community members to let them see what we have and even how they may also participate,
- We network with other Dharmists in these matters to devise plans to further this work to protect and preserve the Dharma and disseminate its benefits throughout society,
- We defend ourselves against the ignorance or simple misunderstanding of others,
- We are pro-active both politically and socially. We can participate in organizations that are already working in such ways.
- We must also support our own community and its causes, and programs that defend our culture. After all, we are here to pool our resources and channel them to uplift people as well as protect our own culture, Vedic Dharma.
- We need to show the universal nature of the Vedic Dharma and how it is based on universal spiritual truths that are applicable to all. It is such a dynamic culture that it is not only for a few Hindus, but for the spiritual progress of all humanity.

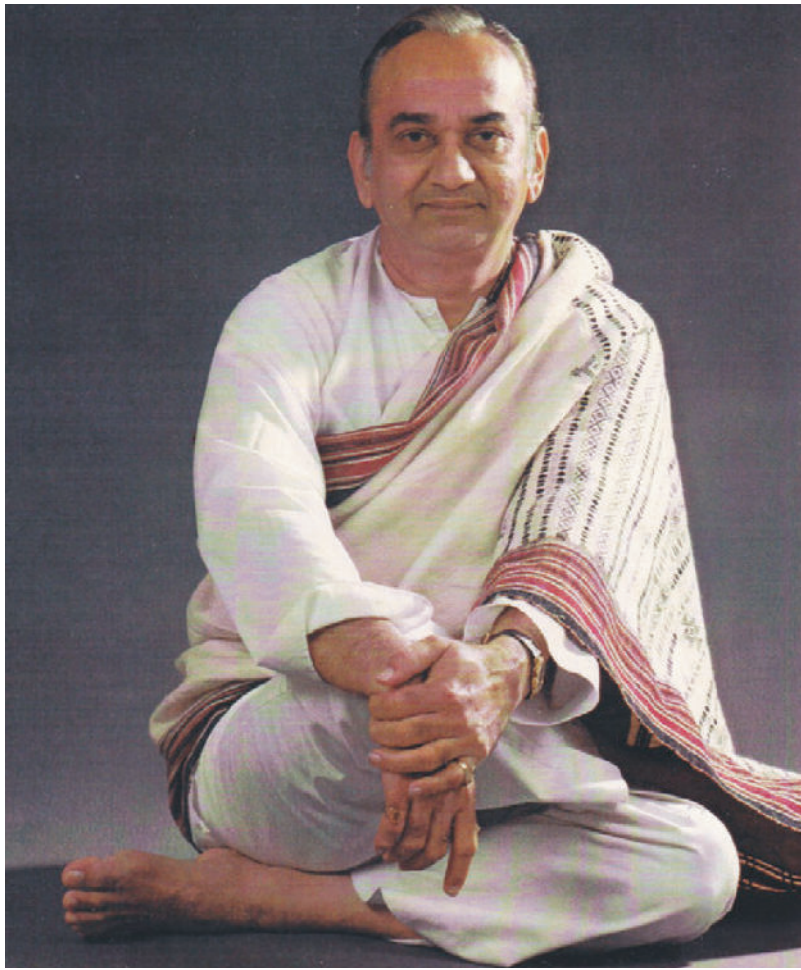
Therefore, with the help of such simple yet bold Vedic Ambassadors working together, the culture will not only remain strong but will increase in its influence and the ways it can provide assistance to all humanity. This is after all why it was given to society by the Supreme and passed along by the great Vedic rishis and seers. We are a part of the hope for the future. We should have confidence in what we can do because history has shown that we have already made a difference. In this way, if we all become Vedic Ambassadors, then we will see a great coalition that brings a bright future wherein people respect all beings and all religions. We will see a freedom for all individuals to develop according to their own spiritual level. Then the universal spiritual truths as found and presented in the Vedic tradition will gain respect and be accepted by many more millions of people across the planet. This could certainly change the course of history and begin to manifest the spiritual dimension in this world. ■

www.stephen-knapp.com



HINDU VISHWA

Tribute to Shri Bharat Bhai Gajjar



**Shri Bharat Gajjar, 1931-2011, a long time VHPA worker and a
founding member of the Hindu Temple of Delaware**



Tribute



**Bharat bhai came to
USA in 1952**

It is a sad day indeed to learn about the loss of Shri Bharat Bhai Gajjar. He was a figure so dear to all of us in the VHPA family, especially to those involved with the camps in the Northeast.

Bharat Bhai was loved by all the children, and probably every single camper in the Northeast camps was touched by his wisdom, caring and affection. The camp program as we see it today was shaped by his efforts and creativity. The evening aarti, the morning yoga, meditation and value stories were his gifts to thousands of campers. He always carried a smile on his lips, in his heart and in his eyes. We all will miss him very, very much. May Ishwara grant his atman peace as it moves onwards in its journey. Our prayers are with the family.

■ **Abhaya Ashthana**

Indeed a great loss for us all. Bharatbhai wrote at least 5 books, (as per my knowledge) 4 about Hinduism and one on knitting technology.

In Hinduism In the West and In India he wrote, "When you pray before eating, the food becomes 'Prasad.'"

Bharat bhai was a Yogi who has been accredited with bringing Yoga to the state of Delaware. He was a disciple of H. H. Swami Vishnu Devananda Maharaj (Swamiji) who gave him and his wife their mantra initiation. Bharat bhai and his wife, Anandi Narayani Ma (2/6/34 - 3/9/84), opened the Sivananda Yoga Center in 1965, in Wilmington, Delaware. They taught Yoga, and had a Satsang (Spiritual meeting) every Sunday for 38 years until 2003. Bharatbhai volunteered his time and gave all the revenues generated from his yoga classes to the center.

The proceeds from the sale of the Sivananda Yoga Center were used to open many one-teacher schools in villages in India where there were no schools. He also volunteered teaching yoga at Baylor Women's correctional facility since 2002. Bharat bhai was an authorized Hindu priest and performed Hindu weddings since 1967. He had given seminars and workshops on meditation, yoga, marriage, Mantra initiations and Hindu philosophy in the Delaware area. Bharat bhai had an ongoing Yoga television program since 1990 with a viewership of about 20,000. He participated as a teacher of the Bhagavad Gita at the Sivananda Yoga Vedanta Ashram, Bahamas, for a month, upon the request of Swamiji. Bharat bhai also volunteered to teach yoga and meditation at the VHP of America's summer youth camps for over 15 years, where he was loved by campers and volunteers of all ages. He could put on enthusiasm and smile on his face and audience at any time. He also recorded two Mantra tapes and has distributed over 5,000 copies of his "Jaya Ganesha Mantra," Kirtan music tape free to students and campers who have greatly enjoyed it. My children's faces light up whenever I mention Bharat bhai's name.

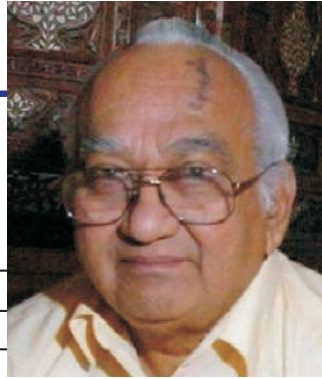
Bharat J. Gajjar was born on June 19th, 1931 into a business family in Ahmedabad, Gujarat, India. He and his wife are the parents of Ajay B. Gajjar and Meeta Gajjar Parker. Bharat bhai came to the US in 1952 and graduated from Philadelphia University, Pennsylvania, where he taught as a Professor from 1990 to 2002 in the graduate school. He had been awarded 20 textile patents and retired from DuPont DeNemours Company in 1992 after 35 years of service. He was the most admired at the VHPA camps, my humble Shraddhanjali to Bharat bhai. May Krishna bless his devotee Bharat bhai.

■ **Madhusudan Jhaveri**



Tribute

**Shri Bharat Gajjar
was one of the first
yoga teachers in
state of Delaware**



We lost a true yogi. Indeed it is a great loss to the community. In VHPA he was a leader, a friend, a guide and a humble dedicated worker. Youths in VHPA camps loved him.

May Ishvar give eternal peace to the departed soul and give strength to the family to pass through this difficult time.

Bharatbhai had touched the lives of many individuals in VHPA - young and old. We will all miss him dearly. Our thoughts and prayers are with the family.

■ **Jyotish Parekh**
President, VHP of America

Indeed a great loss in the passing away of our dedicated volunteer, friend and a guide in our camp work. May Ishwar grant His Soul Eternal Bliss.

■ **Mahesh Mehta**

I have fond memories of Bharatbhai. Praying for peace to his soul.

■ **Manohar Shinde**

Bharatji, was like Bhishma Pitamah of our camps.

Earlier I (up to about 5 years ago) used to meet him in Delaware on my way to NJ/NY and get inspired. Later I could not meet him due to his health problem. He will remain as inspiration with us forever.

■ **Shivaram Sitaram**

Yes indeed. It is a great loss for VHPA and

Hindu community. I did not have the pleasure of meeting him. But I have read his books and always looked forward to his emails/writings on Hindu cause and issues. He will be missed. Our prayers to Ishwar for the family.

■ **Vasav/Sneha**

As a young camper from the age of 9, Bharatji was one of the exciting people we looked forward to at camp. His enthusiasm and excitement about our culture and heritage led partly to my inspiration to work for the Hindu cause. It is a tribute to all in VHPA that great people such as Bharatji and others served in VHPA, which helped many Hindu Americans be proud of their Hindu heritage.

■ **Mihir Meghani, M.D.**
Co-Founder & Board Member, Hindu American Foundation

As many have said, this is a very great loss. I knew him closely from the East Coast camps. His contribution to the Hindu cause is unparalleled.

May God grant eternal peace to his immortal soul. May He give strength to his immediate family, as well as to his extended family (i.e. all of us) to endure this great loss. A fitting tribute to Shri Bharatbhai will be to re-dedicate ourselves to the cause of Hindu Dharma and Hindu society.

■ **Vijay G. Ruikar**



HINDU VISHWA

Tribute



After reading about the great life and dedication of Bharatbhai Gujjar, I felt that I was not fortunate to meet with Such a great inspiring Karma Yogi. I feel proud to belong to VHPA team where such great souls put their lifelong efforts to build the organization without expectations; brick by brick. May his soul rest in Peace. He has touched so many young and old people's life that he will have eternal peace. My sincere prayers for peace to his family.

■ Sheela Kene

This is indeed very sad news. It is a big loss to the Hindu society.

He was a true Karma Yogi. His friendly personality and lack of ego was an inspiration to all. As recently as two weeks ago, he had sent a donation to the HSC along with some useful books on yoga. HSC was planning to contact him to attend the annual HSC camp on Memorial Day weekend. I pray for the peace of his Atman and offer my condolences to the family members.

■ Gokul Kunnath

This is sudden, very saddening and shocking. Our prayers are with the family for the सद्गति (Sadgati) of the departed soul and may Ishwara give them enough strength to bear this immense loss.

■ Shyam Tiwari

Bharat bhai has left behind sweet memories for all of us, and those memories will keep inspiring till the last breath.

■ Abhinav Dwivedi

I see an enlightened young patriot radiating the divine message of spirituality (within few years) all over the globe. I was fortunate to interface with him.

■ Babubhai Gandhi

Some of us who had a privilege to work with him during the camps in 80's will surely reminisce about the time we spent together. May his soul rest in peace.

■ Girish Chokshi

It's a great loss not only to us but also to the entire Hindu community.

Till the last breath, he had upheld all aspects of Hindu-aspirations which were not only inspiring but also guiding light to its greatness. Our sincere "Vandan" to him. Our prayers go out to his family.

■ Prakash/Neela (Waghmare)

I have had fortune of knowing Bharatbhai for a long time. We will miss his presence immensely. We pray the Almighty God Grant Peace to his soul and strength to the family to bear the loss.

■ Ram Prakash Agarwal

Bharatbhai and I had wonderful time together in our VHPA summer camps for at least ten years continuously starting 1981. Along with all the youngsters, I enjoyed his company particularly during the morning yoga and the evening prayer and bhajan sessions. I miss those days, and I miss him now. I was away in India for the last 15 months. When I came back just a few days ago on 2/24, I had planned to meet him as I usually do when I'm back from my long stays in India. He was gone the same day.

■ Sushim Mukerji


HINDU VISHWA
COVER STORY

Are ~~R~~eligions the Same?

By Swami Nikhilanand

There is a statement many of us make which undermines efforts to preserve the authenticity of the teachings of Hinduism and pass that heritage on to future generations. We often say, "All religions are the same." Why do we say it? Sometimes it is out of caution. In other words, we don't want to offend anyone, and that is a safe fallback position. It is considered politically correct. Sometimes we say it out of ignorance. In other words, we find it difficult to grasp the intricacies of Hinduism so we fail to recognize the uniqueness and greatness of our own religion. If Hinduism were the same as all other religions then why would we care if our children convert to other religions? If Hinduism were the same as all other religions then why would we organize a conference to preserve the essential teachings of Hinduism and develop better ways of teaching it to our kids? If Hinduism were the same as all other religions then why would I, who was not raised Hindu, have chosen Hinduism over other religions? In this I am going to explain very briefly what it is that separates Hinduism from the other religions of the world.

To begin let's understand that there are religions in the world today which are considered atheistic, meaning they do not teach the existence of God. For the purpose of this write up we will leave such religions aside and focus on the theistic religions, those who accept the existence of God. First let's consider some commonalities amongst the theistic religions. One thing we can be sure of is that no matter what religion



someone belongs to, if they are worshipping God, then they are worshipping the same God. There cannot be two Gods. God is only one. There cannot be a separate Hindu God, a separate Christian God, a separate Muslim God, a separate Jewish God, etc. God is God and He is one and absolute. Our Vedas state, 'ekamevadvitiyam brahm nehananasti kinchan' एकमेवाद्वितीयम् ब्रह्म नेहान्नास्ति किञ्चन. In other words, "God is only one. He is singular and absolute. There can be no other." Shvetashvatar Upanishad states, 'eko devah sarvabhooteshu goodhah sarvavyapi



HINDU VISHWA



sarvabhootantaratma' 'एको देवः सर्वभूतेषु गूढः सर्वव्यापी सर्वभूतान्तरात्मा'. Meaning, "God is one. He resides in the heart of all the living beings. He is omnipresent. He is within your very soul." If there were more than one God, God would not be absolute or unlimited, because where one God starts, the other would have to stop. But God does not begin or end anywhere because He is unlimited, absolute and omnipresent. He is one. So whoever is worshipping God, anywhere in this universe, is worshipping the same God.

There are also certain general characteristics of God that could be agreed on by all the theistic religions. Everyone who believes in God could agree on certain basic facts. Such as, God is perfect. God is Divine. God is absolute, omnipresent, all-knowing, and all-powerful. God is Blissful. God is all-kind and perfectly Gracious. This is a good general description of God which all theistic religions accept.



This is also the maximum extent of the description which is available in other religions, but not in Hinduism. The Sanskrit scriptures of Hinduism reveal the knowledge of God on a much deeper level. This is both what makes Hinduism great and also what makes it more challenging to comprehend. Just like it is easy to learn what is taught in kindergarten, but it takes much more time, effort and commitment to learn what is taught in a post-graduate course; in the same way, the knowledge revealed in the teachings of Hinduism far exceeds this general knowledge which is the limit of other religions, thus it takes more time, effort and commitment to grasp the knowledge of Hinduism. It is also extremely important to have a qualified teacher from whom to learn such advanced knowledge. Anyone can teach finger-painting, but it takes someone with a PhD to teach



nuclear physics. Similarly, the knowledge of Hinduism is meant to be learned from someone with not only theoretical understanding, but with practical experience of God. Someone may complain that it is so easy for the members of other religions to summarize the teachings of their religion. Why is it so difficult in Hinduism? One should know that the more general and superficial the knowledge, the easier it is to summarize and communicate to others. In Hinduism, due to the depth, scope



and detail of the knowledge revealed, it takes much more skill and training to be able to understand it, distill it, and communicate it to someone else.

Let's have a glimpse of the amazing teachings of Hinduism. For example, the word 'God' is a general term we have assigned to the supreme Divine power. It is vague and non-specific, like the word 'fruit'. 'Fruit' is abstract, because fruit does not exist as such. Bananas exist; apples exist; mangoes exist. You cannot eat fruit. You can eat a banana, an apple, or a mango. If I ask you to bring me fruit, you cannot, because fruit is just an abstract term. You can bring me a banana, an apple, or a mango, because these specific fruits actually exist. If I ask you to describe what



HINDU VISHWA

fruit looks like, you cannot because fruit is a general term. You could describe the appearance of a specific fruit. Similarly, the description of God in other religions is non-specific and general. What does God look like? You cannot tell me, because God is just an abstract term. However, in Hinduism we have the specific description of God's form and personal names. He is Krishn, He is Ram, He is Vishnu, He is Shiv, She is Durga, etc. We know what He looks like, and we know what His Divine personality is like. We even know happenings from His appearance on our earth planet.

This is just one example of what makes Hinduism unique. There are many more, but just focus on what Hinduism says about God's form. I will take you deeper into this topic with the help of a shlok by Ved Vyas from the Bhagwatam: 'vadanti tat tattva vidastattvam yajgyanamadvayam; brahmeti parmatmeti bhagwan iti shabdyate' 'वदन्ति तत् तत्त्व विदास्तात्त्वं यज्यनामाद्वायामः ब्रह्मेति परमात्मेति भगवन् इति शब्दत्ये'. This verse explains that one absolute supreme God appears eternally in 3 main forms: brahm, parmatma, and bhagwan. The Supreme God has uncountable Divine powers. When almost all of them are dormant or inactive, then God is formless and is referred to by the term brahm. This formless aspect is inactive and does not outwardly exhibit any describable characteristics because all the powers are dormant. When more of His powers are active, God has form, and is referred to by the term parmatma. This is almighty God whose 3 main forms are Vishnu, Shiv and Durga. Because His powers are active, He has a form, which can be experienced by one who has Divine senses and mind (a God realized Saint). In this almighty form, God is actively involved in the maintenance and functioning of the universe. He Graces the souls by keeping track of their karmas and giving them the consequences, and by awarding any soul who surrenders to Him His Divine Bliss and knowledge. There are many affiliated forms, such as Lakshmi, Saraswati, Ganesh, Kartikeya, Kali, Gauri, etc., but They are all related to the Divine almighty power. There is one important power which is not manifest in almighty God. That is the power of Divine love, or prema shakti. When all of God's powers are manifested, it includes the power of Divine love. When this is the case, God appears in His loving form and is referred to by the term bhagwan. In this form, God awards an intimate relationship with Him to the

soul who surrenders to Him. The form of bhagwan is Ram and Krishn. In Ram, the Divine love power is manifested in its modest form, and in Krishn, the Divine love power is manifested in its absolute supreme form. This is evidenced by the type of leelas (Divine actions) They each performed while They were on the earth planet.

One should not think that there are different Gods or that God changes from one form to the other. One supreme God appears eternally in uncountable forms, which are all simultaneously omnipresent. This is how God appears to a surrendered soul anywhere in the world in the form that individual has worshiped, and that soul becomes a Saint and sees the whole world as the form of his worshiped form of God. Thus Krishn says in the Gita, 'ye yatha mam prapadyante tanstathaiva bhajamyaham' 'ये यथा माम प्रपद्यन्ते ताम स्थतैव भजाम्यहम्' other words, "I come to you in whatever form you worship Me." All the forms of God are Divine, whole, and absolute. That is the miracle of the Divine power that makes the impossible possible, and it is the reason that such matters are beyond human intellect until such time when a soul surrenders to God and receives a Divine intellect.

Thus we see that one single God, which is described in general in other religions, is described in much more detail in Hinduism. We understand that one single God has 6 main forms: two are loving (Ram and Krishn) and are referred to as bhagwan; three are almighty (Vishnu, Shiv and Durga), and are referred to as parmatma; and one is formless and is referred to as brahm. So we see that Hinduism not only incorporates the concepts of God of other religions but also reconciles the apparent differences in the various descriptions, all the while providing an unmatched depth and elegance in the description of God.

One other distinguishing feature of Hindu philosophy is that it says God can be experienced, and in fact, that is the ultimate goal of a soul. This was one of the most compelling factors for me in my decision to adopt Hinduism. Not only does Hinduism answer all of my intellectual questions, but it clearly states that you can meet God in person. Now who wouldn't want to do that? However, if you don't have the full description of God, then how will you find Him? It would be like someone coming from India and landing at JFK in New York and asking the people he sees, "Have you seen my friend? Where is my friend? I want to meet him." They would ask him, "What does your friend look like?"



HINDU VISHWA

Do you have a picture of him? What is his name? Where does he live?" The man answers that he only knows that his friend moved to America 20 years ago, but he does not remember what he looks like, nor does he have a picture of him, nor can he remember his name, nor does he know what his address is. The people he approaches will consider him insane, because he may search all over America for his whole life and never have any chance of finding his friend. Similarly, without a proper description of God, how could we hope to find Him? Hinduism provides such a detailed description of God which is like providing the photograph and the address of the man's friend. Now all the man has to do is follow the path to reach his friend. This path, known as the path of God realization, is also described in Hinduism. There are many more such points which illustrate the greatness of Hinduism. So remember, although there are similarities between Hinduism and the other religions of the world, and as Hindus we respect all religions, nonetheless, there are features of Hinduism which are not found in other religions and which make Hinduism great. If you would like to study this topic

in greater depth, I can refer you to a resource which has transformed my understanding. It is a book by H.D. Swami Prakashanand Saraswati named The True History and the Religion of India, which is available at www.BarsanaDham.org. ■

About the author

Swami Nikhilanand,
affectionately known
as *Bhaiya Ji*

(respected brother) is
a disciple of
Jagadguru Shree

Kripaluji Maharaj and a sanyasi teacher of
JKP Barsana Dham. JKP Barsana Dham a
nonprofit, religious, educational, and
charitable organization whose aim is to reveal
the eternal knowledge of the Upnishads
(Vedas), the Gita and the Bhagwatam, etc. and
to impart the practical process of divine
upliftment called 'raganuga bhakti' or 'divine
love consciousness.'



Traditions Must be Examined

By Siddheshwari Devi (Didi Ji)

There once lived a priest who had a pet cat. He and the cat were inseparable. When the priest would perform worship for a host, the cat would always be nearby. However, it would meow constantly and cause disturbance. So the priest trained the cat to remain quiet, and started tying up his darling pet near to him as he performed his rituals.

As time progressed, the cat died. The priest also met with his demise. Now the priest's young son took over the performance of rituals for many families in the village. In the very first worship he was to perform, he told the householders to gather all the necessary ingredients.

As the young priest was about to begin his worship ceremony, he said, "You have all the necessary ingredients, but where is the cat?" "A cat?" asked the hosts. "Yes, I have observed my



late father perform many ceremonies, and he always had a cat tied nearby. I will not start until you get a cat."

Many traditions get started like this. Many say that they do not celebrate Janmashtami, Ramnaumi or other such auspicious days. Ask

them why, and they will tell you that someone in the family had died 150 years earlier on an auspicious day. Now the family is afraid that someone else may die if they celebrate on that day.

Let us examine such so-called traditions, and after examining them, we must choose which ones to keep and which ones to discard. ■

www.radhamadhavsociety.org

**HINDU VISHWA**

Conversion not a constitutional right: SC judge

By Satya Prakash

Maintaining that there was no constitutional right to convert a person from one religion to another, justice P Sathasivan of the Supreme Court on Saturday said the right to propagate one's religion was not an unrestricted right.

Delivering the third Dr LM Singhvi Memorial Lecture on "Secularism and Rule of Law in India,"

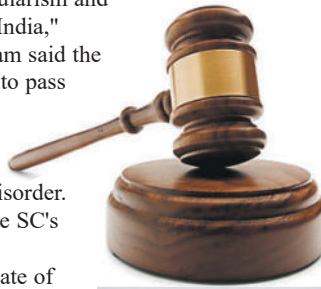
justice Sathasivam said the state has a right to pass laws restricting conversions if such activities created public disorder. Quoting from the SC's 1977 verdict in *Stainislaus vs State of Madhya Pradesh & Orissa*, he said: "The right to propagate means the right to 'transmit and spread one's religion by an exposition of its tenets'. But...there is no constitutional right to convert a person from one religion to another, because this would impinge on the 'freedom of conscience' guaranteed to all the citizens of the country alike."

The Supreme Court delineated the boundaries of the right to propagate in the context of state legislation prohibiting forcible conversions, said justice Sathasivam, who headed the bench, which made a controversial remark against religious conversions while upholding the conviction of Dara Singh in the Graham Staines murder case last month. But the bench chose to modify it after several

Christian organisations termed it uncalled for and demanded its withdrawal.

On state's the right to pass legislation restricting conversions, justice Sathasivam, quoting from an SC verdict said: "the 'public order' provision of Article 25(1) of the Constitution has a 'wide connotation' and that the state could legislate conversions if they 'created public disorder.'"

While maintaining, "Secularism is the part of the basic structure of the Constitution," he said the term 'secular' has not been defined, presumably because it



is a very elastic term not capable of a precise definition and perhaps best left undefined. He, however, said in Indian context secularism meant "Sarva Dharma Sambhav" ie tolerance for all religions, which springs from due deliberation for one's own happiness and also for welfare of all beings. ■

www.hindustantimes.com
StoryPage/Print/667294.aspx

■ April- June 2011 **21**

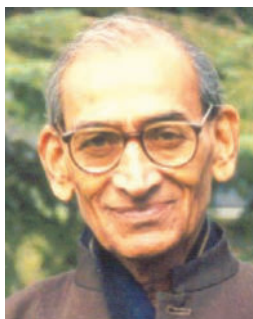

HINDU VISHWA

From Dignity to Divinity Through Pluralism or Dharma?



By Dr. Mahesh Mehta
Vice President, VHP,
Global Coordination

**Mananiya Shree Laxmanrao Bhide
Memorial Lecture,
January 7, 2011, Mumbai**



The subject selected by the Memorial Lecture Committee is quite relevant in the emerging world in the twenty first century. It is also very appropriate

subject in the memory of Mananiya **Shree Laxmanrao Bhide** who dedicated his entire life like a global citizen, incessantly on the move as a true sanayasi following the Dharma "*Chareiveti Chareiveti.*"

Emerging World in Twenty-first century

In today's world it is heard quite often, "Think globally and Act locally". Many organizations are talking about a "Borderless World." It is almost

accepted that this shift in our world view is the contribution of the American Revolution in communications and transportation technologies. The impact of globalization is felt instantly in our personal lives, in our family rooms and in human interactions. Consider this with previous leaps in technology and mass communication. When radio was invented it took more than 35 years to reach to 50 million people. With internet it took less than five years and with Facebook less than a year to reach 50 million people.

Major Global Issues

Today we are facing five major challenges in the world, namely (i) global warming (ii) global terrorism (iii) nuclear proliferation and threats of the nuclear sites falling in the hands of terrorist groups (iv) globalization promoting liberalization leading to erosion of local cultural values and furthermore increasing gap between the poor and the rich (v) the demographic changes caused by the aging population in the west and growing number of young people in Asia. These major issues are further complicated by demographic changes caused by the migration of the people with unfriendly attitude to the multicultural life of the host nations.

The challenges presented above are for the entire humanity but mainly for the leaders of the world community to tackle for the harmonious coexistence of the human civilization and all the living species on our planet. Let us take a look at the current picture of the world leadership and the strategies needed to achieve the goals.



HINDU VISHWA

World Leadership

With dismantling of the Soviet Union in 1989, the bipolar world has continued to reshape itself, looking for countries that can provide leadership to the human societies globally. In the beginning of this process the United States of America was leading the world to become mono-polar. However the efforts to promote the Western Culture as a universal culture through the process of industrial globalization have not been viewed favorably by many civilizations around the world. In 1993, Prof. Samuel Huntington published an article in Foreign Affairs entitled, "The Clash of Civilizations." He raises the question if the emerging world will be dominated by clashes among the major civilizations. According to Prof. Huntington and many other historians, sociologists and anthropologists, today the world can be viewed as a conglomeration of the seven major civilizations that include; Sinic (China, Vietnam, Korea), Japanese, Hindu, Islamic, Western, Latin American, and African.

Reference: The Clash of Civilizations and the remaking of World Order: Samuel P. Huntington

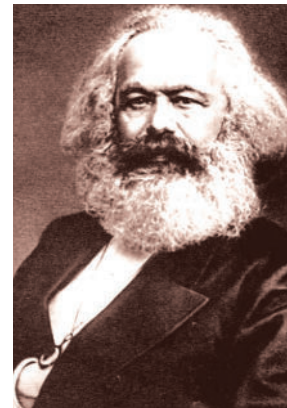
Conflicts among potential world leaders

To better understand these conflicts we should examine the political and economical fault lines amongst major nations of the world. The world leadership role of America is under great stress due to the changing demographics. The economic development and growth is primarily due to young people who are in billions in China and India. The changes in the economic policies of China and India have caused a major shift in markets. China has become the manufacturing arm of the products available in USA and India has become the center of software needs of American industries. Besides China and India, the other two countries with over 250 million people are Russia and Brazil. These nations with brain power, nuclear power, and independent military power have the potential to play leadership roles. But among these nations there are also major issues of conflict of interests. For example the rising wave of Islamic civilizations with their perception of Western values being not in tune with injunctions of the Koran and the Pro-Israel US foreign policy are at the center of the conflict of these two civilizations. The Chinese interference with the territorial sovereignty of the North East borders of India and a part of Kashmir are posing

potential threats of flare ups between these two nations. The Pro-Pakistan policy of US is a cause of concerns for India-US relations. The rising economic power of China and the decline of US economy keep a constant environment of unease among these two nations. The USA is unable to push China to address the issues of Human Rights violations in China.

Factors Contributing to Cultural Fault Lines

From historical perspective, in the ancient holistic traditions of India and many other native traditions around the globe, ownership of land, water or other natural resources were unknown and were looked down upon by the people as a violation of the laws of the Creator. People worshipped Mother Earth and Mother Nature. Later the chieftains and the rulers started invading other countries to establish their sovereignty over the vanquished people. But with the birth of proselytizing religions like Christianity and Islam, the aggressors not only robbed the wealth of the vanquished people but forced them to religious conversions. In Europe the acceptance of Christianity as a religion led to the struggle of power between the Church and the State. Later in Europe the invention of machines, such as the steam engine for transporting goods and people, led to rapid industrialization. This created the division of those who owned the means of production and those who worked in the factories for making a living. With industrialization started the exploitation of the laborers, minimum wages for them to survive and maximum benefits for those who owned the means of production. Later the development of technology led to the formation of business corporations and the conflict among the kings and the owners of industries. **Karl Marx** proposed that the root of all the ills in the society was due to the class struggle among the haves and the have-nots. This laid the foundation for a long lasting cold war among the proponents of capitalism and the communism.





HINDU VISHWA

The Americans with ingenuity, hard work and commitment to the ideals of liberty, equality and justice established a powerful state supporting entrepreneurship, investment, profitability and private property rights. The Industrial revolution was followed by the High technology revolution, followed by the communications revolution and the globalization for exploiting the world markets. Thus the emerging world has undergone several transitions, initially slowly but later with an accelerated rate. The conflicts among civilizations have developed many cracks due to many fault lines along political ideologies, economic conditions and religious beliefs.

Demographic Changes

Among all these factors, religion appears to be the central force causing the cultural conflicts. According to Christopher Dawson, "the great religions are the foundations on which the great civilizations rest." The major world religions at the core of civilizations are Christianity, Islam, Hindu and Confucian. Buddhism is a major religion but is not the core of any major civilization.

Population of Islamic Faith

Today the world population of 6.7 billion consists of Christians 2.2, Muslims 1.5, Hindus 1.2 and the other 1.8 consists of Buddhists, people of ancient traditions and others. The proselytizing religions have almost half the humanity available for religious conversions not counting religious conversions among various denominations of Christianity. Today the fastest growing religion in the world is Islam. One of the key factors in this growth is the fertility rate of the Muslims. For sustaining any culture the families have to have a minimum fertility rate of 2.11, meaning at least 2 children per couple. If the rate is 1.9, it is difficult to sustain that particular culture and if less than 1.3 it is impossible to reverse the trend. The fertility rates among the European nations and the Americas are significantly low as can be seen from the available data. In the 31 European nations the rate is 1.38. It means in a few

Nation	Fertility Rate
France	1.8
UK	1.6
Greece	1.3
Italy	1.2
Spain	1.2
Canada	1.6
USA	1.6



The overall Muslim population in Europe will grow from 52 million to over 100 million in next 20 years.

decades the Europe will not be the same as we see it today.

If the population is 1 million in 2006, it cannot be 2 million by 2020. It means the culture cannot survive with these rates. But the population in these countries is increasing because of immigration. Ninety percent of these immigrants in Europe are Muslims. The fertility rate of a French couple is 1.8 whereas in France the rate for a Muslim couple is 8.1. It is estimated that by 2027, one in five French individual will be a Muslim. In 39 years it will be an Islamic republic. Britain had 82,000 Muslims, thirty years back and now their population is 2.5 million with over 1000 mosques, of which some were churches. In Netherlands the increase is 50% and in Russia it is now 23 million and expected to be one in five to be followers of Islam. The German government has declared that the rate is so slow that the downward spiral cannot be reversed leading Germany to be an Islamic state by 2050. The overall Muslim population in Europe will grow from 52 million to over 100 million in next 20 years.

Mommar Gadafi made a statement that with these fertility rates Muslims need not take resort to guns, or homicide bombers or terrorists. The world is changing fast. Our children and grandchildren may live in a very different world.



HINDU VISHWA

Christian strategy of Religious conversions

The Christian theology is fully supporting religious conversions of pagans and heathens for their salvation in the name of Lord Jesus. Among the Christian denominations at least seven groups have a very ambitious program of religious conversions fully supported by organizational structures and money power. The religious conversions of large populations in Vietnam, Philippines, China, Korea, African countries, north-east India and the people of many ancient traditions all over the world is a cause of concern among the non-Christian civilizations of the world.

Antidotes to Threats of Religious Fundamentalism What is Pluralism?

According to Webster English Dictionary pluralism has several dimensions. It is the quality or state of being plural. It is also holding of two or more offices at once by a person; a metaphysical theory that there are more than one or more than two kinds of ultimate reality (compare to monism or dualism); a metaphysical theory that reality is not an organic whole but is composed of a plurality of independent entities whether material or spiritual or both. For our purpose the more relevant meaning is a state or condition of a society in which diverse ethnic, racial, religious or social groups maintain an autonomous participation in and within the confines of a common civilization; a concept, doctrine or policy proposing or advocating this state.

Roots of Pluralism

The rise of nationalism in Europe, particularly the German variety of nationalism mixed with the Nazi/Fascist movement centered on the superiority of Aryan race resulted in Holocaust of the Jews in Germany. The Jewish people recognized and also experienced the role extremely religious or nationalistic people played during the Nazi period. Pluralism was proposed as an antidote to fundamentalism. The chances of fundamentalists upholding extremist's positions about their faith are more likely resulting in tortures of the people who do not subscribe to those beliefs. Too much homogeneous composition of a society has a greater chance to be ruthless with other groups. One way to ensure security of the Jewish people was to promote pluralism. The people of Islamic or Christian religious faiths are less likely to promote pluralism. A person with strong religious beliefs is not likely to opt for pluralism. A person changing his religious faith is mostly looked down upon by the people who abide

by a religious faith. However in Jewish faith, those who have converted to Islam or Christianity have not been looked down upon if the conversions are done with the overall Jewish interests in mind. Jewish people have a global network of common interests not so much as a religious traditions but strategic needs. I was surprised to learn that Jewish people can be hardcore communists and also hardcore capitalists. This is in contrast to the people with Hindutva ideology that results in us versus them based on doctrines.

The approach taken by pluralists is rooted in rational thinking, belief in individual freedom and acceptance of the heterogeneity of people. People practicing pluralism support many special interest groups to counter balance threats emanating from the beliefs of more dominating groups in the society. The question is if this antidote is the ultimate solution for human beings. The answer depends on how one views human life. I would like to examine Hindu view of life in dealing with this question.

Basis of Dharma- The Ultimate Reality



Sri Aurobindo refers to Dharma as the permanent spirit in things and there is this persistent Swadharma; a less binding system of laws of successive formulation-rhythms of the spirit, forms, turns, habits of nature. These endure the mutation of the ages-Yugadharma (Time-

Spirit). Society must obey this double principle of persistence and mutation, or bear the penalty of a decay and deterioration that may taint even its living center.

(Reference: Foundations of Indian Culture)

The hidden spirit is the Maha Kaal, the presence of God pouring himself in time, the past, the present and the future really form one continuum of God pouring himself in time. In Ishavasya Upanishad it is stated as, "Ishavasyam Idam Sarvam" meaning the creation is the abode of Ishvar and hence one stable spirit is present and governing all the movements in the universe. Self-prolongation by constant self-renewal is the principle of Immortality.

The Indian seers described the creator in Purush Sukta (Rigved Samhita, Mandal X, ch 4.90) as "*Sahsrashirsha purushah sahasrakshah sahsrapad*". This description lays the foundation of organic inseparability of the society. The



HINDU VISHWA

seers further described the individual experiences as "Ekam Sat Vipra bahudha vadanti." Here there is a recognition of the human mind unable to grasp the reality only in one form and hence not one name, one formula or one path. The grasp of Reality is like looking at a circle with many radii. The further you move from the center, the more the distance between the radii and hence greater the diversity and the closer you move to the center the closer it is to unity. One more cardinal principle of Reality is described as, "Yasmin Pinde tasmin Brahmande" meaning that which is in the whole is within the part. The individual-self (aatman) is the holographic image of the Cosmic Self (Parmatma).

The above mentioned cardinal principles of Reality as experienced by the seers and sages are at the root of the guiding principles of Sanatan Dharma. These are universal and eternal guiding principles, the ancient and yet the most modern and therefore always relevant guiding principles for human life. For sustaining a tradition, it has to undergo critical and creative changes from time to time.

Every major transformation occurs due to the dynamic energy of the Time-spirit (Yuga Dharma). Dharma regulates human activities and leads them to the experience of the Ultimate Reality from individual awareness to cosmic awareness.

Dharma is the central pillar of Hindu Thought and Culture. As stated by Pandit Deendayal Upadhyaya, "The four entities-individual, society, nature and divinity (Vyashti, samashti, srishti and Parameshti) are fulfilled when they act in mutual concord. This is called Yagna Chakra, the cycle of sacrifice. This eternal cycle sustains everything. This is Dharma."



Reference: *Integral Humanism*
by Pandit Deendayal Upadhyaya

Dharma is the divine and the human, the universal and the individual, the ethical and the social law. Dharma allows the human being to realize his spiritual nature. Ethically it means the law of righteousness, the moral rule of conduct, or in a still more outward and practical significance, social and political justice or even simply the observance of the social law. Manu Smriti 6-92 gives the ten attributes of Dharma as *Dhriti kshma damosteyam, sauchamnidriya nigrahah Dhirvidya satyamakrodha, dashakam dharma lakshnam*. Fortitude, forbearance, self-restraint, non-stealing, purity, control of the senses, discrimination, wisdom, truthfulness, and absence of anger- these are the ten characteristics of Dharma.

According to *Ramayana (III-0-30)*

Dharmadartah prabhavati Dharmat prabhavate sukham

Dharmen labhate sarvam Dharmasaramidam jagat.

Dharma is the source of wealth; Dharma is the source of happiness. Everything is obtained by Dharma. And the world is but an essence of Dharma.

From the above discussion it becomes obvious that the modern day society with diversity of religions, cultures, beliefs, and self interests have a greater chance of promoting harmony and growth if Dharma is the focal point of each entity. When nature is directed according to the principles of Dharma, there is development of culture and civilization.

Dharma is not a set of doctrines, or a set of commandments prescribed by some authority. The English translation of Dharma as religion has caused lot of confusion. Dharma allows a human being to realize his highest potential by teaching him how to control the inner natural instincts of greed and fear and experience selfless love for all the beings, nature and Ishwar. Religions offer philosophy, traditions, rituals, modes of worship and faith in the Creator with or without form. Religions focus on human beings' relations to God. Dharma encompasses all relations and duties of human beings. The roots of pluralism and Dharma are quite different.

Pluralism and Dharma

Pluralism is a strategy promoted by a group of people to reduce the threat of fanaticism or fundamentalism that can lead to intolerance of the beliefs, faiths and traditions of others; leading to violence and now terrorism. Pluralism is not rooted in the experiences of the seers or the revelations of any Gurus or Prophets. As mentioned earlier pluralism is more a system of rational thinking, belief in individual freedom and acceptance of the heterogeneity of people. People practicing pluralism support many special interest groups to counter balance threats emanating from the beliefs of more dominating groups in the society. People who practice Dharma on the contrary allow individuals to follow their conscience in resolving conflicts of personal or social interests. Dharma is rooted in the realization of the holistic nature of creation and hence promotes human beings to strive for well being of all. The strategy of pluralism is based on self-interest and survival and hence an intermediate route to deal with fundamentalism but it cannot lead the human beings from "Dignity to Divinity." ■

Reference: *Integral Humanism:*
K. Ramchandra Rao.

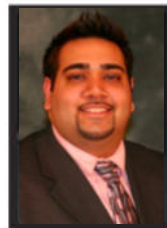
Do you believe in life after death? We do.

Well, not exactly as it is preached in the Bhagvad Gita, but not too unlike it either. Death comes to an individual but life goes on for the individual's family. Coping with the feeling of loss is hard enough. But surviving in the material world is harder, especially if the dear departed individual was the sole breadwinner. Like the good book expounds, death may be in destiny's hands, but duty rests with you. Duty towards your dependents. To provide for them and ensure provision in case of your sudden departure to the other world. Life Insurance can be sensible, practical and above all, the right thing to do.

**You insure your valuables, which are all replaceable except You! Insure yourself first.
We take the "IF" out of Life**



Arish K Sahani, Agent



Shiv K Sahani, Agent

Call the Sahani's... Arish, Shiv or Priya
(718) 271-0453 or (646) 644-0174
E-mail: psahani@ft.newyorklife.com

We will be glad to review your existing policies - with no obligation.

Serving the community since 1972.

New York Life offers a variety of life insurance and financial products


HINDU VISHWA


By Omanand Koul, Burlington, MA

Recently I had the privilege of attending a series of religious lectures or pravachan given by an ascetic woman Sadhvi Ritambhara in Waltham, Massachusetts. She lectures on Hinduism. She speaks in Hindi and her discourses are a multimedia bonanza, and there is never a boring or a dull moment. These are a mix of stories from the life of Krishna and Rama, philosophical streams of thought juxtaposed with her singing of the bhajans, and the spontaneous ecstatic dancing by the attendees.

The event comes close to a description of a necessary event for religious revival of the Hindus.

The force of her eloquence and command of religious knowledge and experience was sprinkled in with deeper philosophical exhortation for self cleansing as the core theme for universal love as we see in Hinduism (Vedic thought). She used the analogy of the mirror and our preoccupation with outward looks and countenance. Sadhvi Ritambhara encapsulated a powerful message of self cleansing and Self knowledge in this analogy. Alas! If only we used



HINDU VISHWA

a similar mirror-like device to detect and rid ourselves of the stains and blemishes on the inner self! This was a fitting and powerful analogy she laid for us to rediscover the strengths and weaknesses in our individual self as well as the societal self, before criticizing others, or complaining about our problems to Krishna. The only solution the Sadhvi considers is seeking the love of the divine Krishna. Thus as the beneficiaries of divine nectar, how could we ignore love for one another? Since Krishna's love knows no bounds! In order for us to keep this love pure and clean we better take care of our soul and keep it free of the nonsense that surrounds us. Not an easy state to get to! And then we perform our daily karma in Krishna consciousness as instructed in the Bhagavata Gita: Yogastha kuru karmani-perform karma



while steeped in yoga of love. At least, we need to strive towards such ideal state. This drew my thoughts to the Saiva-Shakti Sunya-Bindu insights of our predecessors, in describing that ideal state, encapsulated by the Mahayana Buddhists (another contribution from Kashmir) in the Prajnaparamita-Hridaya-Sutra (Heart sutra) thus:

"Sarva-dharm nyat-lak a, anutpann aniruddh, amal avimal, ann aparipr. Tasmad Shariputra sunyatayam na rupam na vedana na samjna na samskara na vijnanam. Na jnanam, na praptir na-apraptih".

[Here, all phenomena of existence are characterized by voidness: Neither born nor annihilated, neither blemished nor immaculate,



neither deficient nor overfilled. Therefore, O Shariputra, in voidness there is no bodily-form, no feeling, no mental imaging, no consciousness; there is no higher knowledge, no attainment (of nirvana). No nonattainment either.]

Sadhvi Ritambhari had come to Boston to present an interpretation of Krishna to the devotees as she saw it. One could not but be enthused by the affection and devotion she demonstrates towards Krishna in the form of service of the downtrodden, the underserved and underprivileged population of our society, particularly the orphans and the widows. The model she has created seems to be a salubrious bridge for wellbeing of the older and the younger generations alike, unlike the end of the road model isolationist model of the Mumuksha Bhawan for older adults.

The central theme of the Sadhvi of self cleansing was reminiscent of Kumar Barabankvi's couplet "Doosaron par agar Tabsarah Kijiye, Samne Aaina Rakh Liya Kijiye"

"दूसरों पर अगर तबसराह कीजिये, सामने आईना रख लिया कीजिये" i.e. 'before criticism see the blemishes of your own'. My hope and prayer is that the Sadhvi continues to spread her words of Krishna love and the wisdom of the mirror for cleansing. And that all people of India listen and practice it for the common good.■

**HINDU VISHWA**

Centre changed personal laws of only Hindus: SC

By Dhananjay Mahapatra, TNN

NEW DELHI: The Supreme Court has again pulled up the government for its failure to overhaul personal laws of the minority communities, saying that it was a reflection on their secular credentials.

The court also said on Tuesday that government's attempts to reform personal laws don't go beyond Hindus who have been more tolerant of such initiatives.

"The Hindu community has been tolerant to these statutory interventions. But there appears a lack of secular commitment as it has not happened for other religions."

Justices Dalveer Bhandari and A K Ganguly made the observation while hearing petitions filed by the National Commission for Women and its Delhi chapter. The petitioners have sought formulation of a uniform marriageable age and complained that different stipulations in as many statutes had created confusion.

Additional solicitor general Indira Jaising explained the differences in age limits provided in statutes, saying that these were meant to achieve diverse social objectives. "Hence, there could not be a uniform age. Though the government feels that girls above 16 years should be said to have attained the age of consent to sexual relation and hence could marry, the formal age of marriage would stay at 18 years," argued the ASG. When asked by the bench and NCW counsel Aparna Bhat about the glaring discrepancies between different laws and how government plans to reconcile them, Jaising said: "Hindu laws is one of the finest laws, a saying that has to be taken with a pinch of salt. It provides for all oppression and also the escape route. The problem with the Hindu law is that legislators have tried to chip away little by little but there is no overhauling of it."

Jaising argued that though there can be no uniform marriage age, other laws including the Hindu Marriage Act, needed amendments to make them

conform to the age of marriage provided under the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006.

She said under the 2006 law, marriages in which the girls are below 16 years are void and those in which they are between 16-18 years are voidable.



In the last two decades, the Supreme Court had stressed time and again the importance of enacting a Uniform Civil Code (UCC) as advised by the Constitution.

Between the Shah Bano judgment in 1985, Sarla Mudgal judgment (1995) and John Vallamattom verdict in 2003, the court had thrice stressed the need for enacting a UCC, saying it would help forge national integration and remove dissimilarities.

Provision for UCC is incorporated in Article 44 under the Directive Principles chapter of the Constitution, which says, "The State shall endeavour to secure for the citizens a uniform civil code throughout the territory of India."

The Directive Principles, despite being termed by the Constitution itself as 'fundamental in the governance of the country' and that 'it shall be the duty of the state to apply these principles in making laws', are not enforceable in a court of law. ■

*timesofindia.indiatimes.com
articleshow/7456761.cms?prtpage=1*



Ekal Vidyalaya Movement

By Dr. Basant Tariyal

Ekal Vidyalaya is a major movement in India, addressing the need for primary education in tribal villages and other remote areas. Currently Ekal Vidyalaya Foundation runs 34,343 schools with 1,030,290 students in India and Nepal. The mission of Ekal Vidyalaya is to eradicate illiteracy from rural and remote India by 2015.



Despite unprecedented affluence and technological innovation in parts of the world, there are parts of the globe where illiteracy, disease, crime and poverty rates exist on an unprecedented scale. The challenge for the affluent world and the leaders of nations is to bridge this gap. Those of us involved in the Ekal Vidyalaya movement are trying to address this issue within India and Nepal through the establishment of *Ekal Vidyalayas* (One Teacher schools). It is widely acknowledged that in the new millennium India with China and the U.S will become one of the three major power centers of the world. India, with a

population of over one billion and a landmass of 3.3 million square kilometers, is on the way to self-reliance and self-sufficiency.

India has made well-documented progress in many fields. Economic reforms are being implemented. India has good telecom infrastructure and is a world leader in the field of information technology. Senior executives in U.S. corporations and many entrepreneurs in Silicon Valley are graduates from the IITs, IIMs, and other reputed institutions of India. Medical doctors from India play a crucial role in the United States healthcare system. Indians own more than half the hotels and motels in the



HINDU VISHWA



US. In spite of the progress made by India and Indians, much of India remains impoverished and presents huge challenges.

One of the major hindrances to India reaching its full potential is the lack of educational opportunities in remote and rural India. There is a general consensus that an

Because of its impressive infrastructure, functioning and low administrative costs Ekal bagged the prestigious 'Best NGO' award in 2008- 2009.

Ekal schools offer the students five years of free informal primary education. The schools are designed to handle up to 40 children, ages 4 through 15. All the children of a village are taught, irrespective of their caste, creed or gender. The teacher is a specially trained local youth. The curriculum includes basic language, science, and math skills. In addition, great stress is laid on character building, cultural values, health, and hygiene. The students are taught through lectures, demonstrations, storytelling, drama and play sessions. Ekal also imparts healthcare, economic development and empowerment education.

educated and well-informed public would likely choose better representatives for political offices, understand and enforce their rights better, understand the benefits of responsible social behavior, like family planning, and in general, make better choices for themselves and the society. One can see the effects of education manifested through the growing digital divide with the most progressive and prosperous regions of India showing the highest literacy rates. Even though India produces the third highest number of technical graduates in the world, yet primary education in rural and remote India has been neglected. While the national literacy rates are 65% for males and 40% for females, in tribal areas the rates are 12% and 5%, respectively.

For people of Indian origin living abroad, it is difficult to bring change in the Indian bureaucracy, or socio-political infrastructure. However, it is relatively easy to contribute to educational projects which have the potential of transforming the country. The cost to support an Ekal Vidyalaya is



HINDU VISHWA

approximately a dollar a day or \$365 a year. The villagers contribute in kind and through their labor, by erecting a schoolroom, cleaning and maintaining it. Because of its impressive infrastructure, functioning and low administrative costs Ekal bagged the prestigious 'Best NGO' award in 2008-2009.

Ekal Vidyalaya Foundation of India with the help of various Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) based in different states of India determine where and how Ekal schools are to be established. EVFI has mapped India into six zones, covering states with project areas containing clusters of thirty schools and then sub-clusters of ten schools each. There are training centers for the trainers, sub-trainers and the teachers at each level and a team of administrators is assigned to each level. Each team has four basic responsibilities:

- Overall project coordination
- Training
- Organizational work
- Basic office functions, including record keeping, evaluations, and feedback.

Ekal Vidyalaya has documented every aspect of the implementation process. One can get an idea of the implementation process by visiting the Ekal Vidyalaya office in Delhi or scheduling a visit to one of the Ekal schools through the website www.ekal.org.

There are Ekal Vidyalaya Foundations (EVFs) based in other countries, whose basic function is to raise awareness and funds. Ekal Vidyalaya Global, registered in the United States, is responsible for helping form EVFs in different countries. EVF USA is the largest and EVFs in Australia, Hong Kong, Canada and Dubai have been established. EVF USA is the largest EVF outside of India and currently supports more than seven thousand



schools. The main donor base consists of Indian Americans; however, corporations and civic organizations, such as the Rotary Club, have also sponsored schools.

We Indian Americans know the value of education. We are the richest ethnic sub-group in the USA (and the world) today. The primary reason behind our prosperity has been the good education most of us received in India. We regard the education we received in India to be practically free relative to what we pay for our children's education in the U.S. However, the education we received in India was not truly free - the people of India paid for it. And the neglected tribals never received their fair share of this educational investment. We, the professional overseas Indians, are indebted to these long forgotten children of India. By providing the gift of education - we repay that debt. ■

About the author
Dr. Basant Tariyal is based in Atlanta, GA and is currently CEO of Ekal Vidyalaya Global.




HINDU VISHWA

Tilak and the Star of the Vedas



By Jayant V. Narlikar

The Vedas are described as *apaurusheya* that is, written by no man. They were transmitted down from one generation to the next without anyone having a clue as to who wrote them. This question of authorship of the Vedas is linked with another, perhaps more tractable, question: When were they written? From the study of the contents, the language and allusions to events, Western scholars arrived at the figure of around 3.5 to four thousand years ago as the age of Vedic literature. Lokamanya Bal Gangadhar Tilak, known to most Indians for his leadership of the Indian national movement for Independence, before the

arrival on the scene of Mahatma Gandhi, had a multifaceted personality. He was well versed in mathematics, had written a learned commentary of the *Bhagavad Gita* called the *Geetarahasya*, had a philosophical bent and took great interest in social issues besides running a national newspaper, *Kesari*, of which he was also the editor. Last, but not the least, he possessed basic knowledge of astronomy which he put to use in a highly original fashion to decide the antiquity of the Vedas.

To understand the basis of Tilak's approach, let us first look at the way the earth spins around its axis as it goes round the sun. It is because of that spin that we see the heavenly bodies go westward in the sky in a 24-hour cycle. Only the Pole Star appears to be fixed in space, because it lies on the axis of spin. An excellent comparison with the earth's spin is provided by a spinning top, which can be spun by pulling the string wrapped around it. With sufficient practice, one can toss such a top on the floor and watch it move round as it spins.

Such a spinning top shows another feature. Its axis of spin is not fixed in space, but it precesses, that is, moves

along a cone thus making the top wobble. The same applies to the earth: its spin axis too precesses in space. But, did we not say that it is fixed in the direction of the Pole Star? Well, that was an approximate statement. It will be more accurate to say that the axis precesses very slowly, making a single round on the cone in around 26,000 years. So to us mortals it seems fixed in space within our sub-century lifespan. However, if we compare astronomical records over several centuries we would discover this motion. For example, the star Polaris (or the star Dhruva in Indian literature) was not the Pole Star 5,000 years ago. Another star, today known as



HINDU VISHWA

Thuban, had that status because the earth's spin axis pointed in its direction then.

But can a layman notice any change in the stellar or terrestrial environment when looking at the astronomical records? The answer is "yes" and to see how that happens, let us see how, when viewed from the earth, the sun changes its direction through the year. Observers over the centuries have used known stellar groups to identify this change of direction. These are the so-called signs of the zodiac. So the sun moves against the zodiacal background and can be located with reference to the sign of stars at its back. The calendar of the year identifies the 12 signs of the zodiac with 12 months and the apparent path of the sun is called the ecliptic. We learn in school geography that the length of the day changes through the year, being the longest on June 21 and the shortest on December 22. In between, there are two locations on the ecliptic where the day and night are equal. These are called the spring equinox and the autumn equinox. These fall on March 21 and September 21 respectively. This variation in the length of the day would not have occurred if the earth's spin axis were perpendicular to the ecliptic. In reality, the axis makes an angle of approximately 66 degrees. And as we saw earlier, the spin axis is slowly precessing. The result is that the points of equinox also slowly move along the ecliptic, taking 26,000 years to make one round.

We also learn in geography texts that seasons arise because of the above configuration. Spring begins when the sun is at the spring equinox and autumn when it is at the autumn equinox. However, as we just saw, the equinoxal points slowly change their positions against the zodiacal groups of stars. Therefore, in the annual calendar, the months identified with a season will slowly change. In particular, if we decide to start the year with the sun at the spring equinox, the first month of the year would change because of the slow shift of the spring equinox.



This was the clue that Tilak worked on. He was led to it by a shloka from the Bhagavad Gita in which Lord Krishna, identifying himself with the best and most important in any class of objects or people, says: "I am Margashirsha amongst the months and spring amongst the seasons".

In modern times Margashirsha does not fall in the spring season; rather it falls closer to the autumn. So why this discrepancy? The discrepancy is resolved if we argue that the statement was made when Margashirsha fell in the spring season. By turning the earth clock backwards, we move the equinoxes backwards until the spring equinox was in the zodiacal group

identified with Margashirsha. This gave him an estimate of the antiquity of the statement. Tilak used this approach to look at astronomical allusions in Vedic literature and from them sought to build up the stellar framework that must have existed when the statement was made. His monograph, *The Orion: Research into the Antiquity of the Vedas*, is a scholarly discussion of this approach. He arrived at an age for the Vedas much older than the age estimated by Western scholars. This opened the door to controversy as to which method is correct. While Tilak's reliance on astronomical data gave him a reliable clock, the weakness of his method probably lay in the authenticity of the allusions he had used. Whatever the eventual outcome of this ongoing exercise of dating our ancient literature, we have to give credit to Tilak for his ingenious approach. ■

About the author

Jayant V. Narlikar is a professor emeritus at Inter-University Centre for Astronomy and Astrophysics, Pune University Campus, and a renowned astrophysicist. www.deccanchronicle.com
op-ed/tilak-and-star-vedas-881




HINDU VISHWA

For India's survival Hinduism has to prevail

what must be done in order to save Hinduism and stop the Islamic flood? There is only one way and it is called mass conversion of Muslims into Hinduism. If Hindus want to survive, they must convert. They must adopt the strategy of Catholic missionaries and Muslim mullahs. I don't mean only conversion of one-time Hindus that only recently adopted other religions. Hinduism must convert also people of non-Hindu origin.

By Alexander Zinoviev

In Europe and all over the world nowadays it is very popular to speak and discuss about Indian culture, ancient Indian philosophy and the glorious past of the country. In everyday life Europeans constantly hear or read in the media about some new yoga seminar being organized, or about the appearance of a new guru in Western countries, drawing the public attention. They hear superlatives about ancient Indian culture over and over again from different places and in different contexts.

But what is worth so much activity, so many words, and do they really help people understand the actual state of modern Hinduism and the challenges that stand before it? I would say, not at all! The truth is that the situation of modern Hinduism, of all India, is far from perfect. In fact, it is alarming, if not altogether catastrophic. Even if some Indians, the so-called "secularists" do not realize that, it is more than obvious that Hinduism is fading in obscurity; its relative influence in Asia is decreasing with every month, with every day. Perhaps we are living at the last centuries of Indian civilization and the situation of today's Hindus is very similar to the Iranians from the late Zoroastrian age or Ptolemaic Egypt. Drastic steps must be undertaken very soon, or Hindus will share the fate of these great nations of the past.

What's the problem?

About one thousand years ago, a horde of savage tribes rushed down from the wild Bactrian Mountains (modern Afghanistan) and occupied the Indus Valley, bringing a new aggressive religion of non-Indian origin; Islam. In the course of the next centuries, this new religion "with violence or persuasion" continuously expanded its territory and increased the number of its followers. In 1000 the relative share of

Muslims in the Indian subcontinent was around zero per cent, in 1400 they were already around 3.5 per cent, in 1700, 10 per cent, in 1890 about 20 per cent, in 1945, 25 per cent, and now they are more than 31 per cent, or one-third of the population. In this long process of Islamisation of India, two characteristic patterns can be distinguished. First, it is a slow process, and second, it is relentless. Unlike the Middle East and Iran, where this religion managed to very rapidly displace the local cults and traditions, completely stifling



If Hindus want to survive, they must convert.

them for just several decades, in India the propagation of Islam was gradual, extended throughout many centuries, even a whole millennium. But there is no place for illusions about the processes, taking place on the subcontinent. The truth is that, in India, Islam has never yielded a position once taken, it never withdrew from territories once conquered, and it spread out on the Indian subcontinent relentlessly, year after year, decade after decade, century after century, in what is maybe the most uncompromising, prolonged, and merciless expansion in the history of religions. It looks like India and Hinduism are doomed, and there is nothing to be done against this unyielding conquest, this tireless offensive, there is no way to reverse things in their advantage. Indeed, if



HINDU VISHWA

Islam continues to propagate with the same rate "to increase in numbers with 1-1.5 per cent per decade" in the first half of the next century Muslims will already be the majority of Indian population. Secularists think that one or two hundred years are too big a period and there is no need to worry about the distant future. But the truth is that in terms of the five millennia of Indian history one or two centuries are nothing, they will pass in a blink. Men of wisdom in India say that the human soul is reborn in a new body every few hundred years. So, even in our next life, in our next reincarnation, India will have already ceased to exist. My views may seem too pessimistic, but the picture is too grim. In fact, what I fear the most is that providence, the supreme spirit, or the force of history acts against Hinduism. Maybe the historical processes lead to such a state of things, when on the planet only the so-called "Abrahamic religions will continue to exist" Christianity, Islam, and Judaism. Maybe the fact that the great religions of Egypt, Babylon and Persia died out a couple of millennia ago is not accidental. But I would like to believe Hinduism is too valuable for humanity, and sacred Indian books contain too much precious and unique knowledge that it will not sink in oblivion. I'd like to believe that the principles of Indian philosophy and religion are much more in agreement with the needs for the future than any other religion in the world, in agreement with the tendency, known in Western countries as New Age. It's my deep belief that without India the world will sink in spiritual darkness and ignorance.

So, what must be done in order to save Hinduism and stop the Islamic flood? There is only one way and it is called mass conversion of Muslims into Hinduism. If Hindus want to survive, they must convert. They must adopt the strategy of Catholic missionaries and Muslim mullahs. I don't mean only conversion of one-time Hindus that only recently adopted other religions. Hinduism must convert also people of non-Hindu origin. The fact that they live in India is enough because all Indians, notwithstanding their religious affiliation, had once had Hindu ancestors. If a problem arises, in which caste to enlist the newly converted Hindus, that can be determined by lots. This kind of assignment is by no means accidental; it can be regarded as the will of providence, the voice of fate, and it is not surprising that this method was so widely used in antiquity in Greece and Rome.

There is another question: is it possible to convert Muslims into Hinduism? Because, as it is well known, the followers of this religion hold firmly to their principles, and it is very difficult to change their views. There is a theory that Muslims would never desert their religion, this is absolutely impossible. But this is just a myth. There is a good example from our recent past.

In one neighboring country to Russia, Bulgaria, there is an

area called Rhodopa Mountain, populated with Bulgarian-speaking Muslims. Bulgarians, in principle, are Christians, pertaining to the Greek-Orthodox Church. But this very area is populated with Muslims due to the strong Turk influence in the past. In the 15th century Turks forced the local population to renounce Christianity and to adopt Islam as their religion, and defiance was brutally punished. When, in 1526, Sultan Suleyman the Magnificent began his campaign against Western Europe, he said: "I want my soldiers, in their way to Vienna, to pass through Muslim lands only, and this corridor to go up to the very Austrian border." And his desire almost came true.

But what happened some ten years ago, in the mid-1990s? The local population in the Rhodope Mountains with Bulgarian ethnic consciousness, being well educated and well aware of their history, suddenly decided to re-embrace Christianity. A remarkable man came forward on the religious scene, Father Boyan Saruev. With his charisma and his unique gift to persuade people, this man of great spiritual power succeeded in converting several hundred Muslims. For a period of seven or eight years between two and three thousand people, mainly from the young, educated generation, adopted the Greek-Orthodox creed. This event was so astonishing precedent that it stunned European public and journalists from many countries came in person to see with their own eyes that it was true.

Obviously, the claim that Muslims can never be persuaded to adopt another religion is nothing but a myth. Under certain conditions, this is quite possible. Very soon such conditions will be present in India, too, because with higher education Muslims will realize that Hinduism is the innate religion of their native country, and Islam is an alien creed forcefully imported from outside. Similarly with the situation when, 600 years ago, during the Renaissance, Western Europeans realized that they were successors of ancient Rome and Greece, and embraced their culture, which for long centuries was being condemned by the Roman Catholic Church as "pagan" and "non-Christian", one day the Muslims on the Indian subcontinent will understand that they are inheritors of a great civilization completely different from that of Arabs and the Middle East. This is a problem of education and knowledge. ■

About the author

The writer is a Russian sociologist and works in Russian Academy of Sciences. He has been many times in India and interested in Indian culture. He has written this article exclusively for Organiser.

He can be contacted at zinoviev555@yahoo.com

Courtesy: Organiser


HINDU VISHWA

Key concepts of Hindu Dharma, Vedic ideas about Creation

By Kamlesh Kapur

Almost all the history books start with a timeframe of world history around three thousand B.C. Even though this arbitrary date of civilization starting around 3104 BC is proven to be inaccurate time and again, historians still blind sight the new evidence showing much older civilizations. Such is the sanctity of this date that historians are unwilling to determine the age of these artifacts with the help of new methods such as carbon testing. This point is pertinent to fixing the chronology of Indian civilization and its origin. Let us review the issues of the age of life on the planet and the possibility of organized societies in very ancient times.

The age of the life on earth is estimated to be 3.5 billion years and the current phase (after the last major catastrophe) is about 15000 years the possible time frame of the ancestors of the Vedic Rishis.

In this context, many scientists believe that the age of the universe is somewhere around 12 billion years. The Hindu tradition has a day and night of Brahm in this range, somewhere in the region of 8.4 billion years. Dr. Sagan said, "As far as I know, India is the only ancient religious tradition on the Earth which talks about the right time scale. In the West, people have the sense that what is natural is for the universe to be a few thousand years old, and that it is billions of years is mind-reeling, and no one can understand it. The Hindu concept is very clear. Here is a great world culture which has always talked about billions of years." This article will present Vedic ideas about the creation and the beginnings of life on earth. It will bring Vedic ideas parallel to the current scientific views on the subject. It will prove that Vedic explanations do not contradict evolution; but they do discuss broader and more logical explanations of the phenomena in terms of the evolution of civilizations- their peaks and declines. Hindu ideas emerge from the mantras in the Vedas especially the Yajur and Rig Vedas. The Hindu time frame about the existence of life on the planet is called a Kalpa which is approximately considered to be 4.32 billion years. According to the Vedic calculations, we are at this time about 2 billions of years, about half time of Kalpa. At the end of the Kalpa, life will cease to exist on the planet and earth would look like any other planet- barren rocks unable

to support life.

Why would such a thing happen?

But before discussing that possibility, it is important to understand how life on this earth came to evolve?

At first there was space; the essential aspect of air emerged which created a sound similar to the sound of OM.

The air was followed almost simultaneously by essential fire- heat. The fire and air produced water which covered the planet; water produced algae and the first forms of the sea life emerged. As the planet developed, plant life, humans and all other fauna evolved.

Kalpa of 4.32 billion years are further divided in 14 parts known as Manvantras, at this time we are in the 7th Manvantra. Manvantras are divided in Yugas. At the end of each Yuga, there is a transition and at the end of each Manvantra, there are cataclysmic changes. This explains why we do not have records about history of

civilization in those remote periods. During the history of 2 billion years there must have been several peaks and declines of human culture and civilization. As we track recent history, it is not difficult to foresee total or partial annihilation of humanity given the tendencies of human beings, societies and nations to self destruct. When such events occur, societies come back to their primitive origins and through tedious paths of survival, bloodshed, wars and famines; they begin their movement towards the peaks of achievements again. The Vedic view of the creation is that the five elements (space, air, fire, water and gross matter) which form the earth are the same as the ones which form human beings. The scientific and the Vedic view coincide. Hindus have names for the elemental forces, the luminary bodies and the forces controlling the natural phenomena. Since all of these give something to us they are called Devas (literal meaning- those who give something). Hindus respect nature and worship various Devas.

Nature of the Creation

Reality of the Prakriti (Sanskrit for nature) can be described thus: Asti Bhaati Priyam, namam, roopam pratyek anshapanchakam, Aadi Treyam Brahman roopa, jagat roopa tato dwayam Meaning: Prakriti exists; it has



Dr. Carl Sagan



HINDU VISHWA

awareness- it means that all the parts in nature follow cues from each other, creating balance, rhythm and pattern in the nature. Many Hindus believe in the reality of the Creator as the cosmic force regulating the creation. The Vedic word for creation on earth (the world) is Jagat , which means it exists and it is constantly in motion. Nature- Prakriti is attractive and awesome. To different aspects of nature and the creation, people give names and forms in their own languages and according to their own perception or education. Evolution as explained in the Vedas is not just a physical phenomenon; it also involves evolution of the consciousness. It is a process and not an event occurring at x time. No X time can be allotted to the arrival of the first man and the first woman. Why would life cease to be at the end of the Kalpa? Vedas stress the eternality of The Supreme, the Soul and the Prakriti (nature). All matter and consciousness are indestructible; they merely transform themselves and evolve. In the beginning of the creation, there was Brahm and the inert Prakriti. Modern scientific evidence points to the same thing, which is that the energy, light and the matter are indestructible and have always been there, going through change and transformation. At the time of the dissolution, these do not come to an end; only the life on earth as we know dissolves. At the end of each Kalpa there is total dissolution and at the end of each Manvantra, there is a partial end. What is left (meaning Shesha)? It is Vishnu (Brahm) on water. Here is an explanation given by a German scientist - M. Bernard Brunlhes, "Matter which seems to give us the image of stability and repose only exists, then, by reason of the rotary movement of its particles so that when atoms have radiated all their energy

in the form of luminous, calorific, electric and other forms of vibrations, they return to the primitive ether." When that happens the Creator sleeps, all else on the planet remains primordial. That means life force is lacking. The current information about other known planets confirms that there is a possibility for an earth-like environment there. Recent excavations of several submerged cities- a few meters away from the southern coast of Madras, the rock bridge between the tip of India and the island of Sri Lanka spotted by the NASA scientists and the discovery of the city of Dawarka and Khambhat near the Rann of Kutch bear ample evidence to the fact that civilizations existed in different time periods and due to climatic changes, topographical changes, earthquakes, deluge or some other natural disasters, they became extinct in those parts and the surviving people moved elsewhere. If the life on earth can be traced that far back, it is preposterous to assume that the creation began only a few millennia before. Given the fact that the tropics sustain communities more than river basins and enable them to form kingdoms leads us to the common sense and logical conclusion that most advanced civilizations had beginnings in the Tropics of India, Central America and Africa with perennially flowing streams.

To be continued in the next issue.■

About the author

Kamlesh Kapur, a retired High school teacher, is an accomplished writer, an educator and an independent researcher of Vedic Studies. Her latest book is "Portraits of a Nation History of Ancient India".

This Ram devotee was born a Muslim

He is called Hanuman because of his devotion towards Lord Ram. He can name all the Hindu gods and goddesses in a single breath, and he performs the priest's duties at a Bihar temple with unwavering dedication - no one can tell that Sidheswar Das was born Mohammad Sadique. Born in a Muslim family, Mohammad Sadique developed an interest in Hindu religion when he was quite young.

www.sify.com/news/this-ram-devotee-was-born-a-muslim-news-national-lbboEcgihea.html

Today, in his 80s, he is the chief priest at Ram-Janki temple in Arwal district's Sohsa village. 'I adopted Hindu faith decades ago. I look after the temple and perform prayers everyday. Now my life is a temple. I have faith in Lord Ram, I was born to worship him,' Mohammad Sadique turned Sidheswar Das told IANS over phone. Vinay Singh, a villager, says that Sidheswar Das is respected by everyone in the village. 'He spends most of his time offering prayers and reciting off names of Hindu gods and goddesses. His devotion and commitment to look after the temple made him a saint,' he says. Another villager, Mahesh Prasad, says that some people call him Ram devotee and others call him Hanuman for his devotion. 'Everyday, he performs all the rituals of a priest, including aarti and distributing sweets among devotees. He is a rare priest,' Prasad said.


HINDU VISHWA

HINDU AMERICAN VANAPRASTHI NETWORK 'CONFERENCE'

Saturday, May 21, 2011

at Hindu Temple Of Central Indiana
3350 North German Church Rd,
Indianapolis, IN 46235

- Lifestyle for seniors
- Health, Seva, Networking and Estate planning discussions
- Light entertainment
- Social mingling

Engaging Vanaprasthis in Meaningful Activities



STAY CONNECTED, GROWING OLD CAN BE AN ART

REGISTRATION FEE (includes meals and conference material): **\$25 per person**

Please mail registration with the check payable to VHPA to:

Vanaprasthi Network Conference

7526 S Forest Park Dr.

Indianapolis IN 46217

Contact: Yogesh Naik 281-433-1321, 281-485-8256 Email: yogeshnaik@att.net/ www.vhp-america.org

About Vanaprasthis: ■ Age 50 & above: more than 100K will retire in next few decades. ■ Professionals, businessmen, home-makers. ■ Involved in religious, community and professional organizations. ■ Have ample time, experience and wisdom at disposal. ■ Geographically dispersed.

Mission: The Hindu American Vanaprasthi Network (HAVAN) is being launched to serve the self development and identification of service fields need for retired and to be retired members of Hindu community living in America. The acronym HAVAN is chosen to reflect the transformative lifestyle stage of Vanaprasthi. The implied transformation contained in the term Vanaprasthi is a journey from often conflicted lifestyle of householder dominated with family needs and interests to conflict-free lifestyle of community service and self development reflecting the purpose and goals of Hindu way of living and leading to Self-realization. The goal is to engage them locally in meaningful community service activities, develop network, and opportunities to use their skills, specialties, and wisdom for the benefit of the society.

STEERING COMMITTEE

Arvind Patel, NJ	973-256-2472
Yogesh Naik, TX	281-433-1321
Vimal Patel, IN	317-409-9113
Sudershan Khurana, GA	770-977-5519
Brahmaratan Aggarwal, FL	407-352-2889
Hansa Dave, IN	317-490-4910
Kundan Upadhyaya, IL	847-969-6426
Ram Bhargawa, IN	317-507-1843
Ram Belagaje, IN	317-815-5524
Sanjay Mehta, PA	412-251-9133
Kumar Dave, IN	317-889-7328

Email: kdave@sbcglobal.net

PROGRAM OUTLINE

♦ 9:00 am	Registration
♦ 9:30	Conference Inauguration By Temple Priest
♦ 9:45	Welcome, Introduction, Overview of the project and Expectations
♦ 10:15	Vedic Vision of Vanaprasthi lifestyle
♦ 11:00	Thoughts on practicing Vanaprasthi lifestyle
♦ 12:00 Noon-	Lunch Break
♦ 1:00	Presentations on Health and Seva (15min. each) and Q and A
♦ 2:15	Presentations on Networking & Estate Planning (15 min. each) and Q and A
♦ 3:30	Tea/Coffee Break
♦ 4:00	Resolutions & Next Steps
♦ 5:00 - 8.30	Havan, Social mingling, Dinner and entertainment

Maha Shivratri Celebration in Pakistan



10 feet tall Shiv Ling in Mansehra Division Khabher Phaktun Khawha is the tallest Shivalingam in Pakistan

Maha Shivratri was celebrated in Shiv mandir at Mansehra (NWFP) Pakistan. People came all over from NWFP & Punjab as well. This temple is one of the oldest temples in the world, according to local people it is 2,000 years old.



Local Hindus standing in front of Shiv Temple in Mansehra, Pakistan



PHP Banner for 2011 Maha Shivratri



Rajesh Pandit with local Hindu womens for 2011 Maha Shivratri Celebrated



Kids and women performing Maha Shivratri pooja



Support A Child in India (SAC Project)



Social services (seva) is the cornerstone of VHP of America work in USA and India. We have helped the people affected by Katrina, 911 attack (NYPD & NYFD), Oklahoma bombings, Tsunami, Gujarat Earthquake and other natural disasters. We are also serving homeless by distributing blankets and soup kitchen work in USA. VHPA raises funds to maintain and support cows (Gau Shala) in upstate N.Y. and Vrindavan in WV. On Gandhi Jayanti both temple and VHP of America volunteers celebrate sewa diwas by serving and distributing food to homeless in USA

One of our projects is the education of poor and needy children in India where VHP of America is supporting 800+ children in 36 institutions in 17 different states.

SAC PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS:

- ❖ Supporting 800+ children in 36 institutions in 17 states.
- ❖ We provide lodging, boarding and medical assistance to children.
- ❖ \$250 per year per child needed to support one child. That is less than 70 cents a day.
- ❖ The IRS Tax ID# is 510156325 and your donation is tax deductible. Consult your tax accountant.



- ❖ Donor parent/s will receive yearly report card of the child with picture and a letter.
- ❖ You can visit the child when you visit India.
- ❖ Donate \$2500 per child for 10 years of education up front.
- ❖ Almost 20 children now adults have become engineers, computer engineers, Pharmacist, IAS officers, admitted into MBBS program. Several of them have become teachers in the same school.

Education builds a solid foundation for the family and in turn builds the Nation.

PLEASE DONATE FUNDS by visiting www.vhp-america.org Or write email to: sac_office@vhp-america.org

Or make check payable to VHP of America and mail it to: VHP of America, P.O.Box: 441505, Houston, TX 77244-1505.

Call 713-261-9400, 561-244-5813 or 513-860-1151 for more information

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

Set Your Shoulder to the Wheel.

**The earth's bravest and best will have to sacrifice themselves for the good of many.
Arise, awake and stop not till the goal is reached.**

TAKE ADVANTAGE OF TAX DEDUCTIONS FOR CHARITABLE CONTRIBUTION

**VISHWA HINDU PARISHAD OF AMERICA, INC.
(WORLD HINDU COUNCIL OF AMERICA)**

