



Yugabda 5119  
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Vol. XXXXVIII  
No. 3  
July - September 2018

# HINDU VISHWA Vishwa Dharma Digest



## Also Read

- Seventh Annual Hindu Mandir Priest Conference Held in Atlanta
- Devi Jagran: Awakening The Goddess
- 125th anniversary of Swami Vivekananda's Address at The World Parliament of Religion



## World Hindu Congress Opens with a Resounding Call for Unity

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# Glimpses of Second World Hindu Congress 2018 - Chicago





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Volume XXXXVIII

No. 3

July-September 2018

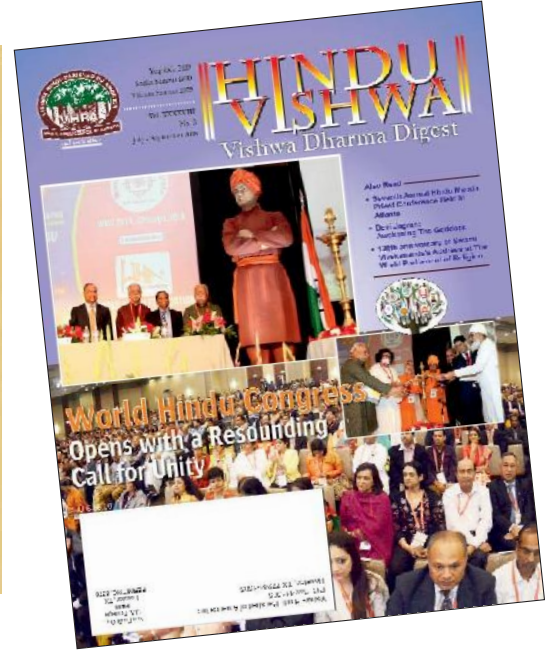
उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत प्राप्य वरान्निबोधत,  
क्षुरासन्न धारा निशिता दुरत्यद्गुर्म पथः तत् कवयो वदन्ति ।।

कथा उपनिषद् १.३.१४

*Uttisthata Jagrata Prapya Varannibodhata  
Kshurasanna Dhara Nishita Dustayadurgama Pathah  
tat kavayo Vadanti*

Katha Upanishad 1.3.14.

Arise! Awake! Approach the great and learn.  
Like the sharp edge of a razor is that path,  
so the wise say-hard to tread and difficult to cross.



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World Hindu Council 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.

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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.

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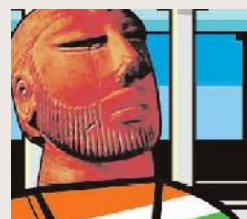
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# Today's Youth's Acceptance of Hindu Beliefs and Traditions

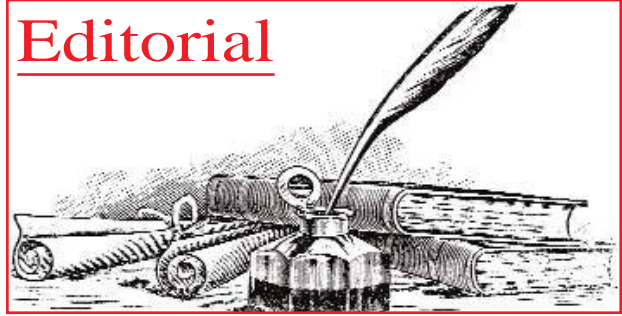
*"I am a Hindu, I am proud to belong to a religion which has taught the world both tolerance and universal acceptance. We believe not only in universal toleration, but we accept all religions as true." - Swami Vivekanand*

**T**his editorial is not targeting any individual or particular group of Hindu youths. It is a generalization based on my experiences, observations and discussions with community members and friends. From childhood, I learnt that to be a Hindu you had to be born a Hindu. I was taught that *Hindu Dharma* is a "way of life". I never bothered to ask for explanations, I just followed the practices and traditions of the household, and did whatever my parents made us do. As I grew up, I accepted the definition of being a Hindu, and continued to follow these practices and traditions without asking any questions, all be it, in a western world. *Hindu Dharma* became my way of life. So where am I going with this preface?

Being born, and raised outside of India, and, in a multi-racial environment, our parents insisted and ensured we had a Hindu upbringing and built temples and schools in each village. Every evening after regular school, we attended Hindu school, to learn our scriptures and to read and write Hindi. We worshipped in the temples and at homes. On special occasions and each weekend, we also attended social, and cultural events, both Indian and non-Indian. On Sundays, we went to the Christian Sunday schools in the village and directly behind our home was a mosque. This only enhanced our knowledge of other religions, and our convictions about Hindu Dharma.

Thankfully, in most countries in which Hindus have migrated to and settled, Hindu Dharma still exists, and is vibrant and alive. Hindus have created establishments (temples, schools, and entertainment facilities) where we assemble, to upkeep and spread our ongoing beliefs, in Hindu religious, cultural, and social activities. Kudos to all who have spearheaded and supported such ventures. Generations past, have fought and worked hard to keep Hindu Dharma alive. The Gen X's, Baby Boomers, and Millenials (also known as Gen Y), continue with great efforts, to sustain what our predecessors have built, and taught us. The question is: Will future generations keep Hindu Dharma alive, and continue to propagate the Hindu way of life indefinitely? Will they visit and maintain the beautiful temples that are built? And ensure that their children continue these traditions?

## Editorial



Although I see no reason why they wouldn't, I do believe that ongoing efforts are required for continued focus, practice and active participation by the next gens. More than a century ago, Swami Vivekanand cautioned, "Too early religious advancement of the Hindus and that superfiness in everything which made them cling to higher alternatives, have reduced them to what they are. The Hindus have to learn a little bit of materialism from the West and teach them a little bit of spirituality." You see, in "today's" world, there are so many distractions that influence kids away from the focus on religion. E.g. After a week of hard work and studies, there is a need to socialize, relax, 'club', and party, and an abundance of opportunities to do so. (Temple attendance becomes secondary).

Social interaction and cultural activities, are much required in society and I am not at all against it. They are executed with style and flair, and we are seeing increased participation, attendance and acceptance, by our non-Indian friends and relatives. Our events, especially the weddings, music, dance, traditional clothing and yoga, are all mind blowing and attractive to them. Our culture is inspiring, amazing and accepted, and, this is all great! The question is about the future generation of Indians making time for Hindu Dharma, and religious worship? Will they continue to propagate, and follow Hindu beliefs and values, religious practices/prayers? Will they make time to visit our beautiful temples and attend religious events?

I think most of the current generation does. But, is it enough? Can we inspire future generations to upkeep Hindu Dharma and Dharma? Will they provide, visit, maintain and care for temples? Can we rest, assured knowing that Hindu Dharma will continue to survive in the western world? How can, and, should each generation upkeep and/or make modifications to assure that Hindu Dharma and Temple/Congregational worship remain vibrant for centuries to come, and that our temples do not become museums or "white elephants"?





# Seventh Annual Hindu Mandir Priest Conference Held in Atlanta

**S**eventh Annual Hindu Mandir Priest Conference (HMPC) was held in Norcross, GA at Global Mall on July 20 and 21, 2018. Over past seven years, participation from Hindu Mandir Priests, temple management, youth group members related to temples and devotees has been steadily increasing. Conference sessions were well received by delegates representing temples across USA.

This year, a total of six temples co-hosted the conference. Attendees included 18 well-respected and accomplished priests from temples across the USA. In all 23 temples and religious institutions were represented at the conference. Other attendees included temple management, scholars from USA and India, and approximately 15 youth group members.

Theme for this year's conference was: "*Dharma Sansad: Role of the Priests and Acharyas in Spiritual and Cultural Well-being of Communities धर्मो रक्षति रक्षितः*".

Hindu temples and institutions are facing challenges around the globe as social changes are affecting traditional beliefs and practices related to Sanatana Dharma. 7th annual HMPC enabled Hindu priests to discuss how these trends are affecting practicing Sanatana





Dharma, what are the challenges faced by next generation of Hindus, and how to make rituals more relevant to devotees in general.

The conference began with *Jyothi Prajwalana, Veda Pathanam* and *Aasheerwachanam* by revered priests and veda panditas. In the inaugural session on Friday, July 20, priests, youth and temple management discussed **"Embracing Sanatana Dharma in North America - Challenges and Opportunities for Youth and Hindu Diaspora"**. This youth, priest and management panel was an initiative developed as a result of an action item from 6th Annual HMPC (2017). Youth group members in this year's panel included second generation Hindus' raising family. One of the action items from this year's youth panel is to develop simple guidelines for devotees and second generation Hindus in North America to practice Sanatana Dharma in ways relevant to modern age.

Second session of the conference started on Saturday, July 21 with *Prarthana*. Sri Sanjay Mehta (General Secretary, VHPA) shared his thoughts on **"Dynamic, vibrant Hindu society - VHPA's vision and projects"**. Followed by this, Sri Laxmi Bhamidipati (Convener, HMPC) shared vision, purpose and background for HMPC and overview of HMPC 2018.

Srimad U Ve Sriman Venkatesa Iyengar delivered Keynote speech and addressed **"What is Dharma and Role of Temples, Priests and Acharyas in protecting dharma, spiritual and cultural well-being of communities, and addressing social and family issues"**. This speech set the tone for the rest of the conference.

Morning session after Keynote speech addressed Importance of Rituals such as *Yajnas* and *Yaagas* in practicing Sanatana Dharma, esoteric meaning of rituals

through examples and how to involve youth in performing rituals such as pujas and involving the devotees in preparing for larger events such as havan.

Later a Priest Panel (***Dharma Sansad: Role of the Priests and Acharyas in spiritual and cultural well-being of communities***) was held, where priests from various temples discussed challenges in making rituals more relevant to devotees and younger generations. Topics discussed included (a) Without compromising core values of Sanatana Dharma, how shall temples and priests adapt Hindu modes of worship to the changing needs and demands of devotees (b) How do we explain the importance of rituals and need to performing rituals and chanting mantras properly to common devotee (c) What are few important aspects from Vedas and *itihasas* (ex. Ramayana and Mahabharata) that are applicable and shall be remembered as we conduct daily life? (d) How



## Following the conference, subsequent action items will be worked on actively in 2018-19

1. Develop Simple Guidelines for Devotees and second-generation Hindus in North America to practice Sanatana Dharma in ways relevant to modern age (outcome of youth panel)
2. Swachch Mandir - Keeping temple premises clean, sacred, inviting and peaceful for devotees to experience the power of divine presence
3. Guidelines for temples and management to balance the need to retain core value of rituals while accommodating the changing needs and time constraints of devotees (outcome of priest panel)
4. Guidelines and training modules for priests on how to communicate with devotees regarding rituals, making rituals more relevant and intuitive to devotees (including second-generation Hindus in North America)

can we protect Sanatana Dharma while performing every day (modern day) karma?

First session in the afternoon included topics related to "Historic Perspective of Sanatana Dharma and Efforts and Approach in Modern Age". Second Session in the afternoon included topics related to "Priests and Changing Hindu Community & Priest Welfare".

Priests (*purohits*) play an essential role in spiritual and cultural welfare of North American Hindu society. Starting 2015, at each Hindu Mandir Priests' Conference "ARCHAKA BHUSHANA" award is being conferred to distinguished priests to honor their significant and sustained spiritual and social service to the Hindu community. This year nine well-respected and accomplished priests were honored with Archaka Bhushana Award.

This year's conference highlights enthusiastic participation of temple management from various temples in support of priests attending the conference. This sets a stage for future conferences where temple managements have opportunity to listen to challenges, opportunities, successes and experience from priests

across North America in practicing Sanatana Dharma and collaborate with priests in making practicing Sanatana Dharma more relevant and sustainable for next generation of Hindus.

The event was a grand success as a result of outstanding effort by the core team - including, Smt Kusum Khurana, Smt Veena Katdare, Sri Madhav Katdare, Sri Sudharsan Khurana, Sri Shyam Tiwari, Smt Manju Tiwari, Sri Vasav Mehta, Smt Sneha Mehta, Smt Manjula Reddy, Sri Raghu Veeraraghavan, Smt Sabitha Venugopal, Sri Jayant Daftardar, Sri Chandra Reddy Gavva, Smt Tejal Shah, Pt Sriman Gyan Prakash Upadhyay, Sri Sanjay Mehta and Sri Laxmi Bhamidipati. In addition, countless number of volunteers helped throughout the event preparation and execution.

The event was made possible through financial support from Sri Shiv Aggarwal, Sri Dr. Venugopal, Smt. Arunima Sinha, Sri Vasubhai Patel, Smt Monica Kumar, Sri Rajnikant Patel, Smt & Sri Harbans Singla, Smt and Sri Dinesh Purohit.

HMPC guiding team has already begun its efforts to







identify temple(s) in North America region to host eighth Annual Hindu Mandir Conference to be held in 2019.

### HMEC

The vision of HMEC is to be the network of Hindu Organizations for effective leadership generation to generation in North America. Representatives from Hindu temples and institutions meet to deliberate and solve issues collectively. This conference provides a great opportunity to community leaders to learn from each other and ultimately grow as one community. The World Hindu Council of America (VHPA), founded in 1970 and incorporated in the state of New York, 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.



For more information on VHPA, please write to [gensecy@vhp-america.org](mailto:gensecy@vhp-america.org) or visit [www.vhp-america.org](http://www.vhp-america.org) [office@vhp-america.org](mailto:office@vhp-america.org),  
Tel: 732-744-0851



# Celebrating 125th anniversary of Swami Vivekananda's Address at The World Parliament of Religion, Chicago

## PAPER ON HINDUISM

Read at the Parliament on 19th September, 1893

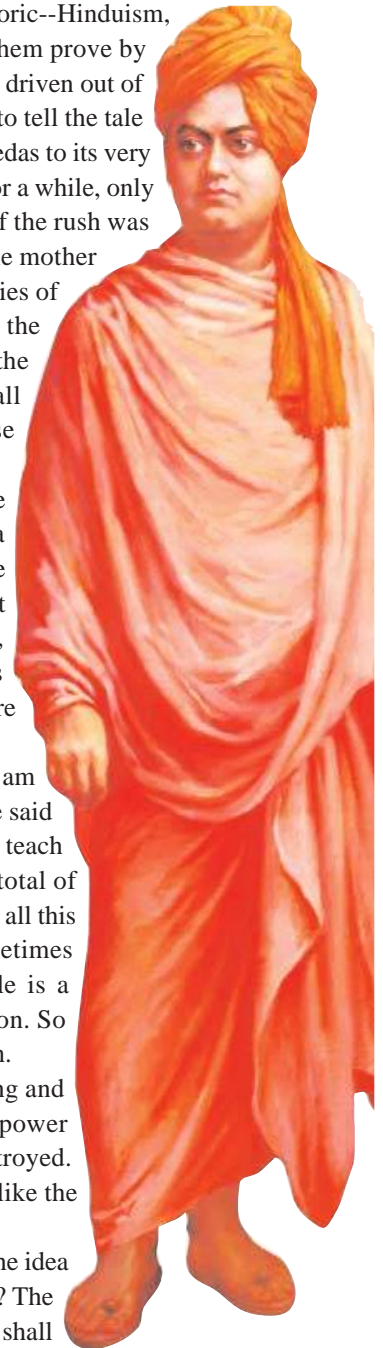
**T**hree religions now stand in the world which have come down to us from time prehistoric--Hinduism, Zoroastrianism and Judaism. They have all received tremendous shocks and all of them prove by their survival their internal strength. But while Judaism failed to absorb Christianity and was driven out of its place of birth by its all-conquering daughter, and a handful of Parsees is all that remains to tell the tale of their grand religion, sect after sect arose in India and seemed to shake the religion of the Vedas to its very foundations, but like the waters of the seashore in a tremendous earthquake it receded only for a while, only to return in an all-absorbing flood, a thousand times more vigorous, and when the tumult of the rush was over, these sects were all sucked in, absorbed, and assimilated into the immense body of the mother faith. From the high spiritual flights of the Vedanta philosophy, of which the latest discoveries of science seem like echoes, to the low ideas of idolatry with its multifarious mythology, the agnosticism of the Buddhists, and the atheism of the Jains, each and all have a place in the Hindu's religion. Where then, the question arises, where is the common center to which all these widely diverging radii converge? Where is the common basis upon which all these seemingly hopeless contradictions rest? And this is the question I shall attempt to answer.

The Hindus have received their religion through revelation, the Vedas. They hold that the Vedas are without beginning and without end. It may sound ludicrous to this audience, how a book can be without beginning or end. But by the Vedas no books are meant. They mean the accumulated treasury of spiritual laws discovered by different persons in different times. Just as the law of gravitation existed before its discovery, and would exist if all humanity forgot it, so is it with the laws that govern the spiritual world. The moral, ethical, and spiritual relations between soul and soul and between individual spirits and the Father of all spirits, were there before their discovery, and would remain even if we forgot them.

The discoverers of these laws are called Rishis, and we honor them as perfected beings. I am glad to tell this audience that some of the very greatest of them were women. Here it may be said that these laws as laws may be without end, but they must have had a beginning. The Vedas teach us that creation is without beginning or end. Science is said to have proved that the sum total of cosmic energy is always the same. Then, if there was a time when nothing existed, where was all this manifested energy? Some say it was in a potential form in God. In that case God is sometimes potential and sometimes kinetic, which would make Him mutable. Everything mutable is a compound, and everything compound must undergo that change which is called destruction. So God would die, which is absurd. Therefore there never was a time when there was no creation.

If I may be allowed to use a simile, creation and creator are two lines, without beginning and without end, running parallel to each other. God is the ever active providence, by whose power systems after systems are being evolved out of chaos, made to run for a time and again destroyed. This is what the Brahmin boy repeats every day: "The sun and the moon, the Lord created like the suns and moons of previous cycles." And this agrees with modern science.

Here I stand and if I shut my eyes, and try to conceive my existence, "I", "I", "I", what is the idea before me? The idea of a body. Am I, then, nothing but a combination of material substances? The Vedas declare, "No". I am a spirit living in a body. I am not the body. The body will die, but I shall not die. Here am I in this body; it will fall, but I shall go on living. I had also a past. The soul was not





created, for creation means a combination which means a certain future dissolution. If then the soul was created, it must die. Some are born happy, enjoy perfect health, with beautiful body, mental vigor and all wants supplied. Others are born miserable, some are without hands or feet, others again are idiots and only drag on a wretched existence. Why, if they are all created, why does a just and merciful God create one happy and another unhappy, why is He so partial? Nor would it mend matters in the least to hold that those who are miserable in this life will be happy in a future one. Why should a man be miserable even here in the reign of a just and merciful God? In the second place, the idea of a creator God does not explain the anomaly, but simply expresses the cruel fiat of an all-powerful being. There must have been causes, then, before his birth, to make a man miserable or happy and those were his past actions.

Are not all the tendencies of the mind and the body accounted for by inherited aptitude? Here are two parallel lines of existence—one of the mind, the other of matter. If matter and its transformations answer for all that we have, there is no necessity for supposing the existence of a soul. But it cannot be proved that thought has been evolved out of matter, and if a philosophical monism is inevitable, spiritual monism is certainly logical and no less desirable than a materialistic monism; but neither of these is necessary here.



*The art institute of Chicago where the Parliament was held.*

We cannot deny that bodies acquire certain tendencies from heredity, but those tendencies only mean the physical configuration, through which a peculiar mind alone can act in a peculiar way. There are other tendencies peculiar to a soul caused by its past actions. And a soul with a certain tendency would by the laws of affinity take birth in a body which is the fittest instrument for the display of that tendency. This is in accord with science wants to explain everything by habit, and habit is got through repetitions. So repetitions are necessary to explain the natural habits of a new-born soul. And since they were not obtained in this present life, they must have come down from past lives.

There is another suggestion. Taking all these for granted, now is it that I do not remember anything of my past life? This can be easily explained I am now speaking English. It is not my mother tongue, in fact no words of my mother tongue are now present in my consciousness; but let me try to bring them up, and they rush in. That shows that consciousness is only the surface of the mental ocean, and within its depths are stored up all our experiences. Try and struggle, they would come up and you would be conscious even of your past life.

This is direct and demonstrative evidence. Verification is the perfect proof of a theory, and here is the challenge thrown to the world by the Rishis. We have discovered the secret by which the very depths of the ocean of memory can be stirred up—try it and you would get a complete reminiscence of your past life.

So then the Hindu believes that he is a spirit. Him the sword cannot pierce—him the fire cannot burn—him the water cannot melt—him the air cannot dry. The Hindu believes that every soul is a circle whose circumference is nowhere, but whose center is located in the body, and that death means the change of this center from body to body. Not is the soul bound by the conditions of matter. In its very essence it is free. Unbounded. Holy, pure, and perfect. But somehow of other it finds itself tied down to matter and thinks of itself as matter.

Why should the free, perfect, and pure being be thus under the thralldom of matter, is the next question. How can the perfect soul be deluded into the belief that it is imperfect? We have been told that the Hindus shirk the question and say that no such question can be there. Some thinkers want to answer it by positing one or more quasi-perfect beings, and use big scientific names to fill up the gap. But naming is not explaining. The question remains the same. How can the perfect become the quasi-perfect; how can the pure, the absolute, change even a microscopic particle of its nature? But the Hindu is sincere. He does not want to take shelter under sophistry. He is brave enough to face the question in a manly fashion; and the question and say that no such question can be there. Some thinkers want to answer it by positing one or more quasi-perfect beings, and use big scientific names to fill up the gap. But naming is not explaining. The question remains the same. How can the perfect become the quasi-perfect; how can the pure, the absolute, change even a microscopic particle of its nature? But the Hindu is sincere. He does not want to take shelter under sophistry. He is brave enough to face the question in a manly fashion; immortal, perfect and infinite, and death means only a change of center from one body to another. The present is determined by our past actions, and the future by the present. The soul will go on evolving up or reverting back from birth to birth and death to death. But here is another question: Is man a tiny boat in a tempest, raised one moment on the foamy crest of a billow and dashed down into a yawning chasm the next, rolling to and fro at the mercy of good and bad actions—a powerless, helpless wreck in an ever-raging, ever-



THE HINDUS HAVE RECEIVED THEIR RELIGION THROUGH THE VEDAS. VEDAS MEAN THE ACCUMULATED TREASURY OF SPIRITUAL LAWS DISCOVERED BY DIFFERENT PERSONS IN DIFFERENT TIMES.



THE HINDU BELIEVES THAT EVERY SOUL IS A CIRCLE WHOSE CIRCUMFERENCE IS NOWHERE, BUT WHOSE CENTER IS LOCATED IN THE BODY, AND THAT DEATH MEANS THE CHANGE OF THIS CENTER FROM BODY TO BODY.

rushing, uncompromising current of cause and effect; a little moth placed under the wheel of causation which rolls on crushing everything in its way and waits not for the widow's tears or the orphan's cry? The heart sinks at the idea, yet this is the law of Nature. Is there no hope? Is there no escape?--was the cry that went up from the bottom of the heart of despair. It reached the throne of mercy, and words of hope and consolation came down and inspired a Vedic sage, and he stood up before the world and in trumpet voice proclaimed the glad tidings: "Hear, ye children of immortal bliss! Even ye that reside in higher spheres! I have found the Ancient One who is beyond all darkness, all delusion: knowing Him alone you shall be saved from death over again." "Children of immortal bliss" --what a sweet, what a hopeful name! Allow me to call you, brethren, by that sweet name--heirs of immortal bliss--yea, the Hindu refuses to call you sinners. Ye are the Children of God, the sharers of immortal bliss, holy and perfect beings. Ye divinities on earth--sinners! It is a sin to call a man so; it is a standing libel on human nature. Come up, O lions, and shake off the delusion that you are sheep; you are souls immortal, spirits free, blest and eternal; ye are not matter, ye are not bodies; matter is your servant, not you the servant of matter. Thus it is that the Vedas proclaim not a dreadful combination of unforgiving laws, not an endless prison of cause and effect, but that at the head of all these laws, in and through every particle of matter and force, stands One "by whose command the wind blows, the fire burns, the clouds rain, and death stalks upon the earth."

And what is His nature? He is everywhere, the pure and formless One, the Almighty and the All-merciful. "Thou art our father, Thou art our mother, Thou art our beloved friend, Thou art the source of all strength; give us strength. Thou art He that beareth the burdens of the universe; help me bear the little burden of this life." Thus sang the Rishis of the Vedas. And how to worship Him? Through love. "He is to be worshipped as the one beloved, dearer than everything in this and the next life."

This is the doctrine of love declared in the Vedas, and let us see how it is fully developed and taught by Krishna, whom the Hindus believe to have been God incarnate on earth.

He taught that a man ought to live in this world like a lotus leaf, which grows in water but is never moistened by water; so a man ought to live in the world--his heart to God and his hands to work.

It is good to love God for hope of reward in this or the next world, but it is better to love God for love's sake, and the prayer goes: "Lord, I do not want wealth, nor children, nor learning. If it be Thy will, I shall go from birth to birth, but grant me this, that I may love Thee without the hope of reward--love unselfishly for love's sake." One of the disciples of Krishna, the then Emperor of India, was driven from his kingdom by his enemies and had to take shelter with his queen in a forest in the Himalayas, and there one day the queen asked him how it was that he, the most virtuous of men, should suffer so much misery. Yudhishtira answered, "Behold, my queen, the Himalayas, how grand and beautiful they are; I love them. They do not give me anything, but my nature is to love the grand, the beautiful, therefore I love them. Similarly, I love the Lord. He is the source of all beauty, of all sublimity. He is the only object to be loved; my nature is to love Him, and therefore I love. I do not pray for anything; I do not ask for anything. Let Him place me wherever He likes. I must love Him for love's sake. I cannot trade love."

The Vedas teach that the soul is divine, only held in the bondage of matter; perfection will be reached when this bond will burst, and the word they use for it is therefore, Mukti--freedom, freedom from the bonds of imperfection, freedom from death and misery.

And this bondage can only fall off through the mercy of God, and this mercy comes on the pure. So purity is the condition of His mercy. How does that mercy act? He reveals Himself to the pure heart; the pure and the stainless see God, yea, even in this life; then and then only all the crookedness of the heart is made straight. Then all doubt ceases. He is no more the freak of a terrible law of causation. This is the very center, the very vital conception of Hinduism. The Hindu does not want to live upon words and theories. If there are existences beyond the ordinary sensuous existence, he wants to come face to face with them. If there is a soul in him which is not matter, if there is an all-merciful universal Soul, he will go to Him direct. He must see Him, and that alone can destroy all doubts. So the best proof a Hindu sage gives about the soul, about God, is: "I have seen the soul; I have seen God." And that is the only condition of perfection. The Hindu religion does not consist in struggles and attempts to believe a certain doctrine or dogma, but in realizing--not in believing, but in being and becoming.

Thus the whole object of their system is by constant struggle to become perfect, to become divine, to reach God and see God, and this reaching God, seeing God, becoming perfect even as the Father in Heaven is perfect, constitutes the religion of the Hindus. And what becomes of a man when he attains perfection? He lives a life of bliss infinite. He enjoys infinite and perfect bliss, having obtained the only thing in which man ought to have pleasure, namely God, and enjoys the bliss with God.

So far all the Hindus are agreed. This is the common religion of all the sects of India; but, then, perfection is absolute, and the absolute cannot be two or three. It cannot have any qualities. It cannot be an individual. And so when



a soul becomes perfect and absolute, it must become one with Brahman, and it would only realize the Lord as the perfection, the reality, of its own nature and existence, the existence absolute, knowledge absolute, and bliss absolute. We have often and often read this called the losing of individuality and becoming a stock or a stone. "He jests at scars that never felt a wound."

I tell you it is nothing of the kind. If it is happiness to enjoy the consciousness of this small body, it must be greater happiness to enjoy the consciousness of two bodies, the measure of happiness increasing with the consciousness of an increasing number of bodies, the aim, the ultimate of happiness being reached when it would become a universal consciousness.

Therefore, to gain this infinite universal individuality, this miserable little prison individuality must go. Then alone can death cease when I am one with life, then alone can misery cease when I am one with happiness itself, then alone can all errors cease when I am one with knowledge itself; and this is the necessary scientific conclusion. Science has proved to me that physical individuality is a delusion, that really my body is one little continuously changing body in an unbroken ocean of matter; and Advaita (unity) is the necessary conclusion with my other counterpart, soul.

Science is nothing but the finding of unity. As soon as science would reach perfect unity, it would stop from further progress, because it would reach the goal. Thus Chemistry could not progress farther when it would discover one element out of which all others could be made. Physics would stop when it would be able to fulfil its services in discovering one energy of which all the others are but manifestations, and the science of religion becomes perfect when it would discover Him who is the one life in a universe of death, Him who is the constant basis of an ever-changing world. One who is the only Soul of which all souls are but delusive manifestations. Thus is it, through multiplicity and duality, that the ultimate unity is reached. Religion can go no farther. This is the goal of all science.

All science is bound to come to this conclusion in the long run. Manifestation, and not creation, is the word of science today, and the Hindu is only glad that what he has been cherishing in his bosom for ages is going to be taught in more forcible language, and with further light from the latest conclusions of science. Descend we now from the aspirations of philosophy to the religion of the ignorant. At the very outset, I may tell you that there is no polytheism in India. In every temple, if one stands by and listens, one will find the worshippers applying all the attributes of God, including omnipresence, to the images. It is not polytheism, nor would the name henotheism explain the situation. "The rose called by any other name would smell as sweet." Names are not explanations.

I remember, as a boy, hearing a Christian missionary preach to a crowd in India. Among other sweet things he was telling them was that if he gave a blow to their idol with his stick, what could it do? One of his hearers sharply answered, "If I abuse your God, what can He do?" "You would be punished," said the preacher, "when you die." "So my idol will punish you when you die," retorted the Hindu.

The tree is known by its fruits. When I have seen amongst them that are called idolaters, men, the like of whom in morality and spirituality and love I have never seen anywhere, I stop and ask myself, "Can sin beget holiness?"

Superstition is a great enemy of man, but bigotry is worse. Why does a Christian go to church? Why is the cross holy? Why is the face turned toward the sky in prayer? Why are there so many images in the Catholic Church? Why are there so many images in the minds of Protestants when they pray? My brethren, we can no more think about anything without a mental image than we can live without breathing. By the law of association, the material image calls up the mental idea and vice versa. This is why the Hindu uses an external symbol when he worships. He will tell you, it helps to keep his mind fixed on the Being to whom he prays. He knows as well as you do that the image is not God, is not omnipresent. After all, how much does omnipresence mean to almost the whole world? It stands merely as a word, a symbol. Has God superficial area? If not, when we repeat that word "omnipresent", we think of the extended sky or of space, that is all. As we find that somehow or other, by the laws of our mental constitution, we have to associate our ideas of infinity with the image of the blue sky, or of the sea, so we naturally connect our idea of holiness with the image of a church, a mosque, or a cross. The Hindus have associated the idea of holiness, purity, truth, omnipresence, and such other ideas with different images and forms. But with this difference that while some people devote their whole lives to their idol of a church and never rise higher, because with them religion means an intellectual assent to certain doctrines and doing good to their fellows, the whole religion of the Hindu is centered in realization. Man is to become divine by realizing the divine. Idols or temples or churches or books are only the supports, the helps, of his spiritual childhood: but on and on he must progress.

He must not stop anywhere. "External worship, material worship," say the scriptures, "is the lowest stage; struggling to rise high, mental prayer is the next stage, but the highest stage is when the Lord has been realized." Mark, the same earnest man who is kneeling before the idol tells you, "Him the sun cannot express, nor the moon, nor the stars, the lightning cannot express Him, nor what we speak of as fire; through Him they shine." But he does not abuse any one's idol or call its worship sin. He recognizes in it a necessary stage of life. "The child is father of the man."



THE HINDUS HAVE RECEIVED THEIR RELIGION THROUGH THE VEDAS. VEDAS MEAN THE ACCUMULATED TREASURY OF SPIRITUAL LAWS DISCOVERED BY DIFFERENT PERSONS IN DIFFERENT TIMES.



SUPERSTITION IS A GREAT ENEMY OF MAN, BUT BIGOTRY IS WORSE. WE CAN NO MORE THINK ABOUT ANYTHING WITHOUT A MENTAL IMAGE THAN WE CAN LIVE WITHOUT BREATHING. THIS IS WHY THE HINDU USES AN EXTERNAL SYMBOL WHEN HE WORSHIPS.

Would it be right for an old man to say that childhood is a sin or youth a sin?

If a man can realize his divine nature with the help of an image, would it be right to call that a sin? Nor even when he has passed that stage, should he call it an error. To the Hindu, man is not travelling from error to truth, but from truth to truth, from lower to higher truth. To him all the religions, from the lowest fetishism to the highest absolutism, mean so many attempts of the human soul to grasp and realize the Infinite, each determined by the conditions of its birth and association, and each of these marks a stage of progress; and every soul is a young eagle soaring higher and higher, gathering more and more strength, till it reaches the Glorious Sun.

Unity in variety is the plan of nature, and the Hindu has recognized it. Every other religion lays down certain fixed dogmas, and tries to force society to adopt them. It places before society only one coat which must fit Jack and John and Henry, all alike. If it does not fit John or Henry, he must go without a coat to cover his body. The Hindus have discovered that the absolute can only be realized, or thought of, or stated, through the relative, and the images, crosses, and crescents are simply so many symbols--so many pegs to hang the spiritual ideas on. It is not that this help is necessary for everyone, but those that do not need it have no right to say that it is wrong. Nor is it compulsory in Hinduism. One thing I must tell you. Idolatry in India does not mean anything horrible. It is not the mother of harlots. On the other hand, it is the attempt of undeveloped minds to grasp high spiritual truths. The Hindus have their faults, they sometimes have their exceptions; but mark this, they are always for punishing their own bodies, and never for cutting the throats of their neighbors. If the Hindu fanatic burns himself on the pyre, he never lights the fire of Inquisition. And even this cannot be laid at the door of his religion any more than the burning of witches can be laid at the door of Christianity.

To the Hindu, then, the whole world of religions is only a travelling, a coming up, of different men and women, through various conditions and circumstances, to the same goal. Every religion is only evolving a God out of the material man, and the same God is the inspirer of all of them. Why, then, are there so many contradictions? They are only apparent, says the Hindu. The contradictions come from the same truth adapting itself to the varying circumstances of different natures.

It is the same light coming through glasses of different colors. And these little variations are necessary for purposes of adaptation. But in the heart of everything the same truth reigns. The Lord has declared to the Hindu in His incarnation as Krishna, "I am in every religion as the thread through a string of pearls. Wherever thou seest extraordinary holiness and extraordinary power raising and purifying humanity, know thou that I am there." And what has been the result? I challenge the world to find, throughout the whole system of Sanskrit philosophy, any such expression as that the Hindu alone will be saved and not others. Says Vyasa, "We find perfect men even beyond the pale of our caste and creed." One thing more. How, then, can the Hindu, whose whole fabric of thought centers in God, believe in Buddhism which is agnostic, or in Jainism which is atheistic?

The Buddhists or the Jains do not depend upon God; but the whole force of their religion is directed to the great central truth in every religion, to evolve a God out of man. They have not seen the Father, but they have seen the Son. And he that hath seen the Son hath seen the Father also. This, brethren, is a short sketch of the religious ideas of the Hindus. The Hindu may have failed to carry out all his plans, but if there is ever to be a universal religion, it must be one which will have no location in place or time; which will be infinite like the God it will preach, and whose sun will shine upon the followers of Krishna and of Christ, on saints and sinners alike; which will not be Brahminic or Buddhistic, Christian or Mohammedan, but the sum total of all these, and still have infinite space for development; which in its catholicity will embrace in its infinite arms, and find a place for, every human being, from the lowest groveling savage not far removed from the brute, to the highest man towering by the virtues of his head and heart almost above humanity, making society stand in awe of him and doubt his human nature. It will be a religion which will have no place for persecution or intolerance in its polity, which will recognize divinity in every man and woman, and whose whole scope, whose whole force, will be created in aiding humanity to realize its own true, divine nature.

Offer such a religion, and all the nations will follow you. Asoka's council was a council of the Buddhist faith. Akbar's, though more to the purpose, was only a parlor-meeting. It was reserved for America to proclaim to all quarters of the globe that the Lord is in every religion. May He who is the Brahman of the Hindus, the Ahura-Mazda of the Zoroastrians, the Buddha of the Buddhists, the Jehovah of the Jews, the Father in Heaven of the Christians, give strength to you to carry out your noble idea! The star arose in the East; it travelled steadily towards the West, sometimes dimmed and sometimes effulgent, till it made a circuit of the world; and now it is again rising on the very horizon of the East, the borders of the Sanpo, a thousand fold more effulgent than it ever was before.

Hail, Columbia, motherland of liberty! It has been given to thee, who never dipped her hand in her neighbor's blood, who never found out that the shortest way of becoming rich was by robbing one's neighbors, it has been given to thee to march at the vanguard of civilization with the flag of harmony.



## Celebrating 125th anniversary of Swami Vivekananda's Address at The World Parliament of Religion, Chicago

### Response to Welcome

September 11th, 1893

**Sisters and Brothers of America,**

It fills my heart with joy unspeakable to rise in response to the warm and cordial welcome which you have given us. I thank you in the name of the most ancient order of monks in the world; I thank you in the name of the mother of religions; and I thank you in the name of millions and millions of Hindu people of all classes and sects. My thanks, also, to some of the speakers on this platform who, referring to the delegates from the Orient, have told you that these men from far-off nations may well claim the honor of bearing to different lands the idea of toleration. I am proud to belong to a religion which has taught the world both tolerance and universal acceptance. We believe not only in universal toleration, but we accept all religions as true. I am proud to belong to a nation which has sheltered the persecuted and the refugees of all religions and all nations of the earth. I am proud to tell you that we have gathered in our bosom the purest remnant of the Israelites, who came to Southern India and took refuge with us in the very year in which their holy temple was shattered to pieces by Roman tyranny. I am proud to belong to the religion which has sheltered and is still fostering remnant Zoroastrian nation. I will quote to you, brethren, a few lines from a hymn which I remember to have repeated from my earliest boyhood, which is every day repeated by millions of human beings: "As the different streams having their sources in different places all mingle their water in the sea, so, O Lord, the different paths which men take through different tendencies, various though they appear, crooked or straight, all lead to Thee."

The present convention, which is one of the most august assemblies ever held, is in itself a vindication, a declaration to the world of the wonderful doctrine preached in the Gita: "Whosoever comes to Me, through whatsoever form, I reach him; all men are struggling through paths which in the end lead to me." Sectarianism, bigotry, and its horrible descendant, fanaticism, have long possessed this beautiful earth. They have filled the earth with violence, drenched it often and often with human blood, destroyed civilization and sent whole nations to despair. Had it not been for these horrible demons, human society would be far more advanced than it is now. But their time is come; and I fervently hope that the bell that tolled this morning in honor of this convention may be the death-knell of all fanaticism, of all persecutions with the sword or with the pen, and of all uncharitable feelings between persons wending their way to the same goal.

### Why We Disagree

September 15th, 1893

I will tell you a little story. You have heard the eloquent speaker who has just finished say, "Let us cease from abusing each other," and he was very sorry that there should be always so much variance.

But I think I should tell you a story which would illustrate the cause of this variance. A frog lived in a well. It had lived there for a long time. It was born there and brought up there, and yet was a little, small frog. Of course the evolutionists were not there then to tell us whether the frog lost its eyes or not, but, for our story's sake, we must take it for granted that it had its eyes, and that it every day cleansed the water of all the worms and bacilli that lived in it with an energy that would do credit to our modern bacteriologists. In this way it went on and became a little sleek and fat. Well, one day another frog that lived in the sea came and fell into the well.

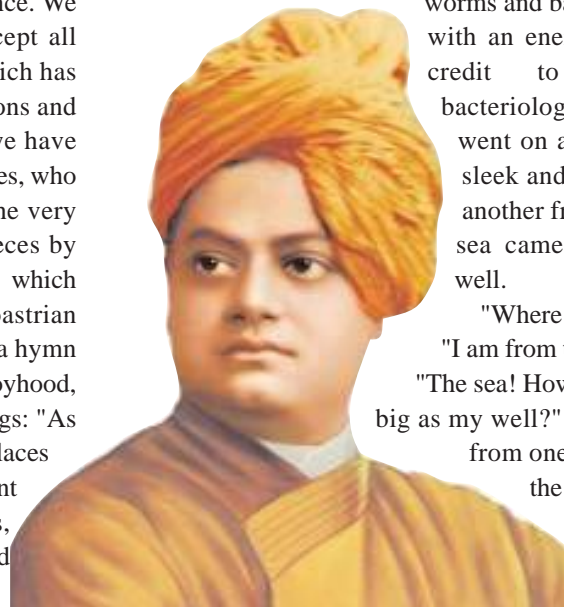
"Where are you from?"

"I am from the sea."

"The sea! How big is that? Is it as big as my well?" and he took a leap from one side of the well to the other.

"My friend,"

said the frog of the sea, "how do you



compare the sea with your little well?"

Then the frog took another leap and asked, "Is your sea so big?"

"What nonsense you speak, to compare the sea with your well!" "Well, then," said the frog of the well, "nothing can be bigger than my well; there can be nothing bigger than this; this fellow is a liar, so turn him out."

That has been the difficulty all the while.

I am a Hindu. I am sitting in my own little well and thinking that the whole world is my little well. The Christian sits in his little well and thinks the whole world is his well. The Mohammedan sits in his little well and thinks that is the whole world. I have to thank you of America for the great attempt you are making to break down the barriers of this little world of ours, and hope that, in the future, the Lord will help you to accomplish your purpose.



**Teacher:** who can tell me what happened on nine eleven?

**Student:** The one from the East or the West. Remember Mark Twain quoted Rudyard Kipling and agreed that "East is east and West and never the twain shall meet".

Regretfully even the media seems to forget that there are other Nine Elevens by simply assuming that only the one of hate and violent took place. They need to be informed or reminded of the others.

Many of us who sat in our living rooms and watched in disbelief as the events of September 11, 2001 unfolded were left with the belief that mankind will forever be involved in internecine conflict. Mention nine-eleven today and our thoughts rush to the image of the twin towers in New York crumbling and taking with them the lives of thousands of innocent people from various religions, races and nationalities. The world has not been the same since that infamous date in 2001. However, lest we associate all nine-elevens with division, hate, destruction, and cowardice, we should be reminded of similar dates in history which are famous examples of unity, love, hope, and courage. Yes, we must fight injustice wherever it occurs but we can do so by peaceful means without destruction of property and loss of precious lives.

**By Ramnarine Sahadeo**



This article hopes to distinguish 2001 from two other nine-elevens in the hope that mankind will not permanently associate the date with negative events. I am sure that further research will disclose more evidence of goodness on that same date but this article will restrict itself to the philosophy and practice that originated from the culture that will forever be known as the Empire of the Spirit, the Vedic Saraswati Civilization

Peculiarly enough the first event also took place on American soil, and also had a lasting impact on mankind. On September 11, 1893 North America was first introduced to the unifying potential of the universal message of Bhagvad-Gita. It was on that day that the dynamic Swami Vivekananda first addressed The Parliament of Religions in Chicago and planted the seeds of a philosophy of love, peace and unity, desired by the vast majority of mankind. The delegates gave him a standing ovation when he addressed them as "Sisters and Brothers of America."

He left an indelible impression with his words:

"It fills my heart with joy unspeakable to rise in response to the warm and cordial welcome which you have given us. I thank you in the name of the most ancient order of monks in the world; I thank you in the name of the mother of religions, and I thank you in the name of millions and millions of Hindu people of all classes and sects..."

The present convention, which is one of the most august assemblies ever held, is itself a vindication, a declaration to the world, of the wonderful doctrine preached in the Gita:

*Whosoever comes to Me, through whatsoever form, I reach him;*

*All men struggling through paths which in the end lead to Me.*

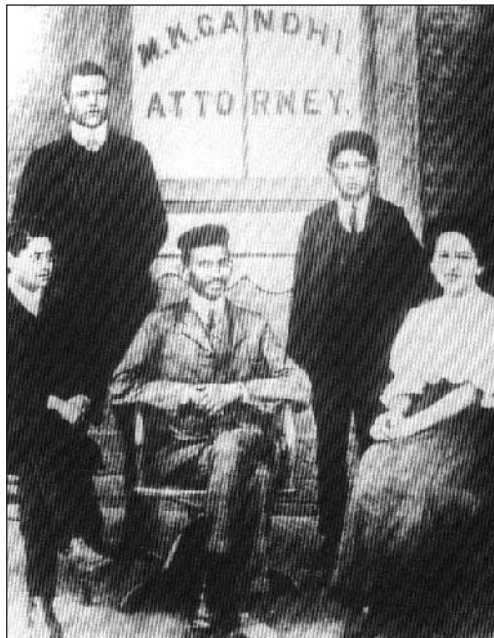
Sectarianism, bigotry, and its horrible descendant, fanaticism, have long possessed this beautiful earth. They have filled the earth with violence, drenched it often with human blood, destroyed civilizations, and caused whole nations to despair. Had it not been for these horrible demons, human society would be far more advanced than it is now. But their time has come; and I fervently hope, that the bell that tolled this morning in honour of this convention may be the death-knell of all fanaticism, of all persecutions with the sword or with the pen, and of all uncharitable feelings between persons wending their way to the same goal."

Although the 2001 nine-eleven and the events thereafter demonstrate that we have not seen the death-knell envisioned by this eloquent, spiritual icon this does not mean that the philosophy he espoused has lost its relevance. Mankind still has to learn and practice it for these universal teachings remain the elusive but ultimate goal for all civilized nations with basic laws respecting fundamental freedoms.

Today the landscape of most major cities in Canada, USA, and Europe are dotted with numerous awe inspiring Hindu temples which will hopefully help in spreading the message of love and peace. However, there is great concern that materialism, ignorance, short sightedness and the thirst for immediate gratification may cause many to depart from the wisdom and spiritual values that are the very foundation of the Vedic Saraswati civilization.

Another nine eleven worth repeating took place in South Africa that also originated from the philosophy of

non-violence repeatedly expounded in the Gita. On September 11, 1906 (a nine-eleven of peaceful protest) Gandhi adopted the first mass protest meeting involving the concept of Satyagraha to oppose the passage of the law compelling registration of the colony's Indian population. The next seven years of struggle resulted in all forms of non-violent protests, and eventually the public outcry over the harsh treatment of the peaceful protestors caused General Jan Christian Smuts to compromise with Gandhi. As the concept of Satyagraha matured it became more and more refined and was the main



**Gandhi ji with his secretary, Miss Schlesin, and his colleague Mr. Polak in front of his office in Johannesburg (1905)**

weapon in the struggle for Indian Independence. It became known as the moral equivalent of war.

Injustice is not new to the world and too many find justification for it as it benefits one individual or group over others. However, as Mahatma Gandhi stated "Truth and Justice" will in the end replace all the despots and dictators but not by methods of mass destruction. If the results are going to be sustained over a long period of time, the change must be brought about by peaceful disobedience and non-cooperation with evil.

Albert Einstein said about

*Continued on page 33*

# ANCIENT HINDU WISDOMS FOR A CONNECTED WORLD II

*Editor's note: Below lecture was delivered at the South Church in South Glastonbury, CT. This is the concluding part of two parts article.*

## 4. *Vasudhaiva kutumbakam* (The world is one family)

We now know what this means and not just at the cellular level. A very touching demonstration of this Hindu wisdom pertaining to connectivity came about in Chicago, way, way back on September 11, 1893. A young Hindu monk, Swami Vivekananda, my spiritual hero, was addressing the Parliament of Religions. He was nervous as all the others on the platform were experienced religious leaders from around the world. Other speakers may have addressed the audience as "Ladies and Gentlemen" or "Dear Friends, or Dear Delegates," etc. But Swami Vivekananda rose and addressed them as "Sisters and Brothers of America" - which delivered such a pleasant shock to the delegates that they rose and gave him a thunderous applause. This great Hindu saint, in one phrase, in one sacred moment, unleashed the very core belief of Hindus *vasudhaiva kutumbakam*, the whole world is a family.

What are the practical lasting effects of Swami Vivekananda's visit to America in 1893? Huge and everlasting! Consider, for example, the Hindu Temple movement alone. Less than a century later Hindus in America began to plan, organize and build Hindu shrines beginning with the Ganesha temple at Queens, New York. Today there are close to a thousand of them scattered throughout the country with more than one or two temples in each state. In addition the popularity of yoga, the many ashrams providing guidance to hundreds of thousands of Americans are currently evident.

## 5. *dharmo rakshati rakshita:*

The most central and core concept in Hindu

*By Dr. A.V. (Sheenu) Srinivasan\**

philosophy is dharma. As I said before every Hindu knows what that means and in fact you can almost use it as a test of being a Hindu. All other principles and values flow from this beautiful fountain of dharma. The word dharma is formed from the root dhr and literally means to hold, sustain and maintain a thing in its being. There is no accurate translation of the word into English but we may have a glimpse of its vast scope by translating dharma as right action, right conduct, virtue, moral law, etc. Every form of life, every group of people has its dharma, which is the law of its being. Dharma or virtue is conformity with the truth of things; adharma or vice is opposition to it. Hindu ancestors mandated that we

follow dharmic values. With no hesitation whatsoever they declared, *dharme? a h?naha pashubhih sam?naha* i.e. The one devoid of dharma is an animal!

The popular Hindu dictum *dharmo rakshati rakshitaha* (dharma protects those who protect it) has two implications in its statement. The first one is easier to understand: *dharmo rakshati*, meaning that dharma offers protection. If we choose to live a life guided by the principles of dharma, then we are assured of protection by dharma. This understanding is ingrained in our thinking from childhood as one grows up in

India.

How convenient it would have been if the phrase contained only the first part: *dharmo rakshati*. It would be a simple statement analogous to saying parents' love children. It would be a clear one-way street. But it is not so because the other part of the phrase is: *rakshitaha*. This part brings

us into the action. Why was this coined? That we human beings need protection is understandable. But *rakshitaha* implies that the concept itself needs





protection too. This is interesting as it conveys the need to protect the very concept whose protection we are seeking. Dharma will protect you if you protect it. Now it is an equation. Thus, long ago it appears there was this recognition that we cannot simply take it for granted that dharma will reign supreme always and that there is no danger to it. Therefore a duty is imposed on those who seek such protection from dharma, and that duty is to take care that this wonderful governing concept of life is not in any jeopardy. Thus dharma is the very core of the Hindu code of behavior and the Hindu view of life which according to Dr. Radhakrishnan is "an attempt to discover the ideal possibilities of human life".

#### **6. Ayam loka: priyamata:**

(This world is to be loved)

Love of life, contrary to popular belief, is also ingrained in Hindu Thought. The Vedas declared adyeha (Here and Now!). Their thinking was the hereafter will take care of itself if we paid meticulous attention to the here - this life and enjoy it to the fullest extent by adhering to what we Hindus call chaturvidha phala purushartha, meaning four aspects of life known as dharma, artha, kama and moksha. We have just discussed dharma, artha defines financial aspects of life, kama, the aesthetic aspects of life (love, art, culture ...). So the mandate: Live a full life within the framework of dharma to reach the ultimate release known as moksha, even as we enjoy life on this earth.

#### **7. yatra naryastu pujiyante ramante tatra devata:**

(Where women are honored, there the gods delight)

The ancients recognized the most fundamental role women play in societies. After thousands of years we still have not learned that lesson fully everywhere. For Hindus this is a given and it is driven deep into our psyche through the two great epics. In the Ramayana, the kidnapping of Sita, wife of the hero Rama, by the demon king Ravana led to a terrible war. Similarly shaming of princess Draupathi in the epic Mahabharata led to a great war that nearly destroyed the race. That is the reason why these epics are popular in India and that is also the reason that motivated the British playwright Peter Brooks to produce a fantastic nine hour drama on that epic. I urge you to read the epic and/or watch Peter Brook's production to understand the Hindu mind.

#### **8. karmaneyeva adhikraste ...**

(You have but one right and that is to do your duty)

The same scripture also mandated that you have a right and that right is to perform your duty with extraordinary passion reaching extraordinary heights through constant education, training, and experimentation to perfect the techniques to contribute your very best to society. The focus was the society, the community, the world at large. In fulfilling these duties you were warned that while performing the very best you should never focus on the benefits of those actions to you as an individual. You just do it! Because your dharma requires to do so. Your dharma also requires that you constantly upgrade your skills so you are the best there is. This system would be what I may call a dream of corporate management everywhere.

#### **9. na hi jnanena sadrsham**

(There is nothing superior to knowledge)

It is hard to believe the extent of emphasis my ancestors placed on knowledge. The knowledge implied here is higher knowledge - knowledge leading to the realization of the self which leads to the last ancient Hindu wisdom I discuss here tonight.

#### **10. Atmanam vidhdhi:**

(Know thyself)

You may have heard a story which goes like this: Someone saw God and asked: Who are you?

God said: You! The non-dual or advaita philosophy asserts this dictum which leads to the phrase: Tat-Tvamasi i.e. Thou art That. Self-awareness is very difficult to realize. If/when we do know who we really are, then according to Ramana Maharshi, a great saint, "Find out who you are and then will be an end to all your doubts".

According to the Hindu, the supreme spirit is identified as Brahman, a universal spirit that is always referred to as "It" and not as a He or a She; Thou art That then means "You are verily Brahman." Brahman was understood to be the only thing real in the universe. All else is therefore unreal, false or illusory and untrue. Brahman sounds like an abstract entity, but is entirely real and in every sense the Supreme Soul, Supreme Being, Creator, the One and Only Reality. And if some wanted to call it God, so be it.

In a sense this also explains the connectivity I referred to earlier. Joseph Campbell, an American author known for his work on comparative mythology in his book Thou art That wonders about a question the German philosopher Schopenhauer posed: How is it possible, that suffering that is neither my own nor of my



concern should immediately affect me as though it were my own, and with such force that it moves me to action? Campbell says "This is something really mysterious, something for which Reason can provide no explanation, Schopenhauer's response, which apparently delighted Campbell was "that the immediate reaction and response represented the breakthrough of a metaphysical realization best rendered as "thou art that." Paraphrasing Schopenhauer I might add this identification with someone, not yourself, is a penetration of the barrier between persons so that the other was no longer perceived as an indifferent stranger but as person "in whom I suffer, in spite of the fact that his skin does not enfold my nerves."

*ayam bandhurayam neti laghuchtasam*

*udara caritnam tu vasudhaiva kutumbakam*

"This is my relative and that is a stranger is what small minded persons think, but for the magnanimous the whole world is a family."

Therefore when I see you as audience, I notice you do not all look alike, of course, but you are indeed alike when I identify you as those "free, unbounded, holy, pure, and perfect" souls.

I opened this discussion referring to Hindus who began worshiping a variety of gods and goddesses based on the Vedas and ended with the Upanishads concluding that none of this is necessary to achieve the Hindu's ultimate goal of salvation. To illustrate that let me conclude with a parable I made up and wrote in my book *Hinduism for Dummies* (page 156):

#### **A parable**

You're climbing some rock-cut steps to an ancient temple on a hill. But this temple is not to a deity. It has no priests. It has no bells to ring, and you do not bring any offerings beyond yourself in body and spirit. As you climb, at each step, one after another, you discard a dogma. You reject ritualistic approaches. You sweat through the futility of pride and vanity and settle for humility. You seek satisfaction beyond pleasure of the senses -- something deeper.

As you climb higher and higher, you recognize that ignorance of your real nature is the source of all problems, so your goal is to destroy ignorance. Another step up and you realize that you do not need to abandon anything but simply remain detached! As the ancient



Hindus said, real knowledge and infinite joy are yours, and they didn't mince words. And with the next step, you realize that simply believing is not enough; you must experience it yourself. Yourself. One more step, and you rise above mere intellect and stand on the threshold of a mystic experience with your heart and intuition tuned to that experience. Experience and only experience counts here on this hill.

The sanctum sanctorum-the holiest of holy places-at this temple contains Bliss. Yes, bliss. That is what the ancient Hindus considered worth living (dying?) for. Bliss is your birth right, proclaims the Upanishads. Your interest is nothing but spiritual illumination. You have entered the temple of the Upanishads. You have reached the source of joy. Now you can begin your earnest inquiry into the ultimate Truth.

Before I conclude, let me share with you an extraordinary and very practical wisdom that occurs in an episode in the second epic, the Mahabharata in which the hero, prince Yudhishtira was asked a question. This was a high stakes Q&A session where the life of his brothers was involved. The details are in my book *Yaksha Prashna*.

The question was: Who is happy? And this was his answer: That person who is free of debt, not in constant travel, and who eats a frugal, satisfying hot meal in his own home every evening.

That person is happy!

Swami Tyagananda in his book *Walking the Walk: A Manual of Karma Yoga* says "It is, in fact, simple to be happy, but is difficult to be simple!" Isn't that the truth!



### **About the Author**

#### **Dr. Srinivasan**

*is the author of many publications including award winning books Vedic Wedding: Origins, Tradition and Practice (The National Best Books 2007 Awards), A Hindu Primer: Yaksha Prashna (2016 Benjamin Franklin Award) and Hinduism for Dummies (see the amazing reviews posted on Amazon.com shown on my site [www.avsrinivasan.com](http://www.avsrinivasan.com))*



## Celebrating 125th anniversary of Swami Vivekananda's Address at The World Parliament of Religion, Chicago



### Buddhism, the fulfillment of Hinduism

September 26 th, 1893

I am not a Buddhist, as you have heard, and yet I am. If China, or Japan, or Ceylon follow the teachings of the Great Master, India worships him as God incarnate on earth. You have just now heard that I am going to criticize Buddhism, but by that I wish you to understand only this. Far be it from me to criticize him whom I worship as God incarnate on earth. But our views about Buddha are that he was not understood properly by his disciples. The relation between Hinduism (by Hinduism, I mean the religion of the Vedas) and what is called Buddhism at the present day is nearly the same as between Judaism and Christianity. Jesus Christ was a Jew, and Shakya Muni was a Hindu. The Jews rejected Jesus Christ, nay, crucified him, and the Hindus have accepted Shakya Muni as God and worship him. But the real difference that we Hindus want to show between modern Buddhism and what we should understand as the teachings of Lord Buddha lies principally in this: Shakya Muni came to preach nothing new. He also, like Jesus, came to fulfil and not to destroy. Only, in the case of Jesus, it was the old people, the Jews, who did not understand him, while in the case of Buddha, it was his own followers who did not realize the import of this teachings. As the Jew did not understand the fulfilment of the Old Testament, so the Buddhist did not understand the fulfilment of the truths of the Hindu religion.

Again, I repeat, Shakya Muni came not to destroy, but he was the fulfilment, the logical conclusion, the logical development of the religion of the Hindus.

The religion of the Hindus is divided into two parts: the ceremonial and the spiritual. The spiritual portion is specially studied by the monks. In that there is no caste. A man from the highest caste and a man from the lowest may become a monk in India, and the two castes become equal. In religion there is no caste; caste is simply a social institution. Shakya Muni himself was a monk, and it was his glory that he had the large-heartedness to bring out the truths from the hidden Vedas and throw them broadcast all over the world. He was the first being in the world who brought missionarising into practice--nay, he was the first to conceive the idea of proselytizing.

The great glory of the Master lay in his wonderful sympathy for everybody, especially for the ignorant and the poor. Some of his disciples were Brahmins. When Buddha was teaching, Sanskrit was no more the spoken language in India.

It was then only in the books of the learned. Some of Buddha's Brahmin disciples wanted to translate his teachings into Sanskrit, but he distinctly told them, "I am for the poor, for the people; let me speak in the tongue of the people." And so to this day the great bulk of his teachings are in the vernacular of that day in India. Whatever may be the position of philosophy, whatever may be the position of metaphysics, so long as there is such a thing as death in the world, so long as there is such a thing as weakness in the human heart, so long as there is a cry going out of the heart of man in his very weakness, there shall be a faith in God.

On the philosophic side the disciples of the Great Master dashed themselves against the eternal rocks of the Vedas and could not crush them, and on the other side they took away

from the nation that eternal God to which every one, man or woman, clings so fondly. And the result was that Buddhism had to die a natural death in India. At the present day there is not one who calls oneself a Buddhist in India, the land of its birth.

But at the same time, Brahminism lost something--that reforming zeal, that wonderful sympathy and charity for everybody, that wonderful leaven which Buddhism had brought to the masses and which had rendered Indian society so great that a Greek historian who wrote about India of that time was led to say that no Hindu was known to tell an untruth and no Hindu woman was known to be unchaste.

Hinduism cannot live without Buddhism, nor Buddhism without Hinduism. Then realize what the separation has shown to us that the Buddhists cannot stand without the brain and philosophy of the Brahmins, nor the Brahmin without the heart of the Buddhist. This separation between the Buddhists and the Brahmins is the cause of the downfall of India. That is why India is populated by three hundred millions of beggars, and that is why India has been the slave of conquerors for the last thousand years. Let us then join the wonderful intellect of the Brahmins with the heart, the noble soul, and the wonderful humanizing power of the Great Master.





# World Hindu Congress

## Opens With a Resounding Call for Unity

With a backdrop of a life-size statue of Swami Vivekananda, to the traditional clarion sound of the conch, the second World Hindu Conference attended by 2,500 Hindus from 60 countries had a resounding start on Friday, 7th September 2018 at the Westin Lombard York Town Center in Chicago.

With luminaries from spiritual, educational, business, and political walks of life among the invited speakers, the message of Hindus coming together for the common good, with a sense of unity, reverberated the grand hall even as Swami Vivekananda's historic speech to the World Parliament of Religions did 125 years ago at the nearby Art Institute of Chicago.

**Dr. Mohan Bhagwat, chief of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh** from India, addressed the congress on the theme drawn from the Mahabharat, "Think collectively, Act Valiantly." Bhagwat highlighted the need for such an action now and how Hindus should work together. "It is an opportune moment. We have stopped our descent. We are contemplating how to ascend. We are

not an enslaved, downtrodden nation. People are in dire need of our ancient wisdom," Bhagwat said.

In Hindu dharma even a pest is not killed, but controlled. "Hindus don't live to oppose anybody. There are people who may oppose us. You have to tackle them without harming them," Bhagwat said. "Our universal values now called Hindu values lead to the welfare of the individual, the society, the nature and the environment. It is the duty of Hindus to remind the world, the universal values from time to time. "This duty of dharma to human beings should be performed till the world exists and thus, Hindu dharma will also exist till the world exists.

Hindus know the basic values, but have forgotten to practice them. Stressing the need for unity, Bhagwat said if a lion is alone, wild dogs can invade and destroy the lion. We must not forget that."

"We want to make the world better. We have no aspiration of dominance. Our influence is not a result of conquest or colonization."

Bhagwat said a sense of idealism is good and





described himself not as "anti-modern," but as "pro-future." He sought to describe Hindu dharma as "ancient and post-modern." Hindu society will prosper only when it works as a society, he said.

One of the key values to bring the whole world in to a team is to have controlled ego and learn to accept the consensus. For example, Lord Krishna and Yudhishtira never contradicted each other, Bhagwat said. In this context, he alluded to the war and politics in the Hindu epic Mahabharat, and said politics cannot be conducted like a meditation session, and it should be politics.

"To work together, we have to accept the consensus. We are in a position to work together," Bhagwat said. He urged the attendees to discuss and evolve a methodology to implement the idea of working collectively, "Think Collectively, Act Valiantly."

The congress recognized four organizations for their outstanding contributions to spreading Hindu philosophy.

The Bochasanwasi Aksharpurshottam Swaminayan Sanstha (**BAPS**) was honored for its extreme visual idealism around the world as it built architecturally beautiful mandirs. **Chinmaya Mission** for explaining the essence of the Gita, **Geeta Press, Gorakhpur** for making sacred Hindu literature easily accessible, and the

**International Society for Krishna Consciousness** for spreading the message of Gita were also honored.

**SP Kothari, chair of WHC**, said he and many speakers attending the conference received calls and petitions from organizations and individuals to withdraw from the Congress on the ground WHC or some of its organizers are "socially and religiously divisive." "I categorically reject this supposition," Kothari said.

"I urge them to listen to my talk and reflect on whether it is tainted with hate. I have chosen to disregard those petitions as originating from a lack of complete understanding of the World Hindu Congress."

Kothari said he welcomed diversity and evolution of thought and believed that two areas will benefit from reform. Women have not fared well and this is a universal problem. There is a large chasm and women's talents haven't been harnessed. Focus on education is the other area requiring reform. The three goals of WHC are "enlighten, reform and advance." WHC brings enlightenment throughout the world about the Hindu community through spirituality, harmony and inclusiveness, he said.

Hindus must reform and be in the forefront in eliminating social and economic inequality, foster





cooperation among those with ideas and resources, and view commerce as a means to furthering Hindu dharma for a better tomorrow.

**Vice-president of Republic of Suriname Ashwin Adhin** in his address said "We, as Hindus, never forsake our mission. Hindus have always been the missionaries of renunciation and service." Words like peace, harmony and spirituality do not appeal to ordinary people easily and they have to be framed in right perspective terms so that they get established in people's mind, Adhin said.

Addressing the "confluence of Hindu leadership who have come to connect, share ideas, inspire one another and impact the common good" **WHC coordinator Dr. Abhaya Asthana** stated that "we have gathered to reaffirm the same message of diversity, cooperation and universal acceptance" uttered by Swami Vivekananda 125 years ago. WHC, he stated is not an event, it is a community movement. It seeks to encourage Hindus around the world to ascend to the highest levels of excellence. This Congress, he stated, was important so we

"may graduate from individual success to collective success."

As a people, we must once again create wealth, affordable quality education, promote a robust Hindu presence in media, cultivate future Hindu leaders, tap the unique strengths of Hindu women and encourage Hindu organizations to work together. It is also the only way to increase our sphere of influence and have a positive societal impact globally.

This land mark event, he said, will help Hindus around the globe to introspect and deliberate the challenges and issues facing Hindus globally and to seek tangible solutions for the progress and prosperity of Hindus.

Stating that it was a big achievement for a poor Kashmiri Hindu boy to be speaking at the event, award winning actor **Anupam Kher** saluted "our country India...a place that has been home to all cultures, religions and faiths. Hinduism is a way of life, and one becomes a Hindu by living like one, he added. Tolerance was the centerpiece of Vivekananda's message. Despite

being refugees in their own country, Kashmiri Pandits have practiced tolerance for 28 years like nobody ever has, he lamented

"My roots are steeped in Hinduism. I refuse to be defined by other people's fears. My Hindu teachings and life's experiences have taught me that there is time for peace and there is time for war. I use war as a metaphor; platforms like this from which I can speak to the world, remind me of my karmic duty. As a Hindu, it pains me deeply to see how ignorance and half knowledge are destroying one of the oldest, most peaceful religion."







**Vice Chair Raju Reddy** described the congress as an extraordinary opportunity to shape the dialogue about Hindus going forward and change the perceptions of Hindus as very positive change makers wherever they may be in the world.

Reddy, a technology entrepreneur in Silicon Valley, said, Hindu Americans or more broadly Indo Americans today are known as great doctors, academicians, engineers and entrepreneurs, generally successful in different walks of life and their per capita income is twice the national average here in America. It's a point of pride but it also means we have the capacity to make a positive difference around the world.

**Conference host Dr. Shamkant Sheth** spoke of the two years of hard work that went into bringing together the WHC and of the opportunity to connect, inspire and learn to strengthen the global Hindu community in these productive 3 days of discussion. This land mark event, he said, will help Hindus around the globe to introspect and deliberate the challenges and issues facing Hindus globally and to seek tangible solutions for progress and prosperity of Hindus.

#### **Convert Hindus to Hinduism, says spiritual head of Chinmaya Mission**

Delegates to the World Hindu Congress being held in Chicago received a special sweet box in their welcome packet containing two sweet ladoos, one hard and one soft. That box was symbolic and became a talking point to clarify the common perception that Hindu society is not united. A panel discussion on "Collective efforts for Hindu emergence," opened with this backdrop.

Hindus were compared to watermelons, which has many stripes but, the inner core is one and the same. Contrast this to a pomegranate which looks smooth

outside, but its core can easily disintegrate.

The soft ladoo represents the status of Hindus today and they may be easily broken and swallowed. The future vision for Hindu society should be like a hard ladoo and strongly bonded.

**Swami Poornatmananda of Bharat Seva Ashram** said all Hindus should unite to achieve resurgence. Hindu religious teaching are for humanity. As such, schools and colleges in India should be opened to impart Hindu teachings.

**Chinmaya Mission Spiritual Head Swami Swaroopananda** said one need not merely state "I am a proud Hindu. We are proud Hindus." On the resurgence of Hinduism, he said "everything begins at home." When family breaks down, culture breaks down and life of disharmony follows, he said. "We have to convert Hindus to Hinduism." "The spirit of unity does not mean all should be the same. In the midst of diversity, we must have a common goal of dedication." We have to reform the education system that inculcates Indian culture and religion. We have to re-discover the way the rishis taught the disciples in the ancient gurukul system.

**Swami Paramatmananda, secretary general of Hindu Dharma Acharya Sabha**, said Hindus should think collectively not only for its resurgence, but for the resurgence of the whole world. Especially, the ecological problems of the world need to be solved, he said. Further, society has a "relationship problem," where one person is unable to relate to the life of another person. God did not create the world for man's consumption. The responsibility lies on Hindus to protect the ecology, he said.

**Sadguru Dalip Singh of Namdari Panth** told the Congress that Hindus and Sikhs can never be separated.



The Guru Granth Saheb says that Sikhs should remain Hindus. He urged Hindus to stop using English to describe India and call it Bharath and Hindus who know Hindi should always speak in Hindi. He also decried those who habitually blamed their motherland. Instead, one should find what is good in India and espouse it. He also visualized a Bharatiya organization encompassing Hindus, Jains, Sikhs and Buddhists.

**Madhu Pandit Dasa**, chairperson of Akshaya Patra Foundation, ISKCON, Bangalore, said the different denominations of Hinduism are a strength and not a weakness. There are common grounding principles in these denominations. He drew attention to the declining birth rate among Hindus in India as an aftermath of the one-child family planning program promoted by the Indian government. Other faiths don't buy into this program and their population is not declining, he said.

Earlier, ahead of the panel discussion, **Congressman Raja Krishnamurthy** (D-IL) addressed the World Hindu Congress. He said "Some of my friends and constituents were very concerned about my presence here today. I decided I had to be here because I wanted to reaffirm the highest and only form of Hinduism that I've ever known and been taught. Namely one that welcomes all people, embraces all people, accepts all people regardless of their faith including all my constituents." "In short, I reaffirm the teachings of Swami Vivekananda...It is because of his legacy of equality and pluralism that I stand before you as a Hindu, as an American and a United States Congressman."

#### **Permanent secretariat proposed for Hindus worldwide**

Hindu worldwide should become more visible as

positive change makers in their respective countries they call home, wherever they may be today, is the main consensus emerging from World Hindu Congress 2018, Dr. Abhaya Asthana, convener of the conference said at the concluding session in Sunday.

The Hindu Political Conference, a subset of the World Hindu Congress 2018, has suggested the need for a permanent secretariat in the US or UK for the cause of Hindu rights around the globe. To accomplish this task, a

group of eminent persons will be recruited.

The political conference highlighted the importance of asserting a strong political voice especially in countries like the Caribbean, Fiji and the African countries, and developing young political leaders. *Continued from page 23* A dynamic digital database of all political leaders by country is to be developed.

The congress hosted five other parallel sessions, on youth, media, economy, women, education, and Hindu organizations. To create awareness about atrocities committed against Hindus around the world, Hindu youth should leverage their social media skills, speak out against biased portrayals of Hindus, educate emerging politicians on the effective use of media and identifying the key roadblock to Hindu youth in embracing their Hindu identity proudly were key points. The conference has decided to establish at least 20 internships for youth who aspire to enter politics.

Freeing temples from the control of the government and an operational mechanism to reach out to unreached areas as well as how Hindu activism in the US can be replicated elsewhere were the outcomes of the Hindu organizational conference.

The media conference called for activist media entrepreneurs who are not profit driven and making writing contemporary and relevant to the present generation and make it "cool"

Finding new ways to open trade, further regulatory reforms in India, skill development, building ecosystems providing capital to startups and mentoring programs for young entrepreneurs were the recommendations of the economic conference.



Entrepreneur and Grammy nominated artist Chandrika Tandon shared her insights at the women's conference. A short term goal was to conduct value based workshops, seminars and symposiums for young girls. Long term goals were an Angel Investor group for women entrepreneurs and a global Hindu Women Business directory.

A strategy for developing scholarship in religious studies and a strong international network of Hindu scholars were the outcomes of the Education conference.

Fifty six posters on inspirational stories and community service projects were on display. The poster on Sewa International's "Toilet and hygiene project for the Girl Child," "Pakistani-Hindu - A genocide forgotten," and a poster by Gurukula.com were chosen as three best posters.

**Mohandas Pai, Sonal Mansingh, and Nagaswamy** shared the dais for the third plenary session on Hindu Society: Glory of the Past, Pain of Present and Dream for Future. Prof. Subhash Kak moderated the session.

"We have a lot to be proud of," said **Subhash Kak** and highlighted the many inventions and scientific theories of today that have already been written about in ancient literary works such as the significance of the number 108. The true father of computer science should be Panini for his 4000 rules of Sanskrit language, he said, and the inventor of quantum mechanics is said to have said that the concept came to him from the Upanishads.

Renowned classical dancer **Sonal Mansingh** spoke about "Kala, Sanskriti and Vidya" and how one is always seeking eternal life in this ephemeral life. This can be achieved by Nritya, which not just dance. Every breath you take is a dance, the blood flowing in your veins is a dance, the heart beat is taal. Even the word Bharath has music in it - as Bha means love, Ra means raga and ta means taal.

India's economy is \$2.6 trillion said Mohandas Pai chairperson of Board of Manipal Global, and is third largest economy in the world, following China and the US. India will become a \$10 trillion economy by 2030.

Everyone should have the basic necessities of life like food, shelter, electricity, water and healthcare. These problems will be solved by 2030. We need to invest in education, fund political parties through checks and demand honesty from our politicians, he said.

R. Nagaswamy, historian and archeologist from Tamil Nadu, spoke about Manu Dharma which is derived from the Vedas. This was the first constitution and law code established 3500 years ago, he said.

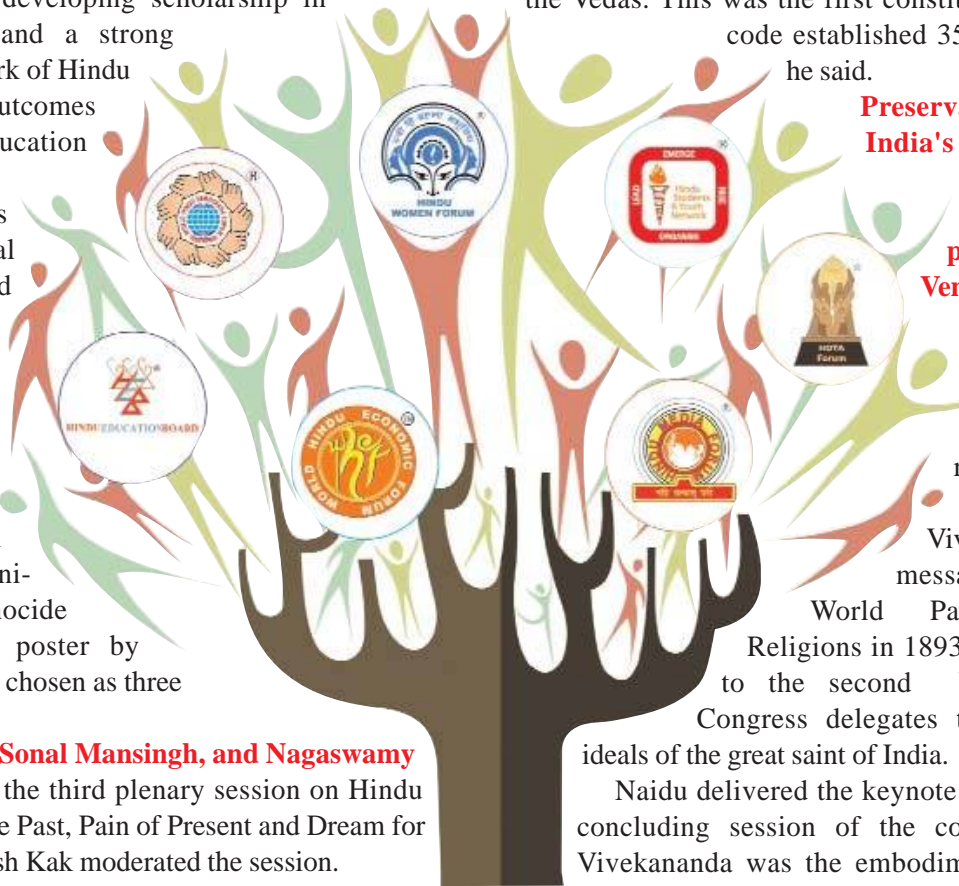
**Preservation of India's heritage is nationalism, says Vice-president Venkaiah Naidu**

India's Vice President Venkaiah Naidu renewed Swami

Vivekananda's message to the World Parliament of Religions in 1893 and appealed to the second World Hindu Congress delegates to follow the ideals of the great saint of India.

Naidu delivered the keynote address at the concluding session of the congress. Swami Vivekananda was the embodiment of Hindu culture. "Let us rededicate ourselves to the thoughts (of Vivekananda) for the greatness of mankind," Naidu said. Naidu peppered his speech with generous Sanskrit and Telugu quotes. He told the gathering though he was not in politics anymore, he was glad to come to Chicago and felt it was his duty to attend the great event happening in the name of Swami Vivekananda.

The organizers announced that the third World Hindu Conference will be held in Bangkok, Thailand, from Nov. 4 to 6, 2022. The conference theme will be "Victory of dharma, not adharma."



# Building Self-confidence in Young Girl Children through

## Devi Jagran:

### Awakening The Goddess

By Asha Shukla

As per the UN report on 'Ending violence against women', seven out of ten women would experience physical or sexual violence in their lifetime and one out of 10 girls have faced sexual violence at some point in their lives. Girls are at greater risk of sexual violence, harassment and exploitation. The Thomson Reuter survey report 2018 paints a very worrying picture regarding the safety and security of women especially regarding sexual violence. India and USA are rated among the most unsafe countries for women.

Violence against women cuts across all social and economic strata and is deeply embedded in cultures around the world. Rape and other forms of sexual violence are increasing, and young women tend to fall victim to intimate violence more often than older women. The findings indicate clearly that violence against women is not a small problem that only occurs in some pockets of society, but rather is a global public health problem of epidemic proportions, requiring urgent action.

In addition to the resulting adverse psychological, sexual and reproductive health consequences, school-related gender-based violence is a major obstacle to universal schooling and the right to education for girls. Less than 40 percent of the women experiencing violence seek help of any sort.

There is thus a clear need to make concerted efforts across a range of sectors firstly to prevent violence and also to provide necessary services to the victims of violence. Unfortunately, "Violence against women and girls is not only a consequence of gender inequality, but reinforces women's low status in society and the multiple



"There is one universal truth, applicable to all countries, cultures and communities: violence against women is never acceptable, never excusable, and never tolerable."

- Ban Ki-Moon

United Nations Secretary-General,  
(2008)



"In a country where the circumstance of women is poor, they are in distress, they are not respected, they do not have a proper station; hopes of progress in that family or country is futile."

Sister Nivedita

- social activist and a disciple of  
Swami Vivekananda

disparities between women and men". (UN General Assembly, 2006)

Despite the devastating effect violence has on women, most efforts have primarily focused on responses and services for survivors. Unfortunately public policies and interventions often overlook younger stages of life although it is the most critical time when values and norms around gender equality are firmed up.

The best way therefore to end violence against women and girls is to prevent it from happening in the first place by addressing its root and structural causes. Prevention should start early in life, by educating and working with young girls and boys promoting respectful relationships and promoting gender equality. This will ensure a faster, sustained progress on prevention and

**THE BEST WAY THEREFORE TO END VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS IS TO PREVENT IT FROM HAPPENING IN THE FIRST PLACE BY ADDRESSING ITS ROOT AND STRUCTURAL CAUSES.**



reduction of gender-based violence. Awareness-raising and community mobilization, including through media and social media, is another important component of an effective prevention strategy.

### Current state of women safety in India:

The situation in India today is extremely worrying with incidents of women and young girls being sexually attacked coming to light again and again.

The reaction of the society however despite such horrendous incidents has remained stereotype. A new case of assault on a girl or women takes place there is first a public outrage, demonstration, severe criticism and heated discussions and after a token action or promise of action by the government the heat settles down to start all over again with the same ritual on the next incident. No one comes up with any new and concrete action, neither the government nor the society. And the women suffer, and further recede in fear.

The two reports mentioned above point to the fact that the current interventions are unable to yield material results in addressing the problem. While the sexual violence is on the increase, the victims of violence either hesitate to seek help or do not have effective access to justice. Urgent and effective steps are needed at all levels to improve the security environment.

The community must step forward rather than being mute spectator and only look towards the government for effective measures to address the problem.

### Role of women in Hindu Dharma

Women have been accorded divine status in the Hindu scriptures. The ancient Hindu text *Devi Sukta* hymn of Rigveda declares the feminine energy as the essence of the universe, the one who creates all matter and consciousness, the eternal and infinite, the metaphysical and empirical reality (*Brahman*), the soul (supreme self) of everything and so woman is celebrated as the most powerful and the empowering force.

The ancient Sanskrit prayer "ॐ असतो मा सद्गमय। तमसो मा ज्योतिर्गमय। मृत्योर्मा अमृतं गमय।" embodies the purpose of a Hindu life -deliverance- from a life that is ephemeral, from darkness and from the cycle of life and death, to attain a state of permanent, eternal bliss.

So, a Hindu society strives to attain/achieve (state of) harmonious (therefore eternal) bliss, where "ॐ सर्वे भवन्तु सुखिनः। सर्वे सन्तु निरामयः। सर्वे भद्राणि पश्यन्तु। मा कश्चित दुःख

भागभवेत्।"everything (including all forms of life, rivers, mother earth, etc.) is happy, free from afflictions, surrounded (see) only by goodness and are protected from misfortune.

Despite having such a powerful role of Devi being defined in the Hindu Dharma, it has not seemingly



translated into a similar role of women in the society. Moreover, no society can ignore half its members and still hope to achieve progress and prosperity, let alone harmony or bliss. So the need for the well-being of women is well understood.

### Our inspiration:

The teachings of Swami Vivekananda - "Serve the living Gods and Goddesses" In India in the ancient scriptures Devi is celebrated as the most powerful and the empowering force. Devi Jagran is a ritual of worshipping Devi to provide power, give peace and safety.

As inspired by the teachings of Vivekananda we see women as embodiment of the divine energy - Devi. During Devi Jagran, our goal is to awaken the Devi in each girl child.

We have also observed that most current programs still try to work with a stereotypical assumption that woman's role is passive, submissive and weak and dependent on others. Moreover current programs supported by the government or nongovernmental agencies are focused primarily on interventions after an adverse incident has occurred and also have met with limited success.

At Sewa Bharati, Madhya Bharat, we envisioned a unique program where communities help themselves by empowering the girls within. This is through creating an awareness in the girls that they are not weak, that they have a latent energy and strength. On the other hand also



**अमूल्या-** मैं भोपाल से आत्मरक्षा प्रशिक्षण लेकर अपने गांव सीतापुर में मेरे जैसी और भी लड़कियों को प्रशिक्षित करूँगी जिससे उनके अंदर की शक्तियाँ भी जाग्रत हो सकें व वह और भी लड़कियों को प्रशिक्षित कर सकें।

**भूमिका-** श्रीमती आशा शुक्ल का मैं धन्यवाद करती हूँ कि उन्होंने हमें एक ऐसी चाबी पकड़ाई जिससे हमने हमारे अंदर छिपी संपूर्ण शक्तियों का ताला खोला और आज हम बहुत ही गुडवान व शक्तिशाली हो गए हैं।



**मुनिय्या-देवी जागरण कार्यक्रम** के माध्यम से हम सभी लड़कियों ने अपने अंदर की शक्तियों को जाग्रत किया और अब हमें महसूस होने लगा की हम भी झाँसी की रानी की तरह स्वयं की व दूसरे लोगो की भी रक्षा कर सकते हैं।

**उषा-** देवी जागरण कार्यक्रम इसलिए रखा गया है जिसके द्वारा लड़कियाँ (देवियाँ) अपने अंदर की शक्ति को उभार सकें व समाज में लड़कियों के साथ हो रहे अनोपचारिक व्यवहार से भी लड़ सकें। मैं सेवा भारती व हमारी श्रीमती आशा शुक्ल को धन्यवाद देती हूँ कि उन्होंने हमें सभी परिस्थितियों से लड़ने योग्य बनाया।



creating programs involving boys and the families about gender equality and respect for women and girls. The girls and boys should come out of the mindset 'I am weak, I am strong'.

### **Devi Jagran - A unique Approach:**

Rather than simply expressing devotion to God, only through worship we should serve the humanity. The 'token expression of devotion' should be followed up with 'Action', and so in our hearts at Sewa Bharti, following solemn resolution has taken place besides the above noble prayer:

### **We solemnly resolve to strive for deliverance from:**

**(1) Superstition to Awakening:** To Understand the real objective behind religious/cultural rituals (Devi Jagran) and to adopt new/modern methods to achieve empowerment. The real empowerment is through awakening the latent divinity (strength and goodness in oneself).

**(2) Problem to Solution:** To stop lamenting, and start acting, rather than waiting for someone else (e.g. government) to solve our own problems.

**(3) Confusion to Concerted efforts:** To work together towards solving problems. Pulling/pushing in any which direction will not solve the problem.

**(4) Darkness to Light:** To make aware of the latent energy within oneself and to bring joy through awakening of latent divinity brought about by right actions and working together.

**(5) As an aid to community policing:** Stepping forward to help the police in creating a safe society.

A unique, one of its kind program has been designed which makes the young girls aware of their latent energy and the potential they possess to keep them strong and so safe and capable of defending themselves in any adverse

circumstance. It is the awakening of the living Goddesses - so the program called "Devi Jagran".

Devi Jagran is the fruit of Vivekananda's teachings, my (author) passion and Sewa-Bharti's solemn resolve to worship the divine through service.

Devi Jagran program brings out the inherent energy, teaching self-defense techniques to the young girls from the weaker sections of the society (since they are the most vulnerable). Self-defense fuels empowerment and awakens the strength and spirit of women.

### **The program consists of:**

1. Teaching self-defense techniques for various situations.
2. Yogasan and pranayama and
3. Counseling.

### **The purpose is threefold:**

**A. Physical awakening:** To make her aware of her inner strength. For she always considered her weak and vulnerable, the teaching of self-defense techniques removes this darkness in thought and makes her aware of her strength.

**B. Mental and psychological awakening:** Through Yogasan, pranayama and meditation she becomes aware of her mental strength and the God gifted sixth sense and further strengthens it.

**C. Social awakening:** Through counseling she understands the strength and weakness of the social media, the do's and don'ts for safety, importance of organization, her responsibility towards the society

### **Process:**

Girls from the most crime prone areas of cities in Madhya Bharat (Central India) are first registered with Nivedita-Bharti (a project of Sewa-Bharti Madhya Bharat, for personality development and character



building of adolescent girls, presently 2000 in number). Batches of 40 girls each are formed for training as per a well-designed program.

Registering the girls with the Nivedita Bharti helps in keeping track of their progress, in keeping them engaged, providing them with regular counselling, support and help of any kind required.

Devi Jagran, Self-defense training program has full endorsement and support of the Madhya Pradesh Police, who are actively partnering with, and profoundly appreciative of Sewa-Bharati, for conducting this program. Addl DG Police (for Crime against women and children), Mr. Anvesh Mangalam who has done commendable work in tackling this problem, is also a constant source of inspiration as well as very supportive of the project.

Sewa-Bharti, through its years of selfless social service in every section of the society has earned good will and earned a place in the hearts of the people living in sewa bastis (slum areas) as well as affluent people. People from sewa bastis are willing to walk an extra mile, if recommended by Sewa Bharti. So, Sewa Bharti does the ground work, convinces individuals and their families and registers girls from crime-prone areas for the Devi-Jagran program, and makes all arrangements for training with the help and involvement of the community, while Madhya Pradesh police with its expertise in self-defense training-both physical and psychological as well as the dos and don'ts to keep oneself safe, handle the training/technical aspect. After the training, girls are given gur (jaggery), chana (grams) and sahan (drumsticks) as supplement nutrition for their growing needs. Yogasan, pranayama and counselling are also integral part of the training for their mental strength.

The program is also for preparing master trainers for taking forward the Devi-Jagran project to other areas.

Last but not the least, workshops for the parents are planned to help them understand the true nature of the challenge and the ways to tackle it.

### Impact:

Three batches have already undergone training. The impact has been remarkable. Girls who feared moving out in their neighborhood now walk with confidence. The overall security environment in the area has improved.

### Future Plans:

★ To conduct 50 Devi-Jagran programs each year, each batch comprising 40 girls from the most vulnerable areas of Central India (Madhya Bharat Prant).

★ To train young boys registered with Kishore Bharati (a project of Sewa Bharati Madhya Bharat for

the character building and personality development)

★ To organize annual public event of demonstration of the self-defense techniques by the girls trained under Devi Jagran program in the Lal parade ground starting from 26th January 2019. The event will be attended by the prominent members of the community, police, and the general public.

★ Preparing teams of master trainers.

★ To provide expert guidance for organizing and conducting the program elsewhere

★ Organizing parent workshops periodically.

Our motto

हमारा ध्येय

" Sushikshit Bharat - Surakshit Bharat"

II सुशिक्षित भारत सुरक्षित भारत II

### You can help:

The girls (undertaking training) coming from poor background living in difficult conditions in slums and crime prone areas are vulnerable, and having seen a tough world around them often have sad outlook and low self-confidence and esteem. Your support (cash, kind and/or moral (letter, etc.) would mean a lot to them, making them realize that the world is one big caring family (Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam).

### Expenses for organizing the training program:

★ Recurrent cost for organizing the training program US \$300 per batch

★ One time investment of US \$5000- Cost of mattresses (the training is conducted on

★ Simple hard floor, so we need mattresses. Currently we are hiring the mattress. We plan to purchase them as this program will be conducted regularly)

★ Cost of organizing annual function is US \$10,000.

### For more information please contact:

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### About the Author



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# Hindi through Incredible Indian Stories in Startalk Balvihar Camp

*By Smita Daftardar*

**S**ummer means different things to different people. From exotic vacations to backyard cookouts, from programming robots to gently lifting a pot off a potter's wheel, the possibilities for all abilities and interests are endless. Understandably (then), a summer camp for learning Hindi faces a stiff competition to land itself on a family's summer to-do list. Yet, for the seventh year in a row, the VHPA Balvihar Startalk Summer Hindi camp has been successfully attracting students, both new and returning and keeping them engaged in a fun and project based learning environment. Startalk Hindi Camp is an immersion camp, where campers are "immersed" in the target language by re-creating the target culture through language, food, clothing and other aspects of daily life. This year, students attended a week-long online session, followed by a 12-day face to face session, amounting to 96+ hours of Hindi instruction, from June 4th to June 23rd. The face to face session was held at the Lakeside Middle School in Forsyth County, GA.

The camp follows a well-designed curriculum based on the guidelines for teaching foreign language in US schools. The theme for this year's camp revolved around famous children's stories from India. Children learnt about the different types of stories such as Panchtantra, Jaatak kathaayeN, Pauranik and Historical stories. They also got exposed to the variety of traditional and modern story telling styles prevalent in India, from Puppetry to Pandwani, all the way to Bollywood.

Students were grouped based on their language proficiency. Each group read and watched different stories. While the beginner language learners read Panchtantra stories, the intermediate students read the famous parable of The Elephant and Six Blind Men. The advance students read and watched the popular Tenali Raman TV series. Students analyzed the stories and examined the message conveyed by them. Using these messages, they suggested solutions to real life issues such as bullying, working together, addressing differences amicably, etc. A variety of hands-on activities created opportunities for students to read, write





and most importantly, speak Hindi. The tasks were especially designed such that kids spoke not only rehearsed language, but also spontaneous Hindi, which is a very crucial component of learning a new language. The overall target of the camp was to have students work in small groups to create a new story, as well as present the story using media of their choice such as a play, a puppet-show or a movie. Apart from this each student made his/her own storybook, complete with illustrations. The theme of the camp allowed for a lot of creativity, and campers came up with a variety of interesting stories, each with a message for the reader. The process of writing and presenting their stories ensured that the students were applying the language they learned in the camp in a measurable way.

A field trip to the Center of Puppetry Arts in Downtown Atlanta, perfectly complemented the camp theme and gave campers a closer look at the art of storytelling from India as well as around the globe. Members of the center lead the students through an informative "Behind the Scenes Tour" explaining how puppets are made & operated, and how the sets are created. The kids participated in a scavenger hunt in the Indian Puppets Exhibit, learning about a variety of puppets from different regions of India. The center also included an extensive collection of puppets from all over the world, a colorful sight to behold.

Apart from reading and writing stories, campers participated in three different clubs. In the food club, they made cookies from scratch, starting with dry ingredients, mixing them and finally giving the dough unique shapes. The cookies were then baked in the school kitchen, and turned out delicious! The next cooking projects were making chat and the mouth-watering all-time favorite, Pani-Puri. Over a period of 3 days, kids learnt a variety of vocab and language chunks through these fun food activities, from identifying ingredients and utensils, to sharing the recipe and making jingles to sell their products. In the Science and Environment Club, students used recycled material to make musical instruments such as drums,



harmonica and guitars. Here again, students were given all the information, including a few scientific facts about sound and how it travels, in Hindi. Equipped with the language, students were able to describe in Hindi what they made and present a comparison of the sounds of different instruments. The language learning continued in the Art and Craft Club, where students used recycled material to create beautiful art projects. Students made paper-Mache face masks and created 3D dioramas housed inside empty milk gallons. These dioramas depicted the setting and characters of the story that the students created during the camp.



An immersion camp for Hindi would be incomplete without a dedicated session on Indian fitness and sports routine. A trained Yog instructor led the students in a daily Yog session, teaching Pranayaam, various Asanas and their importance. This was followed by an hour of sports where students played the popular game Kabbaddii, along with Saakali and other games.

One of the highlights of the 12-day face to face session was the food served to the kids. Over the period of two weeks, kids were led on a culinary journey across the states of India, experiencing the variety of tastes that India has to offer, from idli-vada-sambar in the south to kachori-aloo ki subzi of Uttar Pradesh, and a variety of delicious desserts. Needless to say, food remains a major attraction in the camp, with daily breakfast, lunch and snacks. A common complaint among Indian American parents that kids do not want to eat Indian food, is





for the past few years Urvi Gupta managed the printing and Photo/Videography for the camp was managed by Vinay Patel, a quiet and dedicated member of the team, who seemed to be magically omnipresent, ready to capture the activities of the camp all day long. His hard work not just creates great memories, but also provides valuable evidence of the students' learning to the organizations funding these camps. The food for the entire camp was managed by Lata Chatkaraji, perhaps

practically non-existent in this camp.

On the last day of the camp, parents and community members were invited to attend an exhibition of all the writing, art and science projects created by the students in the camp, including the story book that they created. To celebrate the student writers, a book-signing event was held at each table, after the story-books written by the students were put up for sale, as a fund-raiser for the Habitat for Humanity. After the exhibition, students presented the stories they created; some presented plays, and others used hand-made puppets and sets to tell their story. One group of students made the traditional "Kavad-Katha" display, where the story is told with help of unfolding pictures, while another group presented their story as a short video film. The event was covered by Anjali Chhabria of TV Asia

The camp was led by camp director Manju Tiwari, lead instructor Smita Daftardar along with talented and dedicated instructors Preeti Gupta, Shruti Singh, Neetu Sharma, Varsha Gupta, Brijrani Verma and Shafali Gupta, and teaching assistants (TAs) Esha Oza, Nikita Jain, Manas Sharma, Manjari Hegde and Mehul Mehra. The TAs need a special mention - these are college students, most of them graduates of the VHPA Balvihar Hindi School, and are former Startalk students and volunteers. They help with classroom management and are great role models for the students. The Camp Administrator was Vivek Patel, an efficient and multi-talented Balvihar and Startalk Alumni who has been successfully managing this role



the favorite person of the camp! Thanks to her efficient management, the entire camp was kept well-fed and happy, every single day. A team of high school student volunteers, Saakshi Sachdev, Shreya Sachdeva, Abhinav Singh, Aniruddha Gupta and Tanishq Jain helped with the overall running of the camp, from delivering supplies to classrooms to helping serve food. Likewise, Sonika Chand ji, a volunteer with the VHPA Balvihar extended her help throughout the camp. The work of all these volunteers is an invaluable contribution to the smooth and timely running of the camp.

The VHPA Balvihar Startalk camp was very well received by students and parents alike. The feedback received from the students was overwhelmingly positive. The camp also received highly favorable rating from the



team of observers from Startalk. Looking at the past trends, the VHPA Balvihar team is hopeful of continuing to offer this great opportunity to the Atlanta community in the coming years.



[www.balvihar.org](http://www.balvihar.org)



## Celebrating 125th anniversary of Swami Vivekananda's Address at The World Parliament of Religion, Chicago



### Religion not the crying need of India

September 20th, 1893

Christians must always be ready for good criticism, and I hardly think that you will mind if I make a little criticism. You Christians, who are so fond of sending out missionaries to save the soul of the heathen--why do you not try to save their bodies from starvation? In India, during the terrible famines, thousands died from hunger, yet you Christians did nothing. You erect churches all through India, but the crying evil in the East is not religion--they have religion enough--but it is bread that the suffering millions of burning India cry out for with parched throats. They ask us for bread, but we give them stones. It is an insult to a starving people to offer them religion; it is an insult to a starving man to teach him metaphysics. In India a priest that preached for money would lose caste and be spat upon by the people. I came here to seek aid for my impoverished people, and I fully realized how difficult it was to get help for heathens from Christians in a Christian land.

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### Address at the Final Session

September 27th, 1893

The World's Parliament of Religions has become an accomplished fact, and the merciful Father has helped those who labored to bring it into existence, and crowned with success their most unselfish labor. My thanks to those noble souls whose large hearts and love of truth first dreamed this wonderful dream and then realized it. My thanks to the shower of liberal sentiments that has overflowed this platform. My

thanks to this enlightened audience for their uniform kindness to me and for their appreciation of every thought that tends to smooth the friction of religions. A few jarring notes were heard from time to time in this harmony. My special thanks to them, for they have, by their striking contrast, made general harmony the sweeter.

Much has been said of the common ground of religious unity. I am not going just now to venture my own theory. But if anyone here hopes that this unity will come by the triumph of any one of the religions and the destruction of the other, to him I say, "Brother, yours is an impossible hope." Do I wish that the Christian would become Hindu? God forbid. Do I wish that the Hindu or Buddhist would become Christian? God forbid. The seed is put in the ground, and earth and air and water are placed around it. Does the seed become the earth, or the air, or the water? No. It becomes a plant, it develops after the law of its own growth, assimilates the air, the earth, and the water, converts them into plant substance, and grows into a plant.

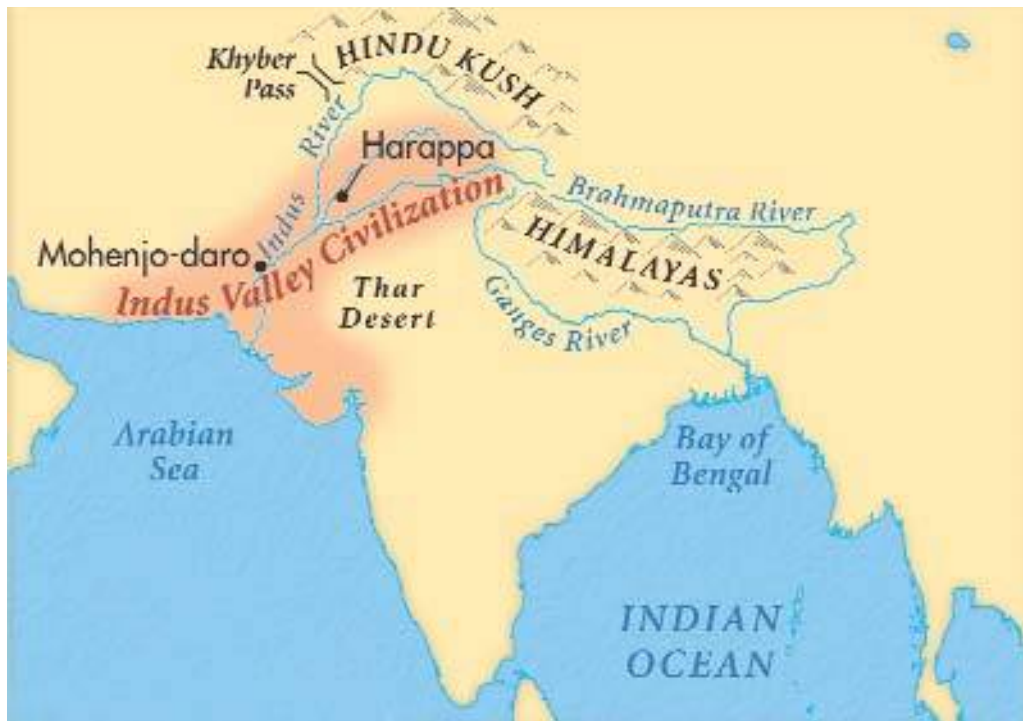
Similar is the case with religion. The Christian is not to become a Hindu or a Buddhist, nor a Hindu or a Buddhist to become a Christian. But each must assimilate the spirit of the others and yet preserve his individuality and grow according to his own law of growth. If the Parliament of Religions has shown anything to the world it is this: It has proved to the world that holiness, purity and charity are not the exclusive possessions of any church in the world, and that every system has produced men and women of the most exalted character. In the face of this evidence, if anybody dreams of the exclusive survival of his own religion and the destruction of the others, I pity him from the bottom of my heart, and point out to him that upon the banner of every religion will soon be written, in spite of resistance: "Help and not Fight," "Assimilation and not Destruction," "Harmony and Peace and not Dissension."

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## Nine Elevens Distinguished

*Continued from page 13* Gandhi that the generations to come will hardly believe that one of flesh and blood actually walked on this earth. That time is already upon us and therefore we must revisit his spirit, his teachings "my life is my message" and distribute throughout the globe the source of his inspiration, the Bhagavad-Gita. It is the Duty of all who feel that the thoughts, words, and deeds of this humble man can still make a significant contribution to our lives and the societies in which we live to promote his life and its message. The State of Illinois may be the first jurisdiction to take steps that NINE ELEVEN will no longer be a date that will be associated with hate and violence. The Governor has signed a Declaration that NINE ELEVEN will henceforth be known as Swami Vivekananda Day. This was announced at the conclusion of the 2nd World Hindu Conference held in Chicago to mark the 125th year of the dynamic monk who impressed the Brothers and Sisters of America with his message of peace and universal brotherhood. ■ ■ ■

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# Contours of Indic Civilization II

**By Dhiru Shah,**

*Director/Treasurer, WAVES*

*Editor's Note: Below is the second part of the paper presented at WAVES conference 2018.*

**Summary:** An attempt is being made here to inquire and analyze the reasons for the Indic civilization's downfall from the most prosperous and enlighten country in the world till 1000 CE to a poor third world country at the time of independence from the British rule in 1947.

## **Medieval Islamic aggressions and rule in India**

The Islamic chroniclers, historians and writers have left behind a vast volume of factual records of the Islamic invaders and Muslim rulers in India, from the seventh to the nineteenth century. They have described in detail about massacres, rapes, torture, forced conversions and enslavement of Hindus, Jains, Buddhists and Sikhs, destruction of temples, and plunder of their towns and cities.

In order to distort history books, NCERT issued guidelines to rewrite Islamic history. A summary

appeared in the Indian Express in New Delhi edition on January 17, 1982 with the idea "to weed out undesirable textbooks (in History and languages) and remove matter which is prejudicial to national integration and unity and which does not promote social cohesion..." [i]

According to American historian Will Durant, "Islamic conquest of India is probably the bloodiest story in history." [4] Alain Danielou says: "From the time Muslims started arriving, around 632 AD, the history of India becomes a long, monotonous series of murders, massacres, spoliations, destructions. It is, as usual, in the name of 'a holy war' of their faith, of their sole God, that the barbarians have destroyed civilizations, wiped out entire races." [ii]

K. S. Lal (in his book 'Growth of Muslim Population in India') estimates that the Indian (subcontinent) population decreased by 80 million between 1000 CE (Afghanistan conquest by Islam) and 1525 CE (end of Delhi Sultanate). Most were killed, and millions were taken as slaves to the Middle East countries. [iii]

In order to fully understand the Muslim invasion of India, it is relevant to mention here that after the death of the Prophet Muhammed, Islam was spread swiftly



through conquests, in a short period of seventy years (637-709 CE), from Palestine, Syria, Persia, Egypt, Inner Mongolia, Bukhara, Tashkent, North Africa and Spain. Most people of the conquered lands were quickly converted to Islam by sword, and their culture and language Arabized.

Since it is not possible to narrate in detail, nearly one thousand years' Islamic history of India in a paper of this size, I will present here only glimpses of the terror, gory deeds, loot and plunder by Islamic invaders and rulers, and the legacy of the Muslim rule in India, as written by the Islamic chroniclers and historians.

**1.** The Islamic rule in India was a theocracy. Amir Khusrau said: "...The whole country, by means of sword of our holy warriors, has become like a forest denuded by its thorns by fire...Islam is triumphant, idolatry is subdued."

(*Ashiqua, Elliott & Dowson Vol. III PP. 545-46*) Lal-119 [iv]

**2.** "Moreover, the main object of levying the tax is the subjection of infidels to humiliation."

(*Encyclopedia of Islam, I P 959*) - Lal 119 [v]

**3.** The Hindu middle class paid the poll tax Jiziyah and were unfairly taxed, their temples were broken, and they were very often forcibly converted to Islam.

**4.** Sufis were keen on maintaining only orthodox Muslim rule [vi]. 'Some Sufi Mashaikh too resorted to aggressive and violent means in fighting infidelity.' Eaton, Richard Maxwell [vii] (#14), Even Shaikh Muinuddin Chishti's "picture of tolerance is replaced by a portrait of him as a warrior for Islam." [viii]

**5.** The Bhakti movement succeeded in saving India from total Islamization. Brahmins also saved the Hindu culture. Wilhelm von Pochhammer writes: "What the Brahmins as protectors of their culture achieved in those days has never been properly recorded, probably because a considerable number of people belonging precisely to this class had been slaughtered. If success was achieved in preserving Hindu culture in the hell of the first few centuries, the credit undoubtedly goes to Brahmins." [ix] (#16)

**6.** Lower classes formed the bulk of the population and were economically poor and socially degraded. By the 16th and 17th centuries Indian peasants lived under crushing poverty. Pelsaert, a Dutch visitor during Jahangir's reign, observed: "The common people (live in) poverty so great and miserable that the life of the people can be depicted or accurately described only as the home of stark want and the dwelling place of bitter woe..." [x] (#17) The "plebian sort is so poor that the greatest part of them go naked." [xi] According to W. H. Moreland 'the basic object of the Mughal administration was to obtain the revenue on an ever-ascending scale.'

'Conditions became intolerable by the time of Shahjahan when peasants were compelled to sell their women and children to meet the revenue demand.' [xii]

**7.** Migration or flight was the peasant's first answer to famine or man's oppression. Amir Khusrau: "Wherever the army marched, every inhabited spot was desolated...When the army arrived there (Warangal, Deccan), the Hindu habitants concealed themselves in hills and jungles." [xiii]

Defeated Rajas and helpless agriculturists alike, sought refuge in the forests. Many *Parihars* and *Parmars*, once upon a time belonging to the proud Rajput castes, are now included in lower castes. Today, the growth SC/ST/Backward classes has reached above 50% because of historical forces operating in the Medieval times primarily.

The British census officials labeled these 'primitive Hindus', in successive censuses, as Aborigines (1818), Animists (1891-1911) and as Adherents of Tribal Religions (1921-1931). It is they who have helped save the Hindu religion by taking to the life of the jungle and remaining Hindus. If they have been harassed and oppressed by high-caste Hindus, they could have easily chosen to opt for Muslim creed even so keen on effecting proselytization. [xiv]

**8.** Slavery: From the days of Muhammad bin Qasim in the 8th century to those of Ahmad Shah Abdali in the 18th, enslavement, distribution and sale of captives was systematically practiced by Muslim invaders. When Mahmud Ghaznavi attacked Waihind (near Peshawar) in 1001-02, he took 500,000 persons of both sexes as captive. [xv] From Thanesar, according to Farishtah, "the Muhammadan army brought to Ghaznin 200,000 captives so that the capital appeared like an Indian city..." [xvi] The Hind-Kush (Hindu-killer) mountain ranges are so called because thousands of Indian captives 'yoked together' used to die while negotiating their sale. [xvii]

## 9. Music

It is difficult to claim that the contribution of Muslims to Indian music is really Muslim. What they have practiced since medieval times is Hindu classical music with its Guru-Shishya parampara. The 'Gharana' (school) system is the extension of this tradition. Most of the great Muslim musicians were and are originally Hindus. [20] Tansen was originally a Gaur Brahmin from Gwalior. Vincent Smith notes that "the fact that many of the names are Hindu, with title Khan added, indicates that the professional artists at a Mhuhammadan court often found it convenient and profitable to conform to Islam."

**10.** Temples' destruction: Many of these monuments

have been converted from Hindu temples and now extant in the shape of mosques, Idgahs, or Dargahs. Sultan Firoz Shah Tughlaq writes: "I destroyed their idol temples, and instead thereof raised mosques...where infidels and idolaters worshipped idols, Musalmans now, by God's mercy, perform their devotion to the true God." [xviii]

**11.** Forcible conversions to Islam is another legacy of Muslim conquest and rule in India. Sikandar Butshikan in Kashmir to Tipu Sultan in Mysore, Mahmud Beghara in Gujarat to Jalaluddin Muhammad in Bengal, all Muslim rulers carried on large scale forcible conversion through jihad. [xix]

**12.** Partition of the Country: (Lal P 324) Muslims could not think of living under the 'dominance' of the Hindu majority after the demise of the Moghul Empire. When the Muslim power started disintegrating, the Sufi scholar Shah Waliullah (1703-1763) wrote to the Afghan King Ahmad Shah Abdali, inviting him to invade India to help Muslims. [xx] Liaqat Ali Khan voiced his demand at a meeting with Lord Wavell on Jan 24, 1946, that the British resolve the transfer of power problem, by imposing a solution on the basis of Pakistan. [xxi] The idea of Pakistan was as old as Muslim rule in India as confirmed by MA Jinnah.

**13.** The history of communal riots is synchronous with the advent of Muslims in India [xxii].

**14.** All Muslim invaders and rulers without exception right from Muhammad Bin Qasim to Aurangzeb and Sher Shah committed extreme cruelties, genocide, destruction of temples, enslavement, forced conversion, plunder and loot of Indian wealth in the name of their faith, Islam. The records of a few, 'glamorized' Marxist historians, will expose their lies.

**(a) Mahamud Ghazni's** attack on Somnath in 1024 CE was based on his strong belief that 'jihad was central to Islam'. "... In the centre of the hall was Somnat, a stone idol, five yards in height, two of which were sunk in the ground. The King, approaching the image, raised his mace and struck off his nose. He ordered two pieces of idol to be broken off and sent to Ghizny, that one might be thrown in the threshold of the public mosque, and the other at the court door of his own palace... Two more fragments were reserved to be sent to mecca and Medina." [22, (P 43)]. On return from Tahnesur to Ghizny, "the Mohmedan army brought to Ghazni 200,000 captives, and much wealth, so that the capital appeared like an Indian city, no



soldier of the camp being without wealth, or without slaves." [22].

**(b) Muhammad Ghauri:** Hasan Nizami in 'Taj-ul-Maasir' wrote about the conquest of Ajmer in 1192: "...The army of Islam was completely victorious, a hundred thousand groveling Hindus swiftly departed to the fire of hell...He destroyed (Ajmer) the pillar & foundations of the Idol temples..." Ghauri around 1193 marched to Benares "where, having broken the idols in above 1000 temples, he purified and consecrated the latter to the worship of the true God." [22]

**(c) Alla-Ood-Deen (Allaudin) Khilji** (1296) wanted to capture Padmini, the beautiful queen of Rana Bhim Singh of Chittor but on the fall of Chittor in August 26, 1303, thousands of Rajput women including Padmini, had burnt themselves to ashes preferring a fiery death for their honor to the lecherous hell of Islamic torture.

**(d) Mahomed Toghluq** (1325 CE) "When he arrived in the district of Beiram, he plainly told his officers, that he came not to hunt beasts, but men. And without any obvious reason, began to massacre the inhabitants. He had even the barbarity to bring home some thousands of their heads, and to hand them over to the city walls." [22](P 243)

**(e) Teimoor or Tamerlane or Timur** (1398 CE) While advancing towards Delhi, it was reported to him, that there were above 100,000 prisoners in his camp, who had been taken since he crossed the Indus. "Teimoor having ascertained that most of them were idolaters, gave orders to put all above the age of fifteen to sword; so that upon on that day nearly 100,000 men were massacred in cold blood." (A.H. 801, CE 1398) [22](P. 284).

**(f) Akbar:** After the capture of Chittor, says Smith (P. 64): "Akbar exasperated by the obstinate resistance offered to his army, treated the garrison and town with merciless severity...The emperor ordered a general massacre which resulted in the death of 30,000." [xxiii] The holy Hindu cities of Prayag and Banaras, writes Vincent Smith (p.58), were plundered by Akbar because their residents were rash enough to close their gates! [28]



**(g) Jehangir:** Guru Arjun Dev was captured on the plea that he helped in Khusr's revolt with a cash gift of Rs. 5000. In June 1606 CE Guru Arjun Dev was mercilessly tortured to death under a blazing mid-summer sun with hot sand and boiling water being publicly poured on him on the bank of Ravi River in



Lahore. [28]

**(h) Shahjahan (Prince Khurram):** The much-touted love story of Mumtaz and Shahjahan associated with Taj Mahal has been questioned by historians like P.N. Oak based on the *Badshanama* where on page 403, volume I says that the Taj Mahal was Raja Mansingh's place taken from Mansingh's grandson Jaisingh for Mumtaz burial. [28](P. 344) He was notorious for womanizing to such an extent that several historians have accused him of coitus with his own daughter, Jahanara [28].



**(i) Aurangzeb:** He decapitated his three brothers. On April 18, 1669, the temple of Vishwanath at Banaras was destroyed on his order. In December 1669, he commanded the destruction of the Hindu temple of

Mathura known as Dera Keshav Dev Rai. On the same spot the foundations of a vast mosque were laid. Aurangzeb asked the Guru Tegh Bahdur to become a Muslim. He refused and so he was beheaded. "At the end of Zi-1 hijja, 1069 (Sept. 1659), the order was given for Dara Shukoh to be put to death.... After he was slain, his body was placed on a howda and carried round the city." [15, p. 246]



**(j) Nadir Shah:** (1739): His plunder: "It is probably that the plunder amounted to about eight kros of rupees" [xxiv] "... Nadir Shah came to the fort... and gave orders for a general massacre. For nine hours, an indiscriminate slaughter of all and every degree was committed. It is said that the number of those who were slain amounted to one hundred thousand..." [xxv]



[i] Kishori Saran Lal, *The Legacy of Muslim Rule in India*. South Asia Books, p. 69-70, 1992.

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# DNA Study Finds No Central Asian Trace, **Junks Aryan Invasion Theory**

**T**he much-awaited DNA study of the skeletal remains found at the Harappan site of Rakhigarhi, Haryana, shows no Central Asian trace, indicating the Aryan invasion theory was flawed and Vedic evolution was through indigenous people. The lead researchers of this soon-to be published study - Vasant Shinde and Neeraj Rai - told ET that this establishes the knowledge ecosystem in the Vedic era was guided by "fully indigenous" people with limited "external contact".

"The Rakhigarhi human DNA clearly shows a predominant local element - the mitochondrial DNA is very strong in it. There is some minor foreign element which shows some mixing up with a foreign population, but the DNA is clearly local," Shinde told ET. He went on to add: "This indicates quite clearly, through archeological data, that the Vedic era that followed was a fully indigenous period with some external contact."

According to Shinde's findings, the manner of burial is quite similar to the early Vedic period, also known as the Rigvedic Era. The pottery, the brick type used for construction and the general 'good health' of the people ascertained through the skeletal remains in Rakhigarhi, he said, pointed to a well-developed knowledge system that evolved further into the Vedic era. The study has, in fact, noted that some burial rituals observed in the Rakhigarhi necropolis prevail even now in some communities, showing a remarkable continuity over thousands of years.

Shinde, who is the vice-chancellor of the Deccan College, Pune, was the lead archaeologist in the study while Rai, who is the head of the ancient DNA laboratory at Lucknow's Birbal Sahni Institute of Palaeosciences, did the DNA study.

## **MINOR TRACES OF IRANIAN STRAINS**

According to Rai, the evidence points to a predominantly indigenous culture that voluntarily spread

across other areas, not displaced or overrun by an 'Aryan invasion'. "The condition of the human skeletons, the burial...all show absence of palaeo-pathology symptoms which could indicate ailments due to lack of medical care. The persons here were healthy; denture morphology showed teeth free of any infection; bones are healthy, as is the cranium," Rai told ET.

He also discounted the notion of any violent conflict. "There are no cuts and marks which would be associated with a population subjected to warfare. All this indicates

that the people were receiving well-developed healthcare and had full-fledged knowledge systems." The excavations in Rigvedic phase, he said, corroborate this. "This points to greater continuity rather than to a new 'Aryan race' descending and bringing superior knowledge systems to the region," Rai said.

The Rakhigarhi study, he said, while showing absence of any Central Asian/Steppe element in the genetic make-up of the Harappan people, does indicate minor traces of Iranian strains which may point to contact, not invasion.

The Aryan invasion theory holds forth that a set of migrants came from Central Asia armed with superior knowledge and arms and invaded the existing settlements to establish a more sophisticated civilization in India and pushed the original inhabitants down south. Rakhigarhi is one of the biggest Harappan civilization sites

spread across 300 hectares in Hisar, Haryana. It's estimated to be 6,000 years old and was part of the mature phase of the Harappan period.

Rai disclosed that 148 independent skeletal elements from Rakhigarhi were screened for the presence of DNA molecules at the Centre for Cellular and Molecular Biology in Hyderabad. Of the 148 skeletal remains, only two samples yielded any relevant DNA material.

Meanwhile, hectic last-minute efforts are on to get additional genetic details of the DNA material. One of the DNA samples recently faced contamination in a Seoul laboratory and efforts are on to segregate it. Samples were sent to laboratories in Seoul and Harvard for establishing accuracy. The contamination, Rai said, is unlikely to have any major bearing on the study's primary findings. ■



*The Aryan invasion theory holds forth that a set of migrants came from Central Asia armed with superior knowledge and arms and invaded the existing settlements to establish a more sophisticated civilization in India and pushed the original inhabitants down south.*



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Volume XXXXVIII

No. 3

July-September 2018

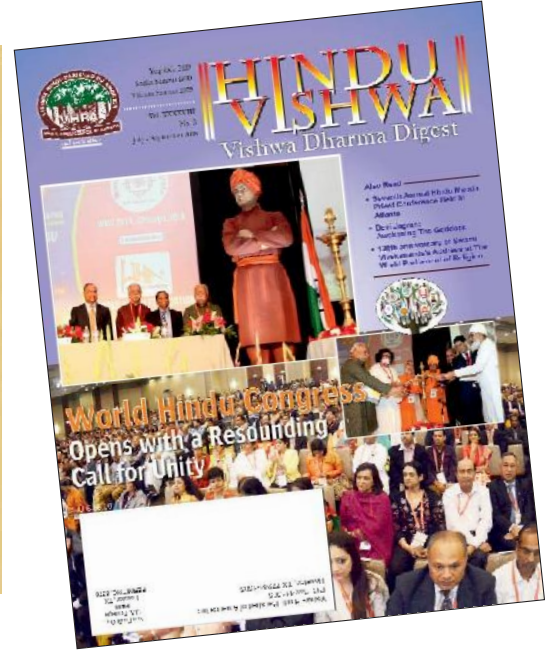
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*Uttisthata Jagrata Prapya Varannibodhata  
Kshurasanna Dhara Nishita Dustayadurgama Pathah  
tat kavayo Vadanti*

Katha Upanishad 1.3.14.

Arise! Awake! Approach the great and learn.  
Like the sharp edge of a razor is that path,  
so the wise say-hard to tread and difficult to cross.



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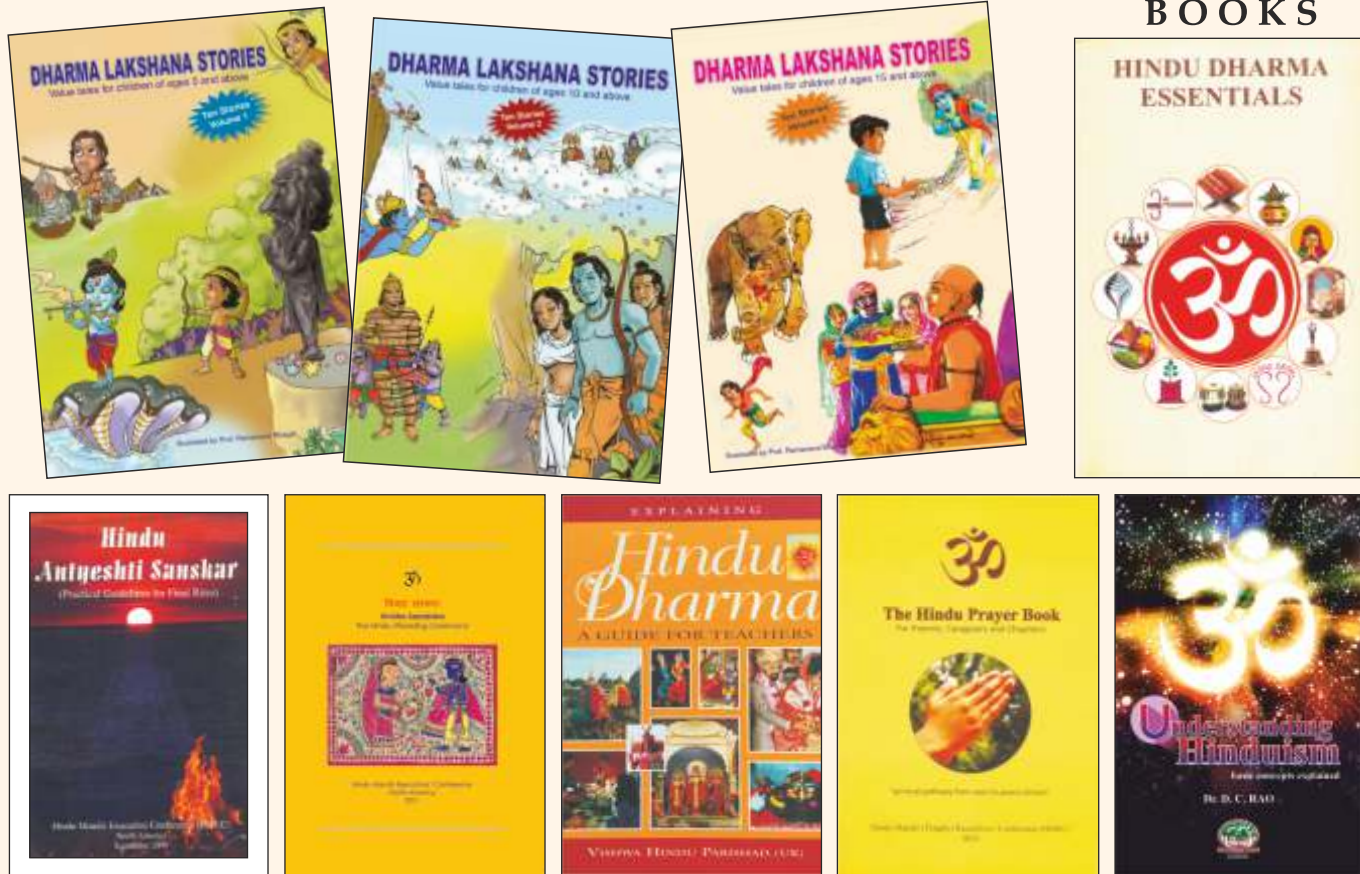
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*Om, Asato Maa Sad Gamaya; Tamaso Maa Jyotir Gamaya Mrityor Maa Amritam Gamaya*

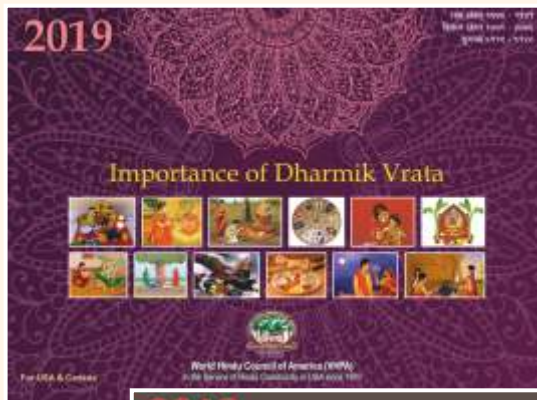
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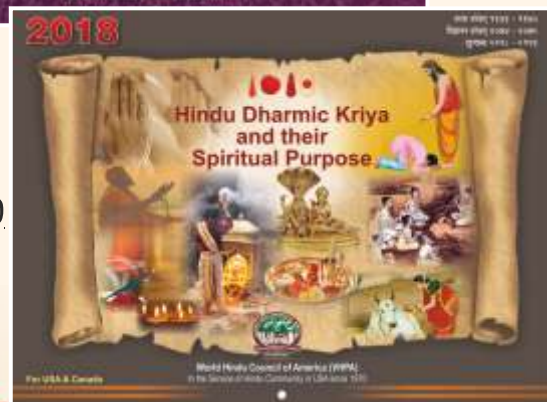
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