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# HINDU VISHWA

## Vishwa Dharma Digest

# ARYAN INVASION THEORY

## Why It Must Be Purged From School Textbooks



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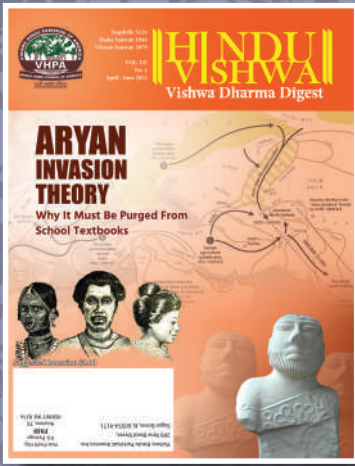
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मूढोऽयं नाभिजानाति लोको मामजमव्ययम्॥

— श्रीमद्भगवद्गीता, 7.25

I am not manifest to everyone, being veiled by My divine Yogmaya energy. Hence, those without knowledge do not know that I am without birth and changeless.

nāhaṁ prakāśhaḥ sarvasya yoga-māyā-samāvṛitaḥ  
mūḍho 'yaṁ nābhijānāti loko mām ajam avyayam

Bhagvad Gita, 7.25

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## IN THIS ISSUE

## Restoring Glory of Kashi Vishwanath Temple Complex

## Why We Should See Our Temples Also as Memorials?

## Preservation, Protection, Promotion and Perpetuation of Vedic Culture

Counseling Vedic and Karmic Way 14

## Aryan Invasion Theory : Why It Must Be Purged From School Textbooks

Principles vs. Commandments 25

No Other Religion is Maliciously and  
Unfairly Denigrated  
As Badly As Hinduism **31**

## VHPA Announces Sharda Hindu Scholarship

## Social Distancing is Needed 37



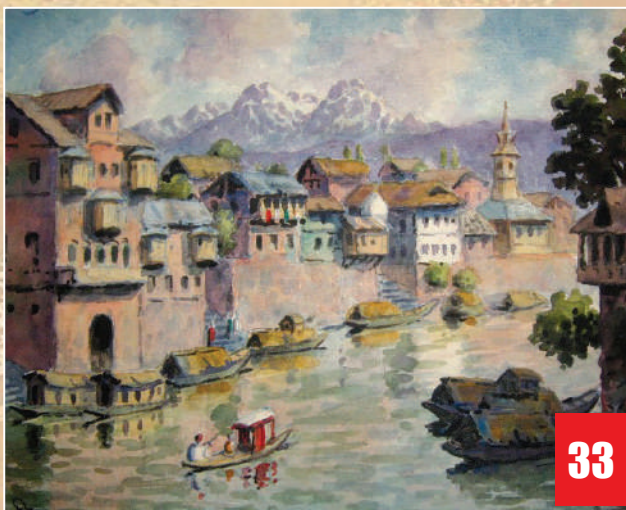
## How a Seed Encapsulates Nepal's Trade Imbalance with China



**In Memory of the 1971 War :  
The Laungewala Post,  
Icon of India's Valorie and Victory**



## How "The Kashmir Files" Became a Phenomenon







## EDITORIAL

# RESTORING GLORY OF Kashi Vishwanath Temple Complex

I recently toured the UK and had the opportunity to see the acclaimed museums there. Not just the British capital London but many other smaller cities host an extensive collection of artifacts from around the world. I was understandably curious about the treasures (“loot”) from the Indian subcontinent. The British and their western minions like to call it ‘South Asia’ collection in their attempt to reduce the civilizational narrative of India to merely a geographical entity on the map. The Victoria & Albert Museum and British Museum in London have the most extensive collections. If it were not for the many ancient, exquisite, and revered deities present there, it would not be a hyperbole to name them the modern-day equivalent of many “chor bazaars” of Indian cities in the past.

It was hardly a consolation that there were many more murtis of Buddha than of prevalent Hindu deities of today. We know that many of the ancient murtis are being reclaimed and repatriated by the current Indian government with the help of many dedicated volunteers and Hindu NGOs. The many more Buddha statues point to the fact that they belonged to the erstwhile Buddhist-dominated area of north and northwestern India currently not part of the political boundaries of India, thereby denying India inheritance right to this precious cultural heritage. It was disheartening to see deities who are living entities in our tradition being caged and put on display as show pieces in a foreign land adorning the museum of the royals who once colonized other lands.

In the Sanatan Hindu traditions, there is reverence for all living beings and also the beings we infuse with divinity by ‘prana pratishtha’. Similarly, though not as widely known, the temples are also considered

living entities and not just abode of god or a place of worship or congregation as in other religions. Unlike the Abrahamic idea of nature as property, there is now a modern movement even in the west to accord trees, forests, rivers, and other forms of nature ‘environmental personhood’. Any defilement or destruction is treated as similar to the harm caused to a living entity. It is congruent with our idea of dharma.

We need to look at all the temple and temple land reclamation movements currently underway in India in this light as modern enlightenment movements and not as going back to medieval history. Land or property that belongs to a temple or the deity is inalienable even if it may have been occupied and involuntarily transferred at some point in time by tyrannical vidharmis or adharmis. As a kid who grew up not far from the Kashi Vishwanath temple in Varanasi, we looked at the Gyan Vapi structure not as a property of us versus them but as unjust possession of occupiers denying Vishweshwar his rightful abode. It is the same with the Keshavadeva temple in Mathura and countless other temples.

Let those Buddha statues depicted as museum artifacts in London remind us that we are still not dead as a civilization and we continue to be worthy of the inheritance of these great temples. Sita Ram Goel has written in his book “Hindu Temples: What Happened to Them”, chapter, “**Let the Mute Witnesses Speak**”.

“The men and women and children who were killed or captured or converted by force cannot be recalled for standing witnesses to what was done to them...”

As for the temples,

***“All these witnesses carry unimpeachable evidence of the violence that was done to them, deliberately and by human hands.”***



the interview including any five star restaurants and then asked if I had a choice. They were keen to know my views as a psychologist on the rising India, the rise of nationalism and its causes. They had asked me to interview about my book 'The Infidel Next Door' and said it represented a new genre of writing in Indian fiction.

"So, how should one like to imagine the new narrative," he had asked me.

"I would imagine a board outside the temple with the written history of the destruction of the temples in India and why it took Hindus so long to build large temples again after centuries. Every Hindu who comes here for puja should also know the story of his ancestors and how they found courage to undo that terror."

"Would you say the same for destroyed temples all over India?"

"Yes," I had answered. "I would like to see the Ram temple as not just another religious pilgrimage for the Hindu devotee, but also as a symbol for the world that tells of a memory not destroyed and which is inscribed at the gate of every temple so that our future generations know of the struggle needed to have kept the temples standing."

"Won't that fill the Hindus with hate and create violence?" he asked.

"Connecting to your roots doesn't make you violent but gives rise to healing."

"According to records there have been number of temples destroyed all over India. Is this physically viable?"

"There was one idea and that was to annihilate the Hindu civilization. When Blacks became aware of the Atlantic slave trade, they realized it involved millions over centuries. Every genocide has annihilated millions. When Native Americans became aware of their extermination by Whites they started to pray at the holy sites. Why it is only for Hindus that this question is asked?"

"No one in the ruling establishment will buy your idea of healing," he had terminated the interview.

Subsequently only a small part of my interview was shown after editing.

How does a people, a nation connect to its lost roots? Thousands of sites that have been destroyed in India over centuries contain a sacred memory that lives on. When will we begin to see them as memory of a narrative?

For the uninitiated, Birla Mandir also known as Laxmi Narayan mandir was built in 1939 by the Birlas, a rich industrial family. What is puzzling to me is that Delhi, a city of Hindus has no history of large or big temple existing or built for almost a thousand years. It is a mystery as to why the Hindus, who had perfected the art of building temples never thought of building one for over one thousand years during Islamic and British rule? When one compares it with south India where huge temples dot the sky, it makes the record more puzzling and makes one wonder why such giant temples are missing in Delhi from medieval or ancient times when records exist of splendid temples from the past and the proof that Hindus were great architects.

The answer may lie in the fear in Hindus and the trauma that prevented the building of any temple for centuries that ended with the rising nationalistic fervor of the freedom struggle. Does that explain that while there are numerous medieval mosques dotting Delhi skyline that can be seen from afar and even churches, there is not a single medieval Hindu temple that is of similar size or comes anywhere near it? Does that also explain (it is my speculation) why a person like Gandhi came to inaugurate the Birla temple knowing its historicity that was kept hidden?

So, where and how does a society find its roots that they have been dispossessed from for centuries.

A Black professor Cornel West had once told me how important it has been for Black people to find, search for their dispossessed roots and connect and feel whole again. Even if centuries have passed, people want to go back in time, when their civilizations were razed to the ground, when they separated from their inner selves. He told me how it has helped millions of Blacks to visit 'Point of No Return' and discover





their soul that was detached and come back feeling healed. Native Americans, he told me find it healing to stand at the spot of the massacre of 'Bury me at the wounded knee'. Jews do that at Auschwitz and Buchenwald.

India is dotted with thousands of destroyed temples and places of desecrated memories such as Jouhar. They have a memory in that geographic entity that is alive through oral history and tradition of a remembered trauma of a language of silence. Isn't it time we break that silence? I wonder if we shouldn't start do so by a movement so that we reclaim these sites not only as religious pilgrimages but also places which tell the struggle and story of our saints?

Every year, millions of Hindus make pilgrimages to Somnath, Kashi Vishwanath, Krishna Janmasthan and monuments like Qutub Minar that are dotted across the country being mute spectators of attempts to create a genocide of our civilization. It is high time we add another definition of pilgrimage to ourselves, one that should remind us of the blood spilled in the name of our religion, the beheadings, the Jouhars, being sold as slaves and for all those who stood against conversion, annihilation and did not give up till their last breath. If that story doesn't get remembered today by us, we may leave a void for the future generations that may continue to echo for a long time asking for justice.



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# Preservation, Protection, Promotion and Perpetuation of VEDIC CULTURE

By **Stephen Knapp** (Sri Nandanandana Dasa)

One of the primary needs for Vedic culture right now, especially in places like India, is the following formula of preservation, protection, promotion and perpetuation of its existence. I call these "the four pers".

I have traveled all over India and have seen many situations where this formula is most needed. I have already written some reports on this, but let me explain a little more clearly the basics of this formula.

## PRESERVATION

is the first step. You have to work in ways to preserve the culture to make sure it will also be around over the long term so others can learn about it, take advantage of its wisdom, and even follow it for their own spiritual progress. This may include, but not limited to, such things as:

1. Preserve the great and ancient Vedic texts,
2. Preserve the main yoga systems, the dharmas that lead to God,
3. Preserve the temples and let them be freely maintained by those Hindus and devotees who are most sincere and qualified,
4. Distribute this literature for colleges, schools, personal homes, so it can spread,



5. Educate people in this knowledge, especially the youth so they are aware of it and know it,
6. Practice the traditions, such as the holidays and spiritual paths in everyday life.

## PROTECTION

is the next step. Even if you do what you can to preserve the tradition, it may also come under attack in many ways. So you have to help protect it by:

1. Overcoming negative impressions that people may try to use to unnecessarily criticize or demean it,
2. Be on guard for negative press in newspapers or television, and work to correct it,
3. Watch for the use of devious ways and false statements that are said to convert people from the Vedic path to some other religion,



4. Be careful even of politicians who have a disdain for God, or for the Vedic culture and who try to work against it or promote some other ideology or religion at the cost of the Vedic institutions.

## PROMOTION

this is important whether we like it or not. Many times Hindus or devotees feel there is no proselytizing in Vedic culture, so you have to be born into it or something like that, but there should be no process to convert others. However, in this day and age this is but a prescription for a slow extinction. Everyone and everything promotes what they have. Just like an author, he may have written the best book ever, but if no one knows about it, no one will buy it. Promotion of some form is a must. And the Vedic tradition is one of the most profound and dynamic cultures the world has

ever seen. Therefore, there is a great need to let others know about it. This does not mean that you have to be in a conversion campaign, but you can certainly share what you know of it. Many people are looking for deeper levels of spirituality, but they do not know where to look, or they do not know the depth of what the Vedic path or its knowledge has to offer. Someone has to be willing to tell them. In fact, we all should be willing. Therefore:

1. Everyone can be a Vedic Ambassador to simply share with other seekers the ways the Vedic culture has helped them and what they have gotten out of it, the difference it has made in their life,
2. Promote it as a spiritual path that can help solve many of the world's problems,
3. Distribute the simpler portions of the Vedic texts, such as Bhagavad-gita, or various forms of



introductory literature that can introduce and easily explain what the Vedic path is so others can benefit from it,

4. Open the temple doors to all who want to come and investigate it or be a part of it so others can see what it is and how to get started,
5. Offer classes on yoga and Vedic philosophy for the same reason,
6. And hold programs wherein the youth can also be a part of it and practice it,
7. Arrange for radio or even cable TV programs so everyone can learn from it or stay connected.

## PERPETUATION

is why we do all of the above. How can we keep Vedic culture a flourishing and dynamic path? By doing all of the above, and providing the means to show people how to practice it. Without the preservation, protection, and promotion of Vedic culture, it cannot be perpetuated. This is where such things as the following can be helpful:

1. Establish and maintain temples that help uphold and show how to practice the Vedic traditions (I have written a whole book on what can be done through temples),
2. Hold classes and study groups, either at temples or at homes, wherein people get together to comfortably converse on various topics of the Vedic texts to help everyone understand it and how deep or practical it is, and then invite friends to join,
3. As mentioned above, spread this knowledge through book distribution, radio, and various other programs, so people can learn about it and utilize it in their lives,
4. Set yourself as an example for those who know you,

but at least for your family and children so they begin to understand it, recognize its potential and practice it as well. If you take it seriously, it will leave positive impressions on others.

There are many other points that can be listed. I have already written detailed action plans that can be used to carry these ideas much further. But the main issue is that we have to work to keep the Vedic culture very much alive and available for everyone. It is what I call the "last bastion of deep spiritual truth." If this should ever disappear, the world will never know what it has lost.

Some people may say that it is an eternal religion, Sanatana-dharma, so it will never fade away. But have they really read the Bhagavad-gita, wherein Lord Krishna explains that one of the reasons why He appeared was to re-establish the Vedic Dharma, which had become lost?

Lord Krishna says, "I instructed this imperishable science of yoga to the sun-god, Vivasvan, and Vivasvan instructed it to Manu, the father of mankind, and Manu in turn instructed it to Ikshvaku. This supreme science was thus received through the chain of disciplic succession, and the saintly kings understood it in that way. But in course of time the succession was broken, and therefore the science as it is appears to be lost. That very ancient science of the relationship with the Supreme is today told by Me to you because you are My devotee as well as My friend; therefore you can understand the transcendental mystery of this science." (Bg.4.1-3)

So, yes, it is eternal but can disappear from the face of the earth, and does at times. It is up to those of us who are serious and sincere to make sure that it can continue being a practical spiritual culture far into the future by applying the above mentioned "four pers."



# How a Seed Encapsulates NEPAL'S Trade Imbalance with CHINA

*Rudraksha seeds are considered sacred in Hinduism and Buddhism, which has led to a booming export market from Nepal to China as trade has expanded between the two countries (Image : Thomas Dutour / Alamy)*

By Amish Raj Mulmi

Hindus believe the rudraksha, the dried seeds of the *Elaeocarpus ganitrus* tree that grows in the foothills of the Himalayas, are made from the tears of Lord Shiva and hold them sacred. While there is no such story in Buddhism, the depiction of the Buddha, like many sacred figures in the region, wearing rudraksha beads has made them special to Buddhists as well. Nepali traders used to largely sell the seeds to Hindus in India, but this has changed in recent years.

For 27-year-old Nima Tamang, the seeds mean business with the Chinese. "I sold 10,000 kilograms

of seeds to the Chinese in 2020," he says, up from a previous yearly average of 2,000-3,000 kg, earning 3.5 million Nepali rupees (USD 28,000).

Since 2014, Nepali farmers and traders have capitalized on Chinese demand for rudraksha and bodhichitta seeds, which Buddhists use as prayer beads. The market for both products is a microcosm of the overall trade dynamics between the two countries, in which Nepal exports raw materials and has little leverage over trade mechanisms.

Deepening bilateral ties in the past decade meant Chinese buyers could purchase the seeds directly from

The experiences of rudraksha seed traders demonstrate how lack of Nepali government support and Chinese market power skew trade between the countries



farmers and middlemen like Tamang. But Tamang's financial success in 2020 was not to last: Chinese travel restrictions to stop the spread of Covid-19 resulted in a sharp drop in demand and prices, leading to Nepali farmers and traders suffering massive losses. Nepal's lack of policy focused on such trade has meant there is not much sellers can do but wait for the Chinese buyers to return.

### Skewed Nepal-China trade balance

The overall trade balance between the two countries skews heavily in favour of China. Nepal imported NPR 211 billion (USD 1.7 billion) from China between mid-July 2021 and mid-April 2022, according to Nepal's Department of Customs. In contrast, Nepal's exports to China were NPR 622 million (USD 5 million) in this period.

Nepal's main exports to China are carpets, medicinal plants, hand-drawn paintings and sculptures. Rudraksha seeds were the 10th most valuable export category in the 2020-21 fiscal year, with the country exporting 280,874 kg.

Much of the recent discourse on Nepal's trade with China has revolved around Chinese exports and investments in the country. Scant attention has been paid to the possibility of expanding Nepal's exports, either through value addition or through policy reforms.

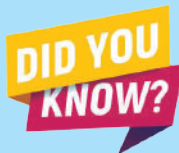
As a result Nepal exports materials such as rudraksha seeds and yarsagumba (a caterpillar-fungus fusion with medicinal properties) in their raw form. In an April 2021 report, the World Bank stated that Nepal's "untapped export potential" is 12 times its current value, and that the country missed out on exports to China worth over USD 2.2 billion between 2010-17.

### Chinese buyers dominate the market

"Nepali farmers started selling rudraksha seeds to the Chinese around 2013-14," says Tamang. Chinese demand changed the fates of rudraksha farmers in Sankhuwasabha and Bhojpur districts in eastern Nepal, where the seeds are sourced, and of middlemen like Tamang who can speak Mandarin.

#### DID YOU KNOW...

A single rudraksha seed can sell for USD 20,000-24,000, if it is a rarer variety considered sacred in Hinduism



**Tamang says:** "The Chinese paid high prices for rudraksha seeds – even up to NPR 1-1.5 million (USD 8,000-12,000) per kilogram at times. Seeing the profits, I jumped into the business about three years ago as I was already a Chinese language guide."

While India is a major market for the seeds, Chinese buyers dominate and set the prices because they offer higher rates for more common varieties.

The rudraksha market is primarily an informal cash business, and thus actual export figures may be far higher than those captured by government reporting. The variation in pricing for rare rudraksha seeds compared with average ones, which only sell for about NPR 100 (USD 0.80) per kg, adds to the complexity.

The trade in bodhichitta and rudraksha seeds is not currently governed by any formal policies except for the payment of forest levies and municipal taxes. Sellers believe Nepal needs to create policies to control prices and formalize the trade so that it does not lose out on revenue.

But official neglect of the sector, which might have allowed sellers to pocket untaxed income, has other consequences.

### Pandemic restrictions expose fragile trade support

The Covid-19 pandemic resulted in a collapse of the rudraksha trade, showing how without effective policymaking and institutional support an export commodity market can falter.

Because Chinese buyers dominate the market, they can determine the price of rudraksha seeds, meaning sellers like Tamang have to sell at the prices they offer. In economic terms this is described as an effective monopsony – when one key buyer is so dominant that they can set the terms of trade.



This situation intensified when Covid-19 restrictions made it difficult for Chinese nationals to travel to Nepal. Borders were closed, and all flights from China were cancelled. Only a few buyers managed to sneak in via Doha and Dubai, and offered far lower prices than in previous years. Nepali farmers had no choice but to sell the seeds at low prices because they had no buyers who could replace the Chinese.

“We have to sell at the prices the Chinese offer,” says Tamang. “No one except them made profits in 2021.”

### **Within three years, the average price of rudraksha seeds has more than halved**

According to the Department of Customs, in the 2018-19 financial year Nepal exported 444,722 kg of rudraksha seeds to China worth approximately NPR 86.7 million, at an average value of NPR 195 per kg.

For 2019-20, however, rudraksha exports to China fell to 264,390 kg, valued at approximately NPR 39.2 million, at an average value of NPR 149 per kg. In the 2020-21 financial year, while the quantity exported rose to 280,874 kg, the value of exports fell to NPR 26 million, at an average value of NPR 93 per kg. Effectively, within three years, the average price more than halved.

Such low prices meant major losses for those in the business. Tamang lost NPR 700,000-800,000 (USD 5,650-6,500) in 2021. “I stocked 300-400 kg of seeds in a hotel room because of the losses,” he says. Until the trade and border restrictions lift, he doubts the business will return to its earlier levels.

### **Infrastructure, trade agreements and quality control stunt Nepal's exports**

China has given duty-free access to over 8,000 products from Nepal, but former commerce



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**As Michael Yahuda and other scholars have noted,  
Chinese foreign relations are both driven by, and drive, trade.  
The management, or mismanagement, of trade plays  
an overwhelming part in how countries like Nepal view  
relations with China.**

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secretary Purushottam Ojha has stated that the strict criteria for rules of origin make it difficult for Nepali products to qualify under the scheme. Other barriers include the difficulty of food-certification and labelling in Mandarin. Connectivity issues due to the high cost of transporting exports to China over land are another reason behind Nepal's lagging exports cited by Ojha. Sea freight is no better: costs have increased almost five-fold per container since the pandemic started.

Nepal's trade with China has also lagged because trade agreements are not implemented in practice, including the much-vaunted 2016 agreement that broke India's monopoly to supply petroleum products to Nepal. Similar concerns have already been raised about an agreement signed in March on the export of Nepali haylage (silage made from partially dried grass), signed during Chinese foreign minister Wang Yi's visit. With China, "implementation on both sides is also an issue", says Krishna Acharya, business editor at Kantipur newspaper, "as is the political will to ease trade on both sides".

What stands out from the example of the rudraksha trade is Nepal's inability to move up the export value chain ladder with such agricultural and forest-based products, and to manage system shocks such as the pandemic restrictions.

"Quality control infrastructure is crucial to increase Nepal's exports of value added, particularly in

agriculture," according to the April 2021 World Bank report. "Investments are needed in infrastructure, equipment, and human resources to certify that its goods achieve the various sanitary and phytosanitary standards (SPS) requirements of key regional and global export markets."

### **The future of China-Nepal trade**

While much focus is on the formal part of China's Belt and Road Initiative, burgeoning informal trade is a natural outcome of China's expanding contact with its neighbors. As Michael Yahuda and other scholars have noted, Chinese foreign relations are both driven by, and drive, trade. The management, or mismanagement, of trade plays an overwhelming part in how countries like Nepal view relations with China.

And yet the limitations of regulatory mechanisms in Nepal are specific to the country itself. The lack of regulation in rudraksha seeds predates the boom in prices due to Chinese demand. A 2016 study on value chain analysis of forest products noted the "lack of government involvement" beyond royalty collection in the rudraksha seed market. It recommended the government bring in laws to certify the quality of the seeds while interacting with farmers and traders to "develop a pragmatic policy" for the trade. Six years later, the situation according to traders remains unchanged.

**Source: <https://www.thethirdpole.net/en/regional-cooperation/how-a-seed-encapsulates-nepal-china-trade-imbalance/>**

# Counseling **VEDIC** and **KARMIC** Way

By **David Frawley** (Pandit Vamadeva Shastri)

## **Karmic Responsibility: Taking Control of Your Life**

The first thing Vedic counseling teaches us is that our lives are a product of our own actions or karma. Who we are and what we experience, both individually and collectively, is the result of forces that we have set in motion and are ultimately responsible for. We are responsible for ourselves, who we are and what we are doing in life.

This realm of karma remains a work in progress with changes happening at every moment. We must remain vigilantly aware of its constant development and direct it towards the highest good. We cannot claim ignorance as an excuse for achieving wrong outcomes in life.

Recognizing that our lives are a creation of our own karma means that we must first take responsibility for who we are and learn to act in a way that insures we achieve what we are really seeking. We cannot place the responsibility for who we are on anyone, though we all have a mutual responsibility for what occurs in our lives.

We must also recognize that behind visible causes and their apparent effects in the world today are placed yet subtler forces of karma shaping them in powerful currents, with links to other times, places and aspects of the greater universe. The karma in our world is linked to the karma in other worlds, including those beyond the physical we may not know.

## **Karmic Counseling**

The key Vedic law of life is the law of karma, which shows the interdependence of all creatures and actions in the universe. Though karma is a common term today, it is seldom understood in its proper light.

Vedic counseling requires understanding our karma in life, which is different for each person, and which is regularly changing. This requires understanding the law of karma and how it works, which can be very subtle.

Vedic counseling is largely a karmic counseling, designed to help us become aware of our karma and manage it in a positive manner. It helps us understand the nature of the karmic forces that we must deal with and provides the tools that can help us positively modify and ultimately transcend karma altogether. Vedic counseling rests upon an understanding of the karma of a person and an ability to improve it in a way that is beneficial to the inner being.

Life is a karmic reality that we must recognize, honor and respect. There are tremendous powers that we are linked to, which can be far stronger than anything we can set in motion ourselves. If we do not act with awareness, we can get ourselves involved in forces that may take us in a very different direction than where we may wish to go, like jumping into the powerful stream that will go only the way that it is flowing. Though the effects of karma do not always manifest immediately, they can be very hard to overcome once they have been set in motion.

## **Karma, Destiny and Free Will**

Karma means action and refers to the results of our previous actions. It does not mean destiny and does not indicate that our lives are predetermined. The past projects an influence that can be very powerful but life in the present can modify that in various directions. There is always room for the new. The law of karma means that each of our actions has consequences that we should be aware of, not only for the present but also for the future.



The law of karma means that we are free to create our own destiny in life. There are, however, three important correlates to this idea that serve to qualify it.

**Karma and Time:** We create our destiny in the field of time, which means that who we are today is a result of what we did yesterday, extending into previous lives that we have forgotten. The shadow or the light of past life karmas hangs over us and must be understood.

**Karma and Dharma.** We create our destiny in the field of universal law. For example, we are free to put our hand into a fire, but we are not free to put our hand into a fire and not get burned. This means that if we violate universal laws that we will suffer. Unfortunately, the results of certain actions manifest only after time and so our immediate reaction may be incorrect. When we come down with an illness, for example, it may be the result of wrong actions over a long period of time, like taking of too many sweets leading to diabetes.

**Collective Nature of Karma.** We are co-creators of karma. We as individuals live in a certain era and cultural field that affects our actions. For example, someone with a certain career potential in our society today may have a different career than if they were born a thousand years ago. Similarly we can be affected by collective karmas extending to major social changes, innovations or conflicts.

### **Karmic Responsibility and Inner Transformation**

The foundation for all Vedic counseling is that we must first assume karmic responsibility for our

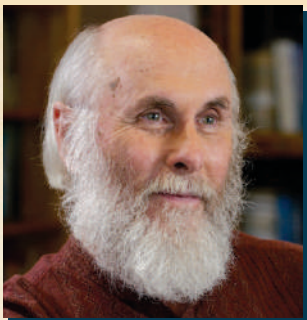
own lives. Only when we assume responsibility for ourselves in life can we effectively change who we are and alter how we live in a harmonious manner.

One of the biggest obstacles to change in life is that we do not accept responsibility, particularly for the difficulties that come to us. We want to make others responsible, whether it is our family, friends, society or the world as a whole. Yet in blaming others, we give away our own power and deprive ourselves of the motivation to improve our lives. We are not victims and cannot blame others for our condition in life, even though their actions do affect us. The attitude of being a victim weakens us, inhibits positive change and gets us caught in the past. It disempowers us of our ability to master our life energies, which we all possess in our inner Self.

Once we accept our karmic responsibility in life, we are able to forgive others and let go of the past. We can make positive changes in the present moment. We recognize that we are responsible for the world in which we live. Accepting our responsibility for our karma allows us to take control of our lives and make meaningful and lasting changes. It opens up a new horizon of transformation both within and around us.

***Remember that all time and space dwells within you. You have the inner power of awareness not to be dominated by any external forces!***

Source: <https://www.vedanet.com/excerpt-from-the-art-and-science-of-vedic-counseling/>



**Dr. David Frawley** (Pandit Vamadeva Shastri) D. Litt., author of several books, is a western born teacher or guru in the Vedic tradition. In India, Vamadeva is recognized as a Vedacharya (Vedic teacher), and includes in his scope of studies Ayurveda, Yoga, Vedanta and Vedic astrology, as well as the ancient Vedic teachings going back to the oldest Rigveda.

Vamadeva is a recipient of the prestigious Padma Bhushan award, one of the highest civilian awards by the government of India, "for distinguished service of a higher order to the nation," honoring his work and writings as a Vedic teacher, which he received in March 2015.

# Aryan Invasion Theory

# Why It Must Be Purged From School Textbooks

By **Jai G. Bansal**, Ph.D., VP Education – World Hindu Council of America (VHPA)

## Background

In many American schools, the teaching curricula on Hinduism are built around an obsolete framework called the Aryan Invasion/Migration Theory (AIMT). This theory postulates that a group of cattle herders from Central Asia, called Aryans, settled in India around 1,500 BCE. This group of cattle herders, the theory suggests, were successful in imposing their social customs - including a rigid caste structure - on the indigenous people.

There is now a large body of evidence that shows this to be a completely false and fabricated construct – indeed, to be little more than a figment of the racially motivated British colonial enterprise. By promoting this discredited theory, the American schools deny the Indian origin of India's predominant culture and religion while giving credit for it to invaders from elsewhere.

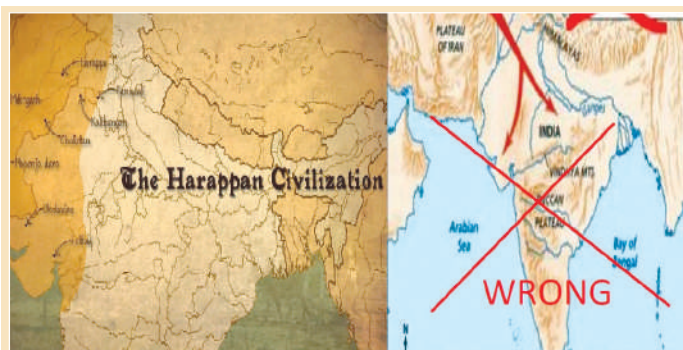
If the purpose of education is to promote religious and cultural diversity, instill a sense of pride in one's heritage, eradicate roots of prejudice, and develop a feeling of self-worth, then the current teaching method about Hinduism and the Indian society fails singularly in its mission. On the contrary, it effectively singles out Hinduism, exposing its adherents - the students of Indian origin - to ridicule and subtly portray Hinduism as inferior. In the contemporary world, no child would want to be associated with a system of belief represented as hierarchical and oppressive. It singles out Hindu culture and civilization for negative portrayal – a classic example of Hindudvesha (systemic Hinduphobia).

This article gives a comprehensive background of the Aryan Invasion/Migration Theory, how it came

into being, and why it does not stand up to the new scientific evidence and should be dropped from the school curricula.

## Aryan Invasion/Migration Theory – Brief History

1. In the mid-18th century, the British East India Company, having gained political control over large parts of India, started programs to conduct linguistic, cultural, and ethnological studies of the Indian people.
2. In the 1780s, William Jones, a British philologist and High Court Judge of the East India Company, discovered remarkable similarities between Sanskrit, India's ancient scriptural language, Greek, Latin, and many other European languages<sup>(1)</sup>.
3. In 1786, Jones published his results, declaring a common origin of these languages. This led to speculations of an "Out of India" (OIT) theory, which postulated that the Europeans came from an advanced civilization in India. Not unexpectedly, OIT was received by the Europeans as a serious affront to their presumed civilizational superiority over other races.





4. In the wake of Jones' publication, Sanskrit language and texts became a major study area among European scholars.

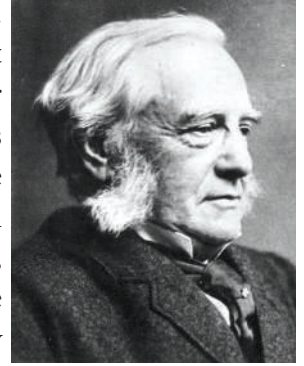
5. During the first half of the 19th century, German scholars, while searching for their civilizational roots, came to identify themselves with the valiant heroes of the Sanskrit epic, Mahabharata<sup>(2)</sup>. This belief developed into a hypothetical construct, the primary tenets of which were as follows:

- The Germans and the Indians were branches of a common warrior race and were the original heroes of the Hindu epic Mahabharata
- The great epic was subsequently ruined by the villainous Brahmins with their redactions and manipulations <sup>(3)</sup>.
- Intermixing of the Indo-Germanic people with the indigenous backward-dark-tribals resulted in racial degeneration of the Indian branch of the Indo-Germanic race.
- On the other hand, German people represented the pristine version of the original Indo-Germanic stock.

6. Max Mueller, a German scholar of Sanskrit at Oxford University, may have been the first one to articulate, in 1848, the idea of an Aryan people while formulating his now famous (or notorious, depending on your viewpoint) "Aryan Invasion Theory" (AIT). Since it was introduced, AIT has undergone several revisions. Its current postulates stand as follows<sup>(4)</sup>:

- The original inhabitants of India were "dark-skinned" Dravidians who established a peaceful, highly developed urban civilization known as the Harrapan or the Indus Valley Civilization.
- Around 1, 500 BCE, a nomadic race known as the Indo-Aryans invaded and conquered India from the West. These 'Aryans / Indo-Europeans' were proposed to have a variety of homelands, including Central Asia, Scandinavia, North Germany, Hungary, and Ukraine. They allegedly destroyed the ancient Dravidian civilization, oppressed the locals, and drove them to relocate

to the south of India. (It is worth noting that Mueller's timeline for the Aryan invasion was inspired by his belief in the infallibility of the Biblical view of human history, which proclaimed the beginning of humanity in the year 4004 BCE and the Great Flood in 2349 BCE).



- The Indo-Aryans were white-skinned people who spoke Vedic Sanskrit, wrote the Vedas, and enforced Indo-Aryan religion (what we call Hinduism today).
7. In the late 20th century, in the face of the mounting evidence against AIT, the theory was further refined into what is now known as the Indo-Aryan Migration theory (IAMT), according to which the Indo-Aryans migrated into India rather than invaded it.
  8. Meanwhile, German scholars, building on their worldview of shared ancestry with the Indian people, coopted Mueller's idea of the Aryan race into their ancestral identity. The resulting Aryan Race theory was to take an ugly turn in the first half of the 20th century when Adolf Hitler<sup>(5)</sup> adopted it and weaponized it against the Jewish people - with devastating consequences for the latter.
  9. Inspired by Mueller's ideas, Herbert Risley, the Director of Ethnography and Census in the British colonial Government, developed a Nasal Index measurement tool. This Nasal Index, much like Phrenology, became an essential tool of Race Science to classify the traits of Indian communities.
  10. During the 1871 census survey of India, the word "caste" (English translation of the Portuguese word *casta*) was first used to classify the Indian society, thus overlaying and distorting the existing social structure based on a fluid Varna-Jati framework<sup>(6)</sup>.
    - Risley's Nasal Index was used extensively to force-fit large swaths of the indigenous population into





The map illustrates the proposed route of the Aryan invasion, starting from Central Asia (near the Aral Sea and Caucasus) and moving south through the Hindukush and Himalayas into the Indian subcontinent. Key geographical features labeled include the Plateau of Tibet, Hindukush, Himalayas, Arabian Sea, and Bay of Bengal. A scale bar indicates distances in miles (0 to 1,000) and kilometers (0 to 1,000). A legend identifies the route as 'Route of Aryans, c.1500 BC'.

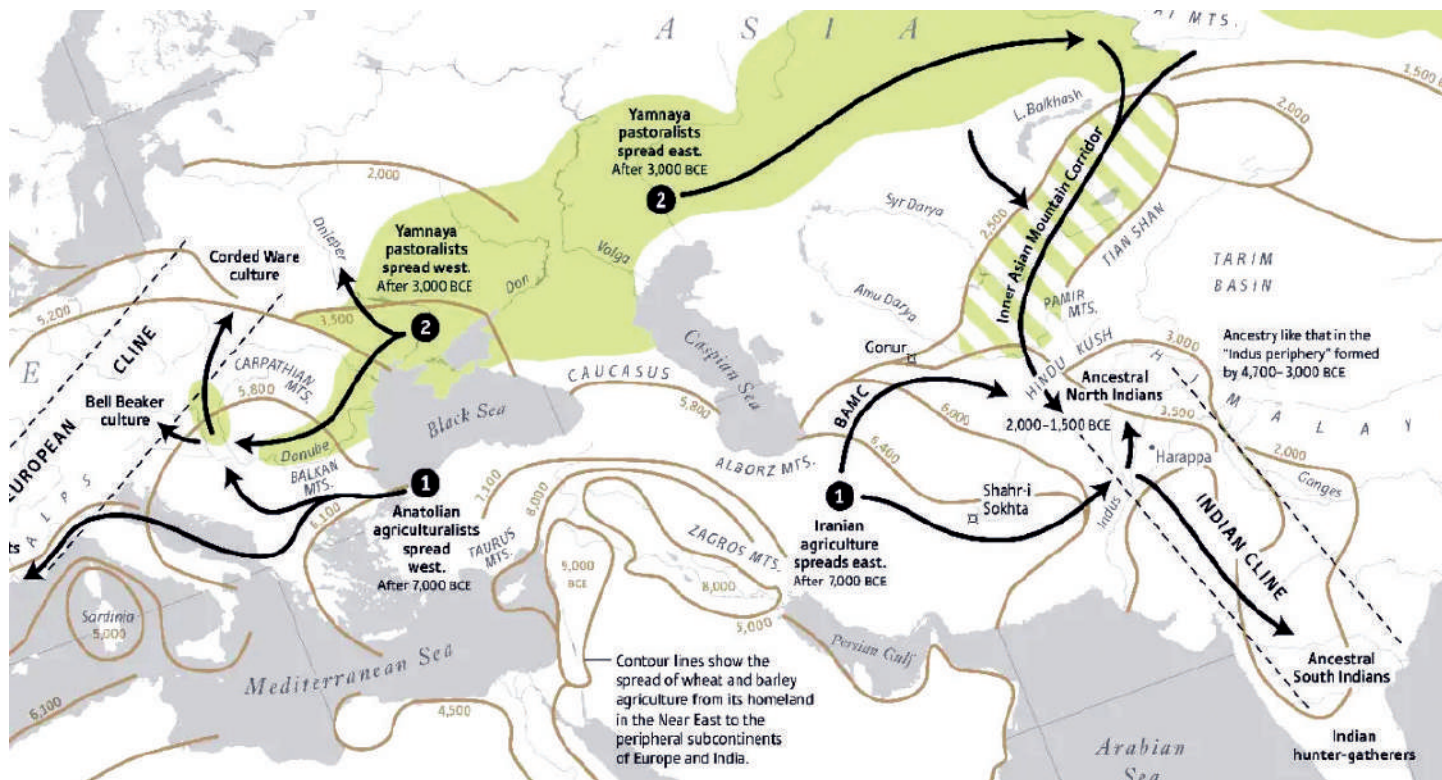
- Yet another study demonstrates that most Indians are genetically alike, thus debunking one of the central postulates of the AIT, namely the Aryan-Dravidian divide<sup>(14)</sup>.
- On the contrary, there is strong evidence to support an Out of India Theory<sup>(15, 16)</sup>.
- While some genetic research purports to support AIT, it has not been able to refute the large body of genetic evidence that has been found against AIT.

Many other pieces of data lend further support to the anti-AIT argument. Two such examples should suffice to make the point:

4. The Vedic literature – supposedly written by the invading Aryans – contains extensive references to prominent landmarks of India but makes no mention of a former homeland. This collective amnesia of the alleged Aryan race concerning their ancestral home is highly unusual for migrant populations.



5. The number of Sanskrit manuscripts in existence today is roughly 1000 times the number of manuscripts available in Greek, Latin, and other ancient European languages combined. Such an overwhelming disparity in the literary outputs between the Aryans and the Europeans is difficult to reconcile with the AIT postulation of their shared heritage.<sup>(17)</sup>





### What Keeps AIT Alive?

According to Prof. Klaus Klostermaier, a well-known scholar of ancient Indian history, “The AIT (Aryan Invasion Theory) is based purely on linguistic conjectures which are unsubstantiated.”<sup>(18)</sup>

However, with nearly 175 years of the constant drumbeat from the progenitors, purveyors, and pushers of the AIT hypothesis, there is far too much academic reputation and obduracy at stake to let the beast die in peace. Many of these eminent scholars, as Michel Danino’s 2018 paper<sup>(19)</sup> suggests, have even resorted to blatant dishonesty to shore up their arguments. Here is a direct quote from Danino’s paper: “This collection highlights how eminent historians and linguists, apart from miscellaneous other writers, have indulged in such scholarly malpractices, some of which qualify as fabrication.”

Examples of deliberate distortions and misrepresentations examined in Danino’s paper include:

1. Invention of nonexistent texts.
2. Deliberate mistranslations of texts.
3. Invention of nonexistent archaeological evidence.
4. Distortion of archaeological evidence.
5. Fundamental methodological flaws include circular reasoning, oversimplification, etc.
6. Recycling of long-discarded theories such as racial ones.
7. Misquoting, blanking out or demonizing of scholars opposing the Aryan paradigm.

### Psychological and Socio-Political Impacts of AIT<sup>(20)</sup>

1. AIT gives credit for Indian culture to invaders from elsewhere while denying its Indian origin.
2. It devalues India’s culture by portraying it as a “gift” from outsiders.
3. It suggested that Indian culture was not a culture in its own right but a synthesis of other cultures.
4. It implies that Hinduism was not an authentically Indian religion but a result of cultural imperialism.
5. It suggested that Indian culture was static and only changed under external influences.
6. It implies that indigenous people were incapable of creatively developing their faith and could only acquire new ideas from other races by invasion or other processes.
7. It downgrades the intellectual status of India and its people by giving a falsely late date to elements of Indian science and culture.
8. It promotes the idea that race is a biologically based concept.
9. It suggested that the light-skinned Aryan invaders forced the dark-skinned Dravidian people of the South of India to convert to the Aryan faith.
10. It creates an artificial fault-line among the Indian people, giving the appearance that North Indians are foreigners and Dravidians are native Indians.
11. It provided a basis for racism in the Imperial context by suggesting that the peoples of Northern India were descended from invaders from Europe and so racially closer to the British colonizers.
12. It gave a historical precedent to justify the role and status of the British colonizers, who could argue that they were transforming India for the better in the same way that the Aryans had done thousands of years earlier.

### Conclusions

There is now a mountain of evidence that shows that the Aryan Invasion Theory or its migration



version is a myth. It is a deeply flawed and dangerous relic of a racially motivated colonial enterprise. It is about time that civilized societies did what is right, i.e., to put it in the only place where it belongs – the trash bin of history.

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2. Bagchee and Adluri, The Nay Science, p.56
3. Here the Brahmins - the educated/intellectual segment of the Indian society - were being gratuitously cast into a villainous role to create a plausible explanation for why the great epic, Mahabharata, had failed to glorify the Indo-Aryan people. This highly prejudicial casting of the Brahmins would become a permanent feature of all subsequent discourse about Indian society.
4. Aryan Invasion Theory (AIT), <https://officerspulse.com/aryan-invasion-theoryait/>
5. Hitler's rare utterance on the Hindus was a racial interpretation of the AIT, "We know that the Hindus in India are a people mixed from the lofty Aryan immigrants and the dark-black aboriginal population and that this people is bearing the consequences today; for it is also the slave people of a race that almost seems like a second Jewry" (Koeonrad Elst, Still No Trace of an Aryan Invasion, p.104, Aryan Book International, 2018)
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16. Lucotte G., The Major Y-Chromosome Haplotype XI – Haplogroup R1a in Eurasia. Hereditary Genet, 4:150. DOI: 10.4172/2161-1041.1000150 (2015)
17. A Google query with the search string "How many Sanskrit manuscripts are there" returned 30 million as the top answer; the same query with "How many Latin, Greek, and ancient European manuscripts are there" brought up less than 30,000 manuscripts.
18. Klostermaier, A Survey of Hinduism, p. 21 (2007)
19. Danino, "Fabricating Evidence in Support of the Aryan Invasion / Migration Theory," (2018); [https://www.academia.edu/39599444/Fabricating\\_Evidence\\_in\\_Support\\_of\\_the\\_Aryan\\_Invasion\\_Migration\\_Theory](https://www.academia.edu/39599444/Fabricating_Evidence_in_Support_of_the_Aryan_Invasion_Migration_Theory)
20. Many of the points here were taken from Frawley, D., Aryan Invasion Theory – Part 1, <http://www.hinduonline.co/DigitalLibrary/SmallBooks/MythofAryanInvasioninIndiaDavidFrawleyEng.pdf>

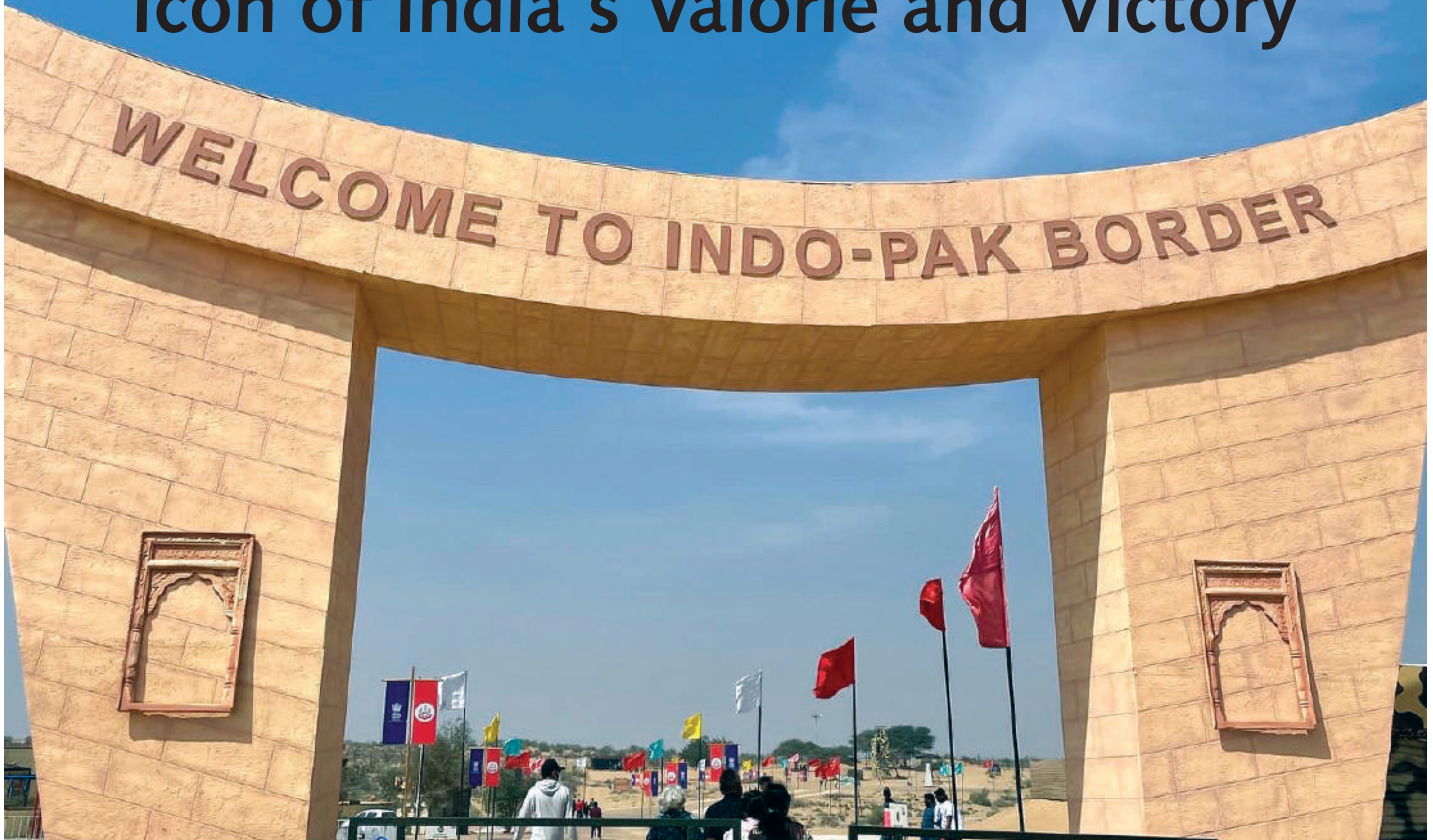


**Dr. Jai Bansal** is a scientist, author, and community leader with a keen interest in Indian history and in exploring the contributions of the Hindu civilization to the world. He currently serves as the Vice President of Education for the World Hindu Council of America (VHPA), as well as a member of its executive board and the governing council. He holds a Ph.D. in Chemical Engineering from the University of Waterloo, Canada, and a B.Sc. (Distinction) from Panjab University. He has published widely and holds over two dozen scientific patents.

# In Memory of the 1971 War

## THE LAUNGEWALA POST

### Icon of India's Valorie and Victory



By **Renu Rajvanshi Gupta**, Vice President of Seva, VHPA

Whenever we will depict the glory of Bharat, the remarkable story of border security forces, and the bravery and patriotism of the Indian army at the Longewala Post will be always discussed with pride. The battle at the Longewala post was fought during the 1971 war between Pakistan and Bharat and this stopped the enemy from breaching our borders.

Longewala is located in the Jaisalmer district of Rajasthan, which is the largest by area. It is situated 108 km west of Jaisalmer, 43 km from Ramgarh, and 15 km east of the border. Between the border and

the post, there is a historical mandir of Shri Tanot Mata Ji.

I would like to share my experience of being at Longewala. We started our journey from the border going east. At the border, there is a fence of heavy wires to protect India from infiltration. There was not much activity on the Pakistani side. There is a lookout tower to get a bird's eye view across the border. There are plans to make it a destination of interest like the Wagha border, hosting the Army's parade and retreat, a playground for children, and a large pavilion.



From the border, we arrived at the Shri Tanot Mata mandir. The mandir is located 126 km from Jaisalmer. Shri Tanot Mata mandir was founded by King Tanu Rao in 858 AD. It is the mandir of the Royal Bhati family of Jaisalmer and Tanot Mata is Kuldevi (Family Devi) of the Bhati family. The mandir is surrounded by dunes. It gets extremely hot in the summertime. Even in March, it hit 90 degrees F. During the 1965 war, the Pakistani army bombarded the Mandir more than three thousand times, but nothing happened to the mandir. It is said that either the bombs were misguided or got buried in the dunes. Since then BSF (Border Security Force) has taken over the management, operations, and security of the mandir. Tanot Mata Mandir is the headquarters of the BSF now. In the 1971 war again this mandir was targeted, but it again endured. It is, for this reason, there is a Devi mandir in every post of the Indian Army. The divine mother is the ultimate savior of us. Mata is the symbol of Shakti (Power), and Shakti is the (Atman) soul of every soldier.

Shri Tanot Mata is deeply respected and widely worshiped by the locals. The mandir has several memorable photos and artifacts of the war. There is also a Vijay Stambha (Victory Tower) built outside the mandir.

After having Darshan of Shri Tanot Mata, we reached Longewala Post, our most important and

ultimate journey. During the 1971 war, the Indian army was busy helping Mukti Vahini in Bangladesh for its liberation from Pakistan. Therefore, the Pakistani army thought India would have many vulnerable points on the western border, so if they could enter from the western side, India would lose the war. With that mission in mind, the Pakistani army made a secret plan to attack the Longewala post. Their slogan was; breakfast in Longewala, lunch in Ramgarh, and dinner in Jaisalmer. And, if they reached Jodhpur, India would surrender.

On the evening of December 3rd, 1971, Lieutenant Dharmveer Bhaan was patrolling the border with his colleagues; they noticed some noises coming from across the border and the signs of moving tanks. Kuldeep Singh Chandpuri was the Major of the Punjab Regiment and was in charge of the post. He had a total of 120 soldiers with him at that time. The Pakistani army was estimated to be about three thousand in number. Major Chandupuri sent the message to headquarters to send for additional troops as well as help from the Air Force to combat this attack by Pakistan. It was late evening and the Major got the message that Air Force jets would not reach until early morning, it was almost 6 – 8 hours gap. They were told to leave the post.





Major Kuldeep Singh Chandpuri asked each of his soldiers either to leave or to stay and fight. The soldiers were not ready to leave the post and show their back to the enemy. It was a cold full moonlight night of December 4th, Major Chandpuri along with his 120 soldiers with all the available ammunition, bombs, and grenades lay hiding behind the mud post. There was total silence as the Pakistani army with sixty-five Patton tanks moved towards the post. Major waited patiently till the tanks came within 15-20 meters of the post. All of a sudden, Major ordered a bombardment of the oncoming tanks. It disabled most of the tanks and buried them in the sand. Thirty tanks were destroyed right away. For the next 6-8 hours, the Indian army fought fiercely killing two hundred Pakistani soldiers and destroying five hundred of their vehicles. India lost only two of its soldiers. This smart move from the Major and his troops made the Pakistani army completely confused and disoriented.

In the morning, Air Force jets arrived and took over the post to continue the fight.

The battle at Longewala post is unique in the history of the Indian army and speaks of its endless bravery. This war saved India from Pakistan entering her western borders. Major Kuldeep Singh Chandpuri was honored with Mahaveer Chakra and so were his other colleagues with other valor awards.

The Longewala post now has very a lively and historical museum narrating the stories of the war. At the site, there is also a theatre that shows a movie about the war that makes you relive the war. There are several tanks and planes on display. There is also a memorial of the war, a victory tower, and a huge gate reminding visitors of the sacrifice of our soldiers.

We are commemorating 50+ years of the 1971 war when more than 3 million Hindus were killed by the Pakistani army in Bangladesh. Let us pay our respect and pranam to all who fought for us and lost their lives protecting us.

[renurajvanshigupta@gmail.com](mailto:renurajvanshigupta@gmail.com)



# Principles vs. Commandments

By **Umesh Gulati**, Ph.D., Professor Emeritus

Unlike every other religion, which is built on some historical character like Buddha, Christ, Mohammad, and so forth, Hinduism is based on principles. As Swami Vivekananda (or Swamiji) put it (Complete Works, v.3, 183-84), no person, man or woman, can claim to have created the Vedas. These Vedas are the embodiment of eternal principles; sages only discovered them. Who were these sages? No one knows who these sages were, their names or their fathers' names, and so forth. These sages were the preachers of principles, and they became the illustrators of the principles they preached. "The glory of Sri Krishna," Swamiji said, "is that he has been the best preacher of our eternal religion of principles and the best commentator on the Vedanta that ever lived in India."

So, what Hinduism is can be summarized in a few principles. But we need to be clear first about what we mean by principles. The dictums like 'truth alone triumphs', etc., asserted by the Upanishads are not commandments, which need to be followed at the risk of being punished by God or some military authority if not carried out. These dictums are not like rules either, which prescribe a special course of action and tell a person what to do and what not to do. These dictums are based on principles, which are aids and instruments in judging possible courses of action. Principles do not tell us specifically what to do but rather what to think about in deciding what to do. For example, if I say that I love people because my Master had ordained so, and not doing so would be a sin, it would be a personality-based moral code. On the other hand, if I say that I love people because love is the basis of life, it would be a principle-based moral code.

As you all know that Swami Vivekananda traveled to the USA in 1893 to spread the message of his Master,

Sri Ramakrishna, on harmony among religions. He also came to this country especially to attend the first World Parliament of Religions that was held in Chicago from September 11 to September 27, 1893. His first lecture at the Parliament on the opening day of the Parliament on religious harmony won him great love and respect from the more than 5000 people in the audience. His 'Paper on Hinduism' presented on September 19 was remarkable in setting out the principles of Hinduism, especially its respect for, and acceptance of every other religion.

The closing words of that 'Paper' breathe the spirit of the universal and common humanism, not only of him and his great guru Sri Ramakrishna but also of the Indian spiritual tradition. He said: '... 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 Christ, and on saints and sinners alike; which would not be Brahmanic [Hinduistic] or Buddhistic, Christian or Mohammedan, but the sum total of all these and still have enough space for development; which in its catholicity will embrace in its infinite arms, and find a place for, every human being, .... It will be a religion that will have no place for persecution or intolerance in its polity, which will recognize the divinity in every man and woman, and whose whole scope, whose whole force, will be centered on aiding humanity to realize its own true, divine nature.

'Offer such a religion and all the nations will follow you. Ashoka'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. (Complete Works, v 1, 19)



of my heart. ... “ Help and not Fight,” “Assimilation and not Destruction,” “Harmony and Peace and not Dissension.”

At any rate, these principles of the Hindus are set not only to promote the general welfare of all beings but more importantly, they are also set out to help one in spiritual realization. For example, truthfulness forms one of the five principles in Patanjali's five-point 'Yama.' But Yama also includes 'non-injury' or non-violence. There can be situations when following the 'truthfulness' principle might conflict with the 'non-injury' principle. In that case, the scriptures enjoin upon us to think and think deeply if following the letter of the law (speaking the truth principle) would not injure one or other members (beings) of society. If the answer is yes, that is, it would indeed hurt one or other members of society; then wise men advise us to speak the truth but speak the pleasant truth, in a way, that it does not hurt or injure anyone.

A case in point would be when a butcher who was leading a cow to his slaughterhouse to slaughter her but lost her because it wandered away. Suppose, someone standing at the crossroad had seen the direction in which the cow had gone. If the butcher asked that man the direction in which the cow had gone, should the man tell the butcher the truth? If he did, then wise men would say that the sin of slaughtering the cow would be on that man's head. Therefore, in that case, it would be OK not to tell the truth!

Among the divine or moral qualities that are mentioned in our scriptures, especially in the Bhagavad-Gita (16.2-3), are truthfulness and non-injury and the absence of pride in one's caste or race, wealth, knowledge, etc. Let us illustrate this by an incident in the life of Swami Vivekananda when he was in the US to attend the first World Parliament of Religions that began on September 11, 1893, in Chicago. It is here that day Swami Ji began his famous address with the five words: 'Sisters and Brothers of America,' which evoked a thunderous and standing ovation for over two minutes from nearly seven thousand people in the audience. After the conclusion of the Parliament, the Swami was in great demand for giving lectures in different parts of the country.



Being an Oriental, his skin seemed dark to an American, and in the South, he was often mistaken for an African-American; sometimes he was insulted. (Please remember that during that time, Afro-American people had no civil liberties in the US.) But the Swami invariably received the rude remarks and rude glances with a grand indifference of a Yogi (who the scriptures say remains indifferent to praise or blame. After all, what was race prejudice to a man who saw in every man his brother? Once an African-American porter, who had seen the Swami being welcomed by a reception committee, came up to him and said how happy he was to see one of his own people had become a great man, and added that he would like to have the privilege of shaking hands with him. The Swami warmly clasped his hand and exclaimed, “Thank you! Thank you, brother!”

In barbershops of northern and southern states, the Swami was infrequently refused service. Several times in important cities of the south he was refused admittance to a hotel because of his dark color. But when the same hotel proprietors who had turned him away read his lectures in the papers or his name spoken with deference everywhere, they were embarrassed and would run up to him to apologize.

Long afterward, when a Western disciple, referring to these incidents, asked him in surprise why he had not told them who he was. “What!” he replied, “rise at the expense of another? I did not come to earth for that!” What broadmindedness, and what strength of moral character! Indeed being a true non-dualist or monist, he saw himself in all beings, and all beings in himself; indeed he identified himself with one and all.

Once again, if the Swami had told the hotel proprietors or the Afro-American porters his true identity, he would not have told a lie but the truth. But how would it have reflected on his character, a monk and a Swami who believed in the principle of the unity of all existence, while this world of name and form is Māya only? To him, the separateness between humans and non-humans, between whites and African-Americans and Orientals, between Indians and Americans was only apparent and unreal. In reality,



we are all one. In other words, although the Swami did not deny being an African-American (which he should have if he had followed the letter of the law of speaking the truth), yet by acting the way he did, he depicted and upheld the other great virtue and principle, the absence of pride, which is the hallmark of every saint. Swami Vivekananda indeed was a saint of the highest order.

One other thing we need to be clear about is the concept of God, and the relationship between God and man and woman in Hinduism, which is very different from monotheistic religions. Says Swami Vivekananda: “Two ideals of truth are in our scriptures; the one is what we call eternal, and the other is not so authoritative, yet binding under particular circumstances, times, and places. The eternal relations between souls and God are embodied in what we call the Shrutis, the Vedas. The next set of truths is what we call the Smritis, as embodied in the words of Manu, Yajnavalkya, and other writers, and also in the Puranas, down to the Tantras.

...“Another peculiarity is that these Shrutis have many sages as the recorders of the truths in them, mostly men, even some women. Very little is known of their personalities [emphasis is added], the dates of their birth, and so forth, but their best thoughts, their best discoveries, I should say, are preserved there, embodied in the sacred literature of our country, the

Vedas. In the Smritis, on the other hand, personalities are more in evidence. Startling, gigantic, impressive, world-moving persons stand before us, as it were, for the first time, sometimes of more magnitudes even than their teachings.

“This is a peculiarity which we have to understand—that our religion preaches an Impersonal-Personal God. It preaches any amount of impersonal laws [emphasis is added] plus any amount of personality, but the very fountainhead of our religion is in the Shrutis, the Vedas, which are perfectly impersonal [emphasis is added; the persons come in the Smritis and Puranas—the great avatars, incarnations of God, prophets, and so forth. And this ought to be observed that except our religion, every other religion in the world depends upon the life or lives of some personal founder or founders. Christianity is built on the life of Jesus Christ, ... “

“It naturally follows that there must be in all these religions a good deal of fight about what they call the historical evidence of the existence of these great personalities. If at any time the historical evidence of these personages in ancient times became weak, the whole building of the religion tumbles down and is broken to pieces. We escaped this fate [the fights between all those religions that have personal founders] because our religion is based not on persons but principles. ... Krishna is not the authority of the Vedas [Emphasis is added], but the Vedas are the authority of Krishna himself. His glory is that he is the greatest preacher of the Vedas that ever existed. ...”

“How is it possible that one person as Mohammed or Buddha or Christ, can be taken up as the one type for the whole world, nay the whole of morality, ethics, spirituality, and religion can be true only from the sanction of that one person, and one person alone? Now the Vedantic [Hindu] religion does not require any such personal authority. Its sanction is the eternal nature of man, its ethics are based upon the eternal, spiritual solidarity of man, already existing, already attained, and not to be attained. On the other hand, from the very earliest times, our sages have been

feeling conscious of the fact that the vast majority of mankind requires a personality. They must have a personal God. ... [So, the Hindus accept a personal-Impersonal God.]”

“The personal God is necessary, and at the same time we know that instead of and better than vain imaginations of a Personal God, ... we have in this world, living and walking in our midst, living Gods, now and then. ... Sri Krishna is much greater than an idea of God you or I can have. Buddha [too] is a much higher idea, ... than the ideal you or I can conceive of in our minds; ... our sages knew this, and, therefore, left it open to ... worship such great personages, such Incarnations. Nay, the greatest of these Incarnations [Sri Krishna] goes further: ‘Wherever an extraordinary spiritual power is manifested by external man, know that I am there; it is from Me that that manifestation comes.’ ...”

“That leaves the door open for the Hindu to worship the Incarnations of all the countries in the world. The Hindu can [and does] worship any sage and any saint from any country whatsoever, and as a fact, we know that we go and worship many times in the churches of the Christians, and many times in the Mohammedan mosques, and that is good. Why not? Ours, as I have said, is the universal religion. [Emphasis is ours.] It is inclusive enough; it is broad enough to include all the ideals. ...” (The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda, “Sages of India”, v.3, 248 – 51).

Besides, we need to emphasize one more thing here before we go any further. And that is the word ‘Hinduism’ is not a Sanskrit word, nor does it stand for the name of the religion of the so-called Hindus. Nor is it derived from the name of the founder of this religion. For, and rather interestingly, Hinduism didn’t have any founder, as I have said before that Hinduism is not based on any personality but on principles. Nor does Hinduism has a central organization. In fact, the very words, Hindu and Hinduism, did not originate from the land of the Hindus. In the past, this word merely referred to those who lived on the eastern side of the river Sindhu (Indus), now in Pakistan. The ancient Iranians mispronounced the name Sindhu and



called all the people living on the eastern side of that river Hindu. So this is how this word has come down to the Hindus, and during the Muslim rule in India, they took that name themselves.

The Hindus themselves would have liked to call their religion Sanatan Dharma or eternal religion, but not many took up this name. Swami Vivekananda suggested that they (Hindus) should be called either Vaidikas, followers of the Vedas, or better still, Vedantists, followers of Vedanta, which is the knowledge portion of the Vedas. Unfortunately, only a minority of intellectuals have taken up this suggestion, so the words Hindus and Hinduism have become enduring. Again, since the religion of the so-called Hindus is based on the Vedas, which contain impersonal spiritual laws discovered by ancient sages whose names are not known, and as pointed out above, our religion is based on principles, not on personalities. Nonetheless, many holy people and sages that followed the ancient sages have verified these laws; and can be verified by people even today by anyone ready to follow the spiritual discipline necessary for its verification. As such, the principles underlying our religion are not opposed to science.

Swami Vivekananda said in one of his lectures in America that religion is a science or a study of humanity's struggle to grasp the infinite, but it was seldom taught so in the West. He explained this scientific approach in Vedanta in that lecture, "Religion and Science":

Experience is the only source of knowledge. In the world, religion is the only science where there is no surety because it is not taught as a science of experience [realization]. This should not be so. There is always, however, a small group of men who teach religion from experience. They are called mystics, and these mystics in every religion speak the same tongue and teach the same truth. This is the real science of religion.... Religion deals with the truths of the metaphysical world, just as chemistry and the other natural sciences deal with truths of the physical world. The book one must read to learn chemistry is the book of nature. The book from which to learn religion is your mind and heart. (The Complete Works, v.6, 81)

Another reason that Vedanta is consistent with science is that like science, its code of ethics is based on the scientific principle of cause and effect, that is, what we call the laws of nature. We give here just two verses from the Bhagavad-Gita (9.4 and 9.5) in support of our assertion. Sri Krishna says (BG: 9.4): All this world is pervaded by Me in My un-manifested form; all beings abide in Me, but I stand apart from them; (9.5): Nor do beings exist in Me (in reality), behold My divine Yoga! Bringing forth and supporting the beings, My Self does not dwell in them.

At any rate, some of the things for which the non-Hindus consider our weakness, on the contrary, give our religion the strength. For, having no founder of the Hindu religion, has allowed this religion to incorporate into its tenets fresh experiences of saints and sages, and remove anything that is contradicted by modern discoveries. As such, Hinduism has remained ever fresh. In the words of one scholar, Hinduism is ever-aging but never old. There are, however, certain words that have become part of the vocabulary of our religion and culture. One is the word dharma. This word means something that supports, and what supports a nation is righteousness, morality, and spirituality. So the essence of everything is dharma; our dharma is spirituality, which means that behind this world of names and forms lies the divinity or God.

Another important word is darshan, which means seeing or realization. Darshan also means philosophy, but unlike western philosophy, which is more speculative, darshan in Hinduism implies thought or view that is based on experience and subject to verification by other saints. In other words, Hindus are concerned more with 'seeing' and realizing God or the Ultimate Reality, rather than just believing in its existence. For, the word 'seeing' expresses that perfect quality of immediate conviction, which is independent of other media wherein intellect and feeling directly get the vision that is the aim of Vedanta. Shankaracharya, perhaps the greatest philosopher of India, said that various people would express Reality in different ways, but what is the real nature of Reality depends on one's own realization or experience.



Three Schools of Vedanta: As one might have noticed that we have used the words ‘Hinduism’ and ‘Vedanta’ interchangeably. Interestingly, there is no agreement about the word Vedanta. For, there are indeed at least three different schools of Vedanta, which provide us with the meaning of this important word. The first School is the dualistic or dvaita school of Sri Madhavacharya. The dualists believe that God, who is the creator of the universe and is its ruler, is eternally separate from nature, eternally separate from the human soul. God is eternal, and so are nature and all the human souls. Nature and the souls manifest and change, but God remains the same. Besides, dualists assert that this God is personal in the sense it has qualities and human attributes. He is merciful, and just, He is powerful, etc., etc. In short, He is the repository of an infinite number of blessed qualities.

The real Vedanta philosophy begins, according to Swami Vivekananda, with what is known as the qualified non-dualistic or visisht-Advaita school; the principal exponent of the qualified non-dualism is Sri Ramanujacharya. This school asserts that the effect is never different from the cause. If the universe is the effect, and God is the cause, it must be God Himself—it cannot be anything but that. Thus, say the qualified non-dualists, God is both the effect and also is the material cause of the universe.

Therefore, God is not only the creator of the universe, but He is also the material out of which the universe has been projected. A good analogy given in the Vedas is that of a spider that spins out thread out of its own body and lives in that web. So the whole universe is the body of God. In other words, the whole universe and the souls are the body of God, and God is the Soul of all the souls. As from the blazing fire,

fly millions of sparks of the same nature, even so from this Infinite Being, God, these souls have come, say the non-dualists.

Now we come to the Advaita of Sri Shankaracharya, the fairest flower of philosophy and religion that any country in any age has produced, where human thought attains its highest expression. This Advaita or non-dualist Vedanta is too abstruse, too elevated, to be the religion of the masses. For, Advaita says that God is both the effect and material cause of the universe; but it goes beyond it and says that God is both the creator and also the created. He Himself is the Universe; there is but one Existence, the Infinite, and the Ever-blessed One. In other words, all that exists is the Atman, Infinite, beyond the known and beyond the knowable.

The Atman is neither ‘he’ nor ‘she’; there is no sex in the Atman, the Self. It is the names and forms, the bodies, which are matter and are superimposed upon the Self; and they make all this difference. If one takes away these differences in names and forms, the whole universe is one. They are not two, but one everywhere. You and I are one, not two (Advaita). Whom do I worship, and whom can I worship. “I worship”, says the advaitist, myself and I salute to myself; I bow down to myself. I am the Infinite Being; I am the Self, the Self in me is the same Self in you, in everyone else, and every being and thing.

Last but not least, Hinduism is the world’s only religion that allows its tenets to reason and logical analysis, rather than just a dogma to be believed and accepted without putting it to any logical test or its verification. The very fact that during or after the discourse of any speaker or Swami for that matter, questions are raised and answered indicates that Vedanta allows its principles to be put to test and analyzed.

**Shri Umesh Gulati**, based in Durham, NC, is a Vedantist, and a devotee of Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda. He has regularly published articles in Vedanta Kesari from Chennai and Prabuddhabharata from Kolkata, and also in Vedanta magazine from England. Lately he also published articles in Marg magazine. After receiving Ph.D. in Economics from the University of Virginia in 1967, he joined East Carolina University in Greenville, NC the same year and retired in 1999.



# No Other Religion is Maliciously and **UNFAIRLY DENIGRATED** As Badly As Hinduism

By Maria Wirth

**E**xcerpt from my open letter to Pope Francis which is also valid for Muslim clerics.

“Maybe Your Holiness is under the impression that Hinduism is a depraved religion and Hindus would do well to accept the Christian God instead of their multiple Gods.

Such an impression would be completely wrong. There is no other religion that is – unjustly – denigrated as badly as Hinduism. Sorry to say that Christian (including Catholic) missionaries are in the forefront of this vilification campaign. Few people in the west know how profound India’s ancient tradition is.

Long before ‘religions’, as we know them today, came into being, ancient India knew about a solid philosophical basis for our existence and helpful tenets for a fulfilling and meaningful life. The only addition Christianity brought in anew, are unverifiable dogmas that cannot possibly have a bearing on the absolute Truth. Can an event in history impact the absolute Truth? Will Truth make a distinction between people who are baptized and those who are not? “There is no salvation outside the Church” is, and I may be excused for using strong language, ridiculous.

The Indian rishis had discovered ages ago that an all-pervading Presence is at the core of this universe, indescribable, but best described as absolute consciousness. Further, the Hindu law of karma preceded by ages the Christian dictum “as you sow so you reap”.

A Council stopped Christians from believing in rebirth which would explain many riddles that trouble them, for example why there is great injustice already at birth?

The advantage of having a perfect person as a friend and guide on the spiritual path was known in India, but till some 2000 years ago nobody claimed that ‘only’ Krishna or ‘only’ Ram or ‘only’ Buddha can lead to salvation and that whoever does not believe it, goes to hell. “Truth is One, the wise call it by many names”, the Indian Rishis declared and listed different names of Gods. That was at a time, when Christianity was nowhere in sight.

Probably they would have included ‘God’ as another name and Jesus as an avatar, not expecting to be backstabbed by followers of “God” declaring:

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Such an impression would be completely wrong. There is no other religion that is – unjustly – denigrated as badly as Hinduism. Sorry to say that Christian (including Catholic) missionaries are in the forefront of this vilification campaign. Few people in the west know how profound India’s ancient tradition is.

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Christians in India are told that Hindu Gods are devils.  
On what basis? Of course there is no basis and it's an unacceptable  
insult. Yet in recent years, Christianity tries to revive (inspired by  
Hinduism?) belief in angels, as devotion for the Invisible is easier by  
focusing on images.

"Truth must be called only by one name and is fully  
revealed only in one book."

The multiple Gods in Hinduism are personified  
powers that help to access the formless, nameless  
Presence that is in all of us. Christians in India are told  
that Hindu Gods are devils. On what basis? Of course  
there is no basis and it's an unacceptable insult. Yet  
in recent years, Christianity tries to revive (inspired  
by Hinduism?) belief in angels, as devotion for the  
Invisible is easier by focusing on images.

Hinduism is not a belief system. It is a knowledge  
system. It is a genuine enquiry into what is true about  
us and the world. Hindus are not required to believe  
anything that does not make sense and can never be  
verified. There is complete freedom.

Yes, most Hindus believe in rebirth, which makes  
sense.

Most believe in an all-pervading Brahman (other  
names are in use). All-pervading means of course that  
is also in humans.

Most also believe that this Divine Essence can be  
experienced in oneself, if the person purifies herself by  
certain disciplines coupled with devotion.

This belief is verifiable. It is not blind. There were  
many Rishis who realized their oneness with Brahman.

In Christianity, too, there were mystics who  
experienced oneness with the Divine like Meister  
Eckhart for example. Sadly, he was excommunicated  
by the Church. Why is the Church resisting scientific  
insight that there is some mystery essence in  
everything? And why is it difficult to accept that in the  
long, long history of humanity, there were several (not  
only one) outstanding personalities who showed the  
way to the truth?"

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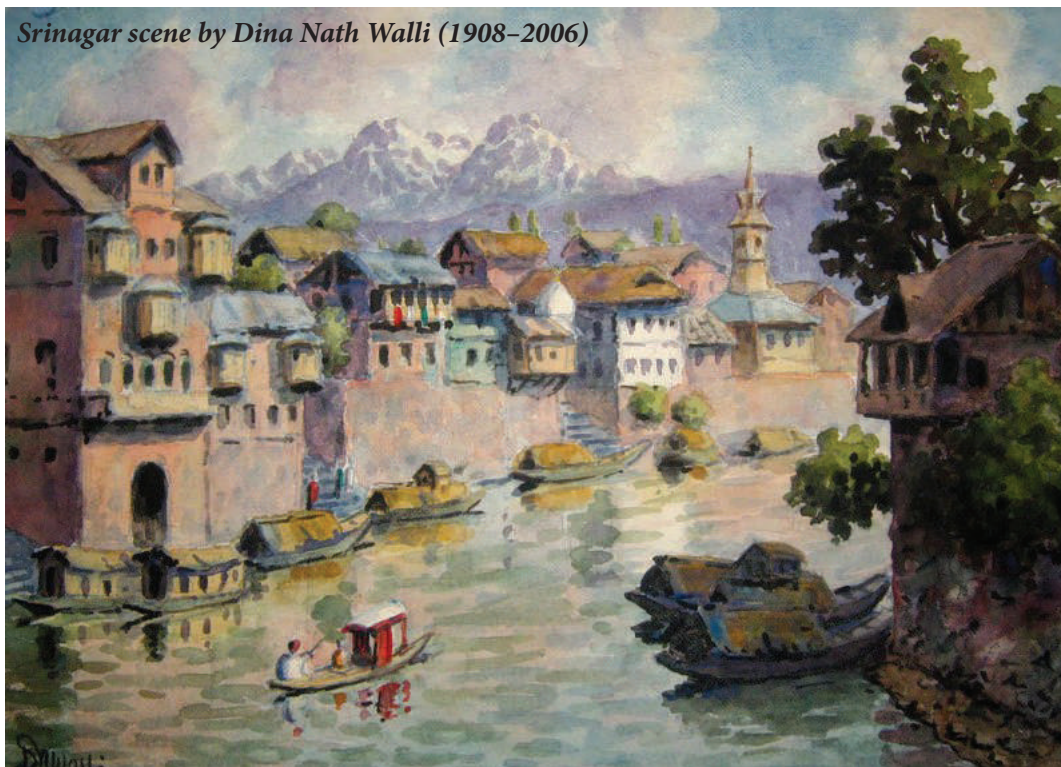
*Source: <https://mariawirthblog.wordpress.com/2022/06/14/no-other-religion-is-maliciously-and-unfairly-denigrated-as-badly-as-hinduism/>*



**Maria Wirth** is a German and came to India for a holiday after finishing her psychology studies at Hamburg University. She visited the Ardhha Kumbha Mela in Haridwar in April 1980 where she met Sri Anandamayi Ma and Devaraha Baba, two renowned saints. With their blessing she continued to live in India and dived into India's spiritual tradition, sharing her insights with German readers through articles and books. For long, she was convinced that every Indian knows and treasures his great heritage. However, when in recent years, she noticed that there seemed to be a concerted effort to prevent Indians (and the world) from knowing how valuable this ancient Indian heritage is, she started to point out the unique value of Indian tradition.



*Srinagar scene by Dina Nath Walli (1908–2006)*



## How “THE KASHMIR FILES” Became a Phenomenon

By Dr. Subhash Kak

In the theatre in Miami, Florida, where I saw *The Kashmir Files*, a tall young American man, a few rows down from us, let out a primal scream near the end of the movie and ran out.

He yelled he couldn't take the pain, but he must have crept back in for I saw him as the movie ended.

It made me think of Ingmar Bergman's *Cries and Whispers*, a film on the horrors of emptiness, loneliness, and death. Such pain is universally relatable but the idea that one's neighbors and friends can be evil and perpetrate deceit, when most people are actually good, can be more frightening, and Vivek Agnihotri's film takes on this subject.

The horror of the genocide of Kashmiri Hindus is a searing story. Compared to the genocide and sexual-slavery of the Yazidis, it is more terrifying

psychologically, because while the Yazidis have returned home, the Kashmiris remain in perpetual exile. And in a diabolical twist, media accounts of the exodus made it out as if the Kashmiri Hindus had brought the tragedy upon themselves.

This movie has captured the public imagination for two main reasons. First, as an artistic creation of great merit and subtle balance; and second, for taking covers off the events that had been denied by India's elites.

As artistic creation, it is a contrast from the mostly vacuous, algorithm-driven stuff Bollywood produces, with storylines copied from Hollywood but put together in the most inauthentic manner, using tired tropes of the stupid Hindu priest and the heartless Thakur.

The Kashmir Files is fresh and it doesn't take the audience for granted. It has complex dialogue and nuanced characters, and the success of the movie shows that the audience is looking to go beyond the mind-numbing Bollywood offerings. It deals with the "raudra", fearful, rasa, a very difficult aesthetic to enact. Without the raudra one cannot properly reach the state of kārū ya, compassion.

For a long time, Indian audiences were patient with cleverly packaged, shallow stories so long they were good for whiling away a couple hours. At the end of the movie one didn't remember or care what the story was.

This patience was a consequence of the hypocrisy and falsehoods that the Indian Left, which has controlled political and intellectual life in the country for decades, injected in entertainment, education, and journalism. This was done ostensibly to foster social amity but in truth to maintain control over institutions of power.

If several hundred thousand Kashmiri Hindus (called Pandits, or scholars, by the honorific granted to them by the early 18th century King Muhammad Shah of the Delhi court), were cleansed out of their homes, it was to be described as simply an exodus, a result of a conspiracy done by the governor of the State to malign the freedom campaign of Kashmiri Muslims. Truth was turned upside down.

## Fake history

Indian schoolbooks teach white-washed or even false history, and since students can't do anything about the books, they have learnt to go through the motions of the course and then forget the material.

The Left in India remains in a bubble, seeing India through the colonizer's eyes. The British were in India for the publicly stated mission of civilizing the people, and debasing reason the Left has embraced this nonsense for truth.

The British destroyed India's education and economy, "stole" 45 trillion pounds' worth of wealth, precipitated devastating famines, and through their control of the education system somehow convinced Indians that it was all their fault.

The Left speaks of patriarchy in India but paints the West in glowing terms. For example, it doesn't tell people about the estimated 3–5 million women who were executed or burnt alive as "witches" in Europe

— women who resisted being cut them off from independent livelihood. It considers Indian culture regressive and ridicules Indian customs and festivals. It follows simple binaries: Hinduism is complex, immoral, and bad; later religions are simple, clear, and good.

Cancel culture may be new to the West, but it's been practiced for decades by India's self-hating, mind-colonized establishment, which has perpetuated stereotypes through schoolbooks, media and propaganda. As example of pervasive deceit, the Left swears by secularism but is happy that Hindu temples are administered by the State, whereas the religious places of other religions are free.

The genocide of Kashmiri Pandits was minimized by the Left because according to its ideology the Pandit beliefs are more regressive, and they were the wealthier group (although it wasn't true), and so they deserved their fate.

The killings and the displacement of Kashmiri Pandits was a matter of shame for the government and their policy was to use the relatively benign euphemism of "exodus" for what had happened. The Kashmiri Pandit diaspora kept the story alive through meetings and seminars, and the pain of the expulsion from their ancestral home remains undiminished.

## Religious War

In the 1980's, Pakistan was the conduit for the flow of arms from the United States to the Taliban in Afghanistan that led to the defeat of the Soviets. Pumped up by this success, Pakistan stoked terrorism in the Punjab using Khalistani proxies, and they thought the time had come to snatch Kashmir from India.

Historians are aware that Pakistan sees itself as Riyasat-e-Medina, a temporary government (like the prophet's) that will eventually conquer India as a part of Ghazwa-e-Hind, a prophecy of Jihad mentioned in sayings of Muhammad, foretelling battles in the Indian subcontinent resulting in the victory of Muslims over non-Muslims, as prelude to Qayamat, the Day of Judgment.

As a warlike religious state, it created laws against non-Muslims within the state, of which the most horrifying is the blasphemy law that lets a person abduct a girl from a minority religion, "convert" her so



that she cannot return to her family and her religion for that would be blasphemy, and put her into sexual slavery, protected by this law.

The call for Ghazwa-e-Hind motivates the religious hardliner to keep military pressure on India and use all means, including terror, to achieve this goal. The background to the Hindu genocide in Kashmir was the weak Indian State of the late 80s pushed by an emboldened adversary.

Pakistani generals went along with this policy for they had not been held to account for the genocide in Bangladesh in 1971, in which the Pakistani Army and supporting Jamaat-e-Islami militias killed perhaps three million people and raped nearly half a million. The three million dead estimate from the Bangladesh government makes it the largest genocide since the Holocaust.

In December 1971, Pakistani Army surrendered to Indian forces. Of the 93,000 Pakistani POWs, 195 were suspected of committing war crimes. The appropriate course of action would have been to try them before an International War Crimes Tribunal. But the Indian government made a huge mistake and the war criminals and other POWs were released in April 1974.

This was a big moral lapse on India's part. Pakistan concluded that criminal behavior had no consequences and this contributed to its use of terrorism in Punjab, Kashmir and elsewhere in India.

### The recovery of memory

The Kashmir Files became a sensation as people realized that the terrible events of Kashmir from the 1990s have been hidden from the general public.

The geopolitical situation in the world has changed greatly from the 1990s. India is the world's third largest economy based on PPP (purchasing power parity), and its economy is expected to become the world's largest in the next 20 or 30 years. Indians individually have become extremely successful all over the world, and in the United States they represent the wealthiest ethnic group.

With economic success comes self-confidence. In the past, Indians used idealism or emotionalism to mask their weakness. There is recognition now that realism is the best policy in life and public affairs.

Even in questions related to conflict between communities, it is best to shine light on the past. Doing so generates wisdom to deal with similar conflicts in the future and perhaps avoid conflict altogether. There can be no real reconciliation without truth.

The Kashmir Files exposes layers of deceit within the ecosystem of Indian media, academic, and power establishments. An artistic creation becomes extraordinary if it takes the viewer from the immediate story to the dhvani of the universal. The movie is a story not just of Kashmir, but of our times, where deceit and hypocrisy lie just one layer below professions of justice and equality.

Vivek Agnihotri deals with the issue of evil that few artists have explored; this issue will become increasingly important over the world in the coming years, as jobs shrink due to AI and religious bigotry becomes intense.

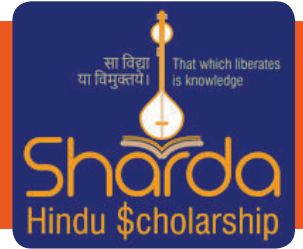
But this is also a movie of hope for the truth has the potential to free both the perpetrator of injustice and the victim, to reveal common humanity, and to uncover ways to protect oneself from the evil that lies next to the truth.

Source: <https://subhashkak.medium.com/how-kashmir-files-became-a-phenomenon-f7adf14af49a>



**Subhash Kak** is Regents professor of electrical and computer engineering at Oklahoma State University and a Vedic scholar. He has authored many books and published numerous papers in various academic journals.

# VHPA Announces SHARDA HINDU SCHOLARSHIP



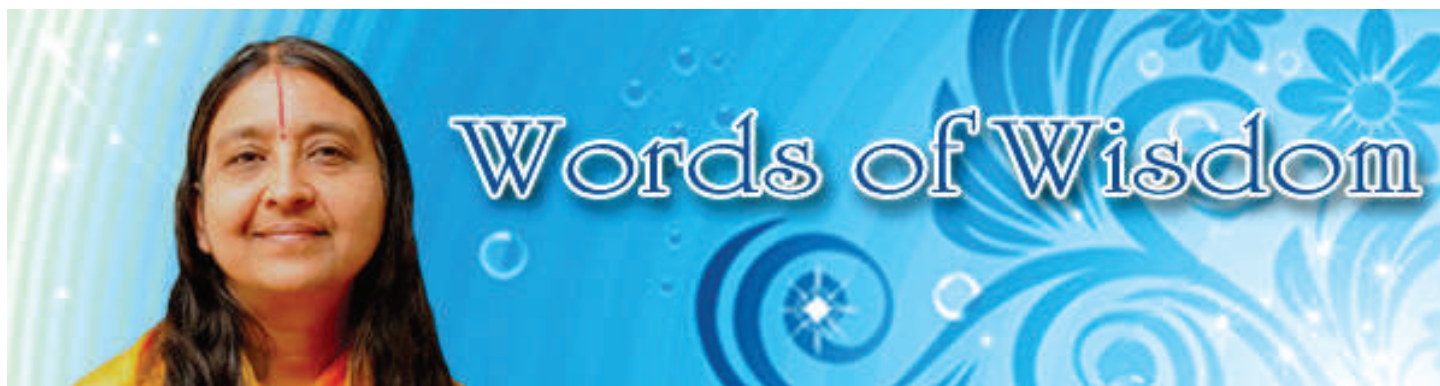
While scholarships for graduating high school students abound, almost all are sponsored by corporations, foundations, and faith-based community organizations. However, hardly any scholarship is offered by the Hindu community to deserving high school seniors. To fill this gap, the World Hindu Council of America has launched the Sharda Hindu Scholarship at the national level, offered to Hindu students who are graduating from High School and are headed to a college to pursue higher studies.

Saraswati Devi is the giver of knowledge. She embodies the feminine aspect of Reality (Brahman) that inspires us to continuously seek, learn, create, and grow to our full potential. And this growth is trifold: academic, spiritual, and cultural i.e., all forms of creative arts. The scholarship is awarded to students who best exhibit the values that Saraswati Devi represents.

The Scholarship is open to rising High School seniors from the Hindu Community who aspire for higher studies. The student must excel not only in academics but also demonstrate talent in cultural arts, leadership in community service and awareness of their heritage. The application process, eligibility requirements, qualifications and the selection schedule are described on the scholarship website <https://scholarship.vhp-america.org/>

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# Social Distancing is Needed

By Siddheshwari Devi (Didi Ji)

## Social Distancing is Needed

Ever-new tech innovations are making the world smaller and smaller. People who are geographically oceans apart can see and chat with each other. Social media platforms allow people to find long-lost family members and friends. They make it easier for the police to find criminals and identify criminal activity. Now it's easier to learn anything you wish to learn. All this is very good. However, things have clearly gotten out of hand.

The sign of the times is a disturbing one. A family is sitting down to dinner and everyone has something in their hands, but instead of cutlery it's a smart phone. Animated conversations are taking place, but not with each other. Everyone is communicating with someone who is not at the dining table. By saying that the family is dining together I am likely presenting an unlikely scenario. Who even does that anymore?

YouTube, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Pinterest, Snapchat, Zoom, Tik Tok etc. didn't start off with a malicious intent. Despite all the good intentions, these social platforms have taken over our lives. Moderation is important in every walk of life, but the nature of this beast is such that it doesn't tolerate anything less than full addiction. If we don't stop it.....!

It's essential to distance ourselves frequently from social media. This 'social distancing' will hopefully

bring us out of the trance and we will once again learn the fine art of conversation. Children will learn how to do 'nothing' by hanging around in the backyard and collecting fireflies. We will all cherish reality rather than 'virtual reality'.

It's time to distance ourselves from the social platforms. I am all for 'Social Distancing.' Are you?

## Devotee, Test Yourself

Contrary to popular belief, devotion to God is not an activity for us to perform monthly, weekly, or even daily. It's not a chore that has to get done from time to time. Devotion is a state of mind in which we must remain all the time. Whether we are waking in the morning or going off to sleep at night, we must be aware of God who is inside as well as outside of us.

If you believe in God's omnipresence, you must also be aware that the Creator is within every individual. How can we then separate devotion to God from being kind and respectful to all creatures? Devotion renders the heart pure and gives rise to virtuous qualities such as compassion, gentleness, helpfulness, generosity and humility.

Devotion means 'love for God,' and love is practiced with the mind. The more our mind is lovingly meditating on God, the better we become

as individuals. When God enters the mind, Godly qualities make their entrance also. Vices gradually depart as virtues enter the heart.

If you claim to be a devotee of God, test yourself. Are you a calm person or are you quick to anger? Do you understand the pain of others or are you completely absorbed in your own life? How well or poorly do you handle adversity? Do you judge others harshly or do you view them kindly? Do you find more virtues than vices in a person, or is it the other way around?

The mind can trick you into thinking that you are a great, or even a good, devotee. By testing ourselves regularly, we can get a very good idea.

### Significance of the Guru

The true meaning and the serious implication of the word 'Guru' elude those who generally use it to mean 'expert.' The eternal Vedas define 'Guru' as 'the one who dispels ignorance and gives knowledge.' They also specify that the Guru teaches the highest knowledge; the knowledge of God.

We readily accept that even the knowledge of A B C or 1 2 3 cannot be acquired without a teacher; that no material knowledge can be learned without being taught by someone. It is odd, therefore, that we do not accept the need for a divine teacher to impart divine knowledge. It is our experience that when we try to understand anything about the soul, the mind, God, or other spiritual matters, we are hopelessly lost despite being highly qualified in worldly matters.

Enlightened ones have compared the material world to an ocean. The individual soul must cross the ocean of materialism and reach to the other side, to God's kingdom. The soul has been given a competent ship in the form of a human body. The captain of the ship is the Guru who steers the mighty barge across the ocean.

Without the guidance of a Guru our life is like a ship being tossed around in the ocean. Life has no

meaning until a divine teacher reveals it. The Guru reveals the meaning of life and the practical method of fulfilling the purpose for which God has sent us to earth.

### Don't be a Hoarder

We humans would do well to look towards the animal kingdom and learn how to better manage many aspects of living; one of which is eating and accumulating only as much as we need. Hibernators such as squirrels gather nuts for the winter, but only as many as necessary. Their accumulation is based on need, not greed. Looking at these and other creatures we learn to eat only as much as it is necessary to fill the stomach. While these creatures eat to live, we often live to eat.

Many people accumulate so much that they become hoarders. Some extreme hoarders become prisoners in their own homes, always bringing more possessions into their living space and not being able to discard even outdated material and expired food items.

A good plan of action to avoid this extreme is to get into the habit of giving away or discarding certain possessions. If it is useable, act with compassion by donating it to the needy. If it's broken and unfixable, discard it lovingly.

The underlying problem for hoarders may be anxiety, schizophrenia, or a deprived childhood. Hoarders generally accumulate many emotions that go unchecked. They form an emotional bond with objects and are therefore unable to discard them.

If you are or becoming such person, take a photo of the possessions to which you are attached but do not need. You can then look at the photos whenever you want. As for possessions, make a concentrated effort to use what you have. If you have not used it for a year, you do not need it. Before making a new purchase, ask yourself, "Am I acting out of need or out of greed?"





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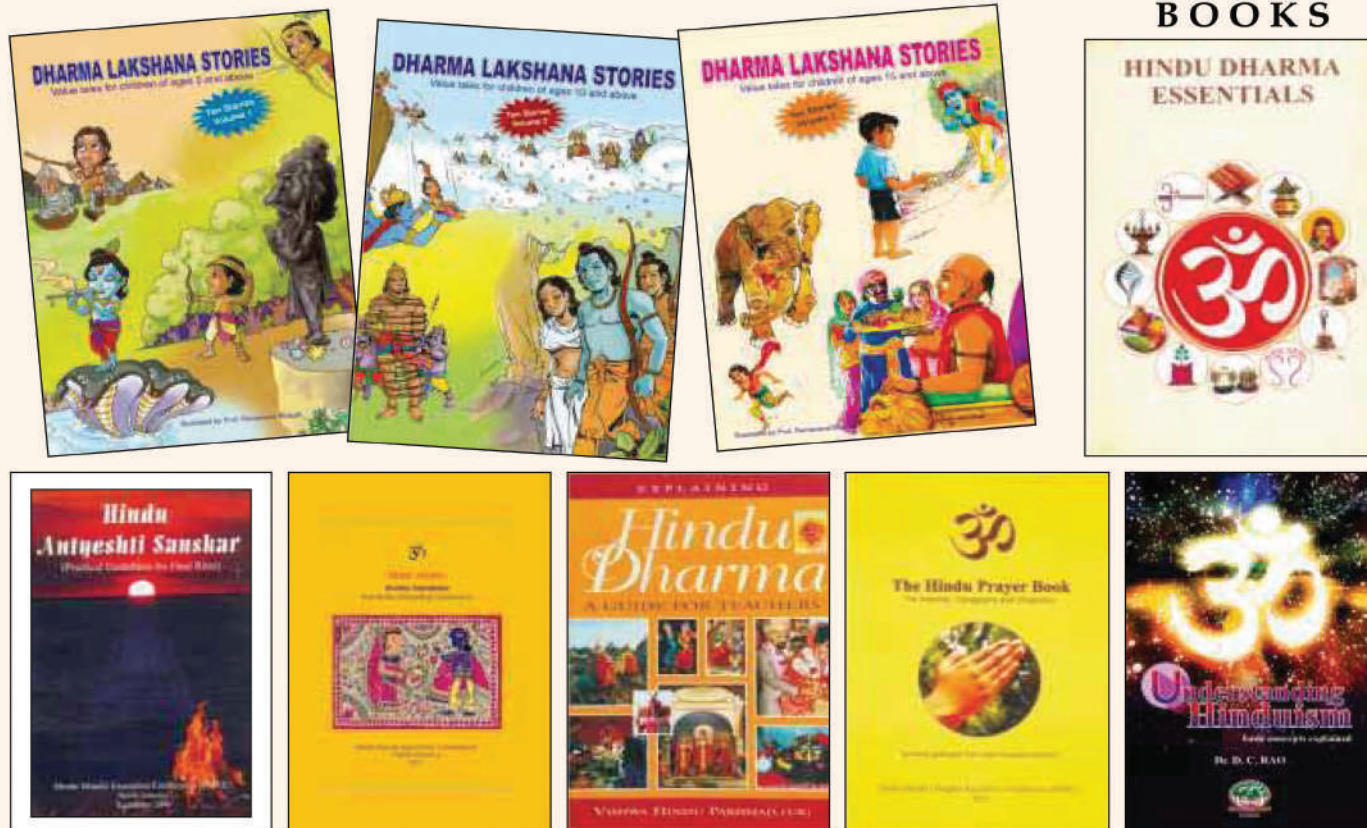
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Om, Asato Maa Sad Gamaya; Tamaso Maa Jyotir Gamaya Mrityor Maa Amritam Gamaya

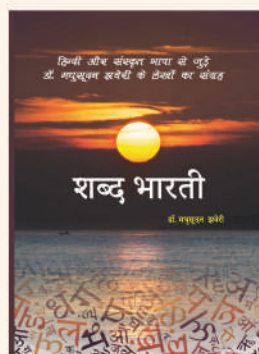
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