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April-June 2020

# HINDU VISHWA

## Vishwa Dharma Digest

धर्मो रक्षति रक्षितः

**Seva in America for Covid-19**

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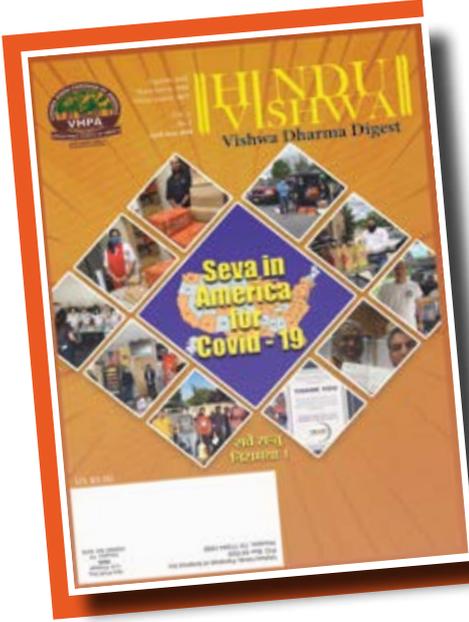
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इहैव तैर्जितः सर्गो येषां साम्ये स्थितं मनः ।  
निर्दोषं हि समं ब्रह्म तस्माद् ब्रह्मणि ते स्थिताः ॥

-श्रीमद्भगवद्गीता 5.19

*ihaiva tair jitaḥ sargo yeshām sām̐ye śhitaṁ manaḥ  
nirdoṣhaṁ hi samam brahma tasmād brahmaṇi te  
śhitāḥ ॥*

-Bhagvad Gita 5.19

Even in this life, the world is conquered by those whose mind is established in equality. Brahman is free from defects and is the embodiment of equality; therefore, become established in Brahman.

## About the HINDU VISHWA

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

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# OUTRAGE AND DIVISION – THIS TOO SHALL PASS;

## The recent outbreak of the Corona Virus and racial tension in the USA

The new year of 2020 started off with a bang. But, in a matter of months, some major global occurrences, including the pandemic of COVID-19, which caused fear and outburst, and spread to many other countries throughout the world, resulted in significant changes to human behavior, and lifestyle. The occurrences of COVID-19, the Delhi riots, and the horrible death of George Floyd, to name a few, threw India, the USA, and the world, into crisis. We have seen loved ones become severely ill due to the Corona virus, and some even died. We have seen eruptions of anger and frustrations, due to the severe religious, and racial conflicts. We have witnessed the increasing divide among nations, as well as the violent loss of lives, and cities, villages, and properties being looted and destroyed.

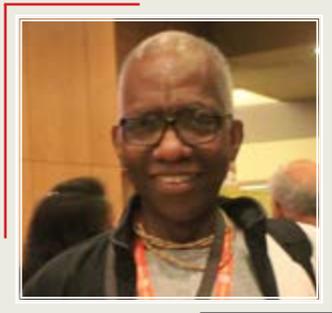
Are there solutions to these events? Regarding the COVID-19, and, as far as we know, throughout the world, countries inflicted with COVID-19 virus, are working diligently together, to come up with solutions, to eradicate the virus, and avoid a global pandemic. In the meantime, people all over the world are asked to protect themselves by wearing masks, and avoiding physical contact, through social distancing. In some places we see the limit of six, or ten persons for gatherings. We have now become a masked population. But, over time I have adjusted and I do feel safe wearing my mask, when I am out of my home boundaries.

Regarding the riots and killings of people, we as nations and individuals, must accept the responsibility for our actions, and do the right things. Leaders are holding on to power, irrespective of the conditions in their countries. They disregard the majority of people who elected them into their positions. This should not be! Leaders will not be, without followers. So, respect the people who helped you to get to the top! This corona virus has taught us, (I hope) that we have been taking life for granted, and not considering some of the damages that our needs, and wants, have caused. Regardless of who we are, how rich we are, how bright we are, how good and kind we are, we are all humans, and, we are all susceptible to God's will, based on our Karma!!

Hinduism is a way of life. And, as Hindus, we have been taught to be flexible, accommodating, and respectful, not only of our way of life, but also that of others. We believe in "Action Thy Duty, Reward Not Thy Concern" Our actions and goals are based on following the principles of: Dharma (ethics/duties), Artha (prosperity/work), Kama (desires/passions), and Moksha (liberation/freedom from the cycle of death and rebirth/salvation);

**As true Hindus, we must abide by these principles and always stand up for the truth! Satyamewa Jayete!**

# AN AFRICAN AMERICAN HINDU LEADER ON CURRENT RACIAL SITUATION



**Benny J Tillman** (*Balabhadra Bhattacharya dasa*)

I grew up in the South during the 1950s and 60s. Those were troublesome times for the African American community. We were identified as Negroes and as an ethnic minority, it was very difficult to understand what our place in the world was. Honestly, there was an element of shame associated with being black.

During the late sixties, I became involved in the “Hippy culture” which exposed me to the concept of “Universal love.” I was not familiar with this Vedic concept of universal love, which is foundational to the true Hindu/Vedic culture.

My first exposure to this culture was through my association in 1971, with Transcendental Meditation, introduced by the late Maharishi Mahesh Yogi. I was a performing artist in Atlanta

and the surrounding areas and heavily involved with the culture of “Sex, Drugs and Rock n Roll.”

Eventually around 1972, I came in contact with disciples of His Divine Grace A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, the founder Acharya of the International Society of Krishna Consciousness. They introduced me to the Bhagavad Gita, which is the most well-known of all Vedic texts. This holy book is very dear and sacred to all Hindus and Westerners who have adopted these teachings and practices. I became an initiated disciple of Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada in July 1974, during his visit to Chicago for a major Hindu/Vedic festival, the Ratha Yatra.

Interestingly, around 1974, I was fortunate to meet one of Swami Prabhupada’s very first disciples, Rupanuga dasa. He encouraged me to join the local Atlanta Hare Krishna Temple. He said they would train me as a leader and then I should go back and help the Black community. This instruction has constantly inspired me to expose this great Hindu/Vedic culture and philosophy to the urban communities.

Central to the Hindu/Vedic philosophy is the concept that we are not these material bodies but that we are eternal spiritual beings, temporarily inhabiting these material bodies. So whether we identify as an African American, Hindu American, Asian American, White American, or an American of color, we are all spiritual beings equal in the eyes of the Supreme Lord.

During the present time of racial tensions in America, I along with other Hindu/Vedic leaders are considering what we can do, to impact and help change this painful and distressful situation.

One thing that I have learned during my several efforts to share Hindu/Vedic principles in the primarily African American community, is that these communities are not looking for a handout. They are desperately in need of help in building up their communities, especially in the areas of affordable housing not just



gentrification. Jobs and other meaningful social activities for their youth and young adults are also a major concern, along with educational help.

Some years ago, I partnered with a young African American community activist who was working in my hometown of East Point Georgia and during that time some local people who knew about my association with the Hindu community, said to me “Mr. Tillman, could you ask your Hindu friends to teach us how to do business like they are doing.” One reason for this question is that many of the small businesses in their communities, are owned by Hindu community members.

I serve as the president of the Vedic Friends Association, an organization focused on preserving and presenting the various aspects of the Hindu/Vedic culture, in a manner suitable

for the present environment which is plagued by such issues as racism. This is the first time to my knowledge that they have elected an African American as the president of a major Hindu based organization. I am honored to serve in this capacity and the support and encouragement has been tremendous.

I am confident that with the vast resources of our Hindu/Vedic community, we can have a positive and powerful impact on developing our communities of color. ■

#### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

*Benny J Tillman (Balabhadra Bhattacharya dasa) is based in Atlanta, GA and has been very active member of the Hindu community in Atlanta, He also served as the Presodent of ISKCON temple in Atlanta. Currently, He is the president of Vedic Friends Association.*

# World Hindu Council of America Launches HinduPACT USA

**W**orld Hindu Council of America (VHPA), the oldest, and one of the most prominent Hindu organizations in America has launched a grassroots initiative Hindu Policy Research and Advocacy Collective USA (HinduPACT USA). HinduPACT USA aims to bring Hindu ethos and dharmic values of unity in diversity, plurality, compassion and, mutual respect amongst religions to policy and advocacy for human rights, environmental protection, gender equality, education, and interfaith dialog.

HinduPACT USA will partner with community organizations, government officials, civil rights organizations and other organizations who share our values to achieve our vision. We will work with civil society organizations, mandirs, thought leaders and others to become a premier policy research & advocacy organization. HinduPACT will identify and influence issues of interest to Hindus at all levels, train Hindus for grassroots advocacy and create advocacy internship opportunities for Hindu youths.

HinduLounge, VHPA's weekly Facebook Live program on contemporary Hindu issues in America is the first HinduPACT USA project. Political candidates from across the country, regardless of their political affiliation, are being approached to ascertain if their positions are consistent with Dharmic, and American values. HinduPACT USA will not take any partisan political stand and will not endorse any candidate for political office.

Over the course of next year, HinduPACT USA will formulate Hindu views on contemporary American issues, such as school prayer, race relations, gun control, environmental awareness, abortion, gender equality, legalization of marijuana, immigration, sanctuary cities /

states, without taking a partisan political stand on the issues.

We welcome Hindus across the US to join us in this important initiative. ■



## HSMN GRADUATION EVENT - 2020 Graduation Day Online Celebration

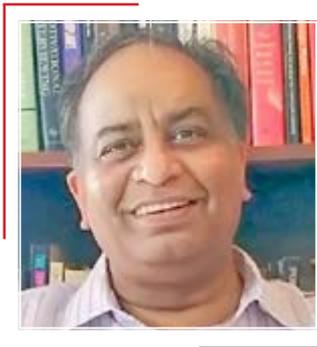


**H**SMN's virtual graduation event went very well. We had speakers, student recognition, scholarships, and priest puja all virtually from different places. **Shri Sanjay Mehta** was one of the chief guests, his talk was towards the beginning. Vote of thanks was at the end to wrap up. We bookended the event.

One of the advantages of a virtual event is that we had participants, and involvement from various parts of the state and country!



# WHAT THE MURDER OF AJAY PANDITA TEACHES US – A TRIBUTE TO HIS TRAGIC DEATH



*Rajat Mitra*

**A** Kashmiri Hindu and an old friend called me up a few days ago. We discussed the COVID19 scenario, the political situation created by Chinese incursion and then he asked me about the murder of Ajay Pandita. “It has affected me so much that I haven’t slept properly since then. It has affected my family too. For the first time in months I am at a loss. Can you explain why I am feeling this way?” he asked.

We talked for some time. As he shared his feelings, what came across to me was the utter sense of shock and unbelievability in his words. “Did you believe that after the abrogation of article 370 there could still be such brutal murders of Kashmiri Hindus?” he asked. After a moment’s silence, he said, “Maybe I was wrong. After the abrogation and the way things happened, all my Kashmiri Hindu brothers had come to believe that no one will target us again like they used to do in 1989. That shell around us, that cocoon has busted with this killing. We remain as vulnerable

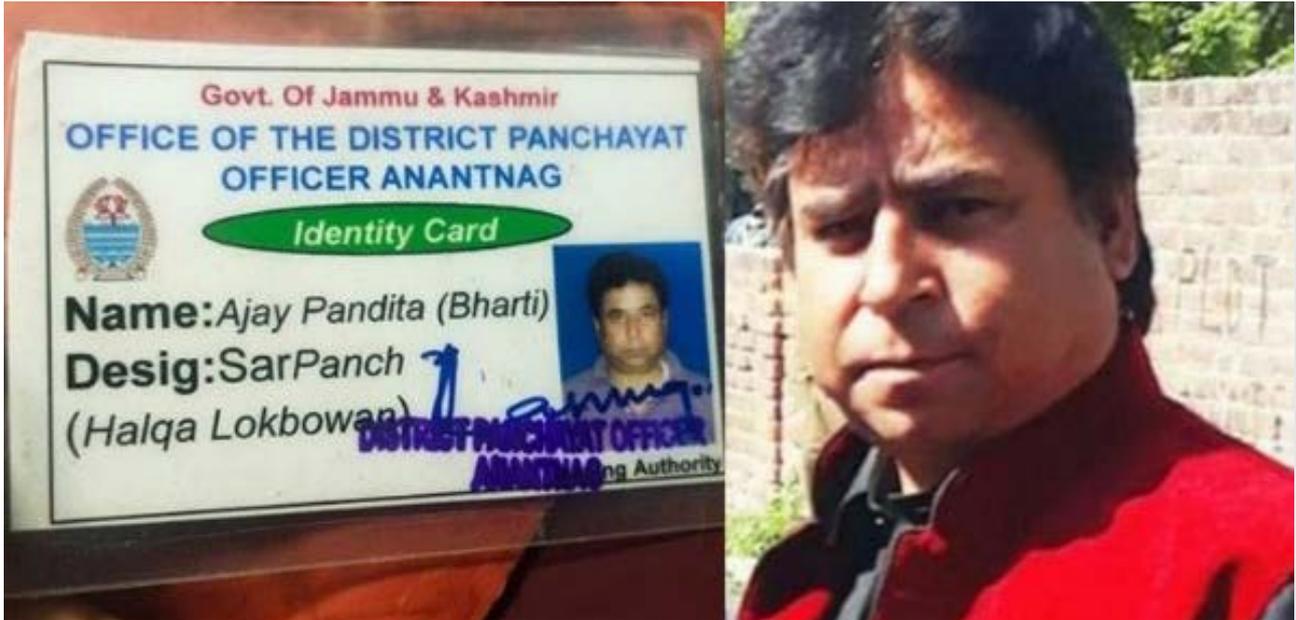
as we were then.” Thanking me for the discussion, he hung up. A few days later he called me and said he had talked to several other friends. All had expressed a similar sentiment. It is as if the sense of vulnerability has come back to them. The shell of safety they had begun to build around them, is broken. The question on their mind is that how could it happen when the reality of Kashmir is changing?

Some murders are more shocking, and more disturbing than others. They shake our inner beliefs that we take as inviolate, and which tells us that the world we inhabit is safe for us. The killing that is sudden and unprovoked, tells us that the world is no longer the safe place we assumed it to be. The murder of George Floyd is disturbing not just because of its brutality, but because every Black man in USA fears being questioned and killed in the same manner by police no matter what his status in life.

In 1995, while waiting at Amsterdam airport to board my flight, the television screen announced the murder of the Israeli Prime Minister, Yitzhak Rabin. A couple next to me had begun to cry hysterically, saying something in Hebrew. As I learnt later, Jews cried that night not because their Prime Minister was killed but because it shattered their faith that after going through the holocaust, a Jew could ever kill their own Prime Minister.

Has the abrogation of article 370, the subsequent handling of the Kashmir issue, produced in the Hindus of Kashmir a similar conviction that the painful blood filled chapters of killings is over and met with a closure?

As a psychologist, I learnt about Kashmiri



Hindus while working in prisons during my conversations with terrorists. The second was while working in refugee camps in Jammu. Kashmiri Hindus are unique in India. No other group of Hindus, I believe, has faced so much persecution and terror as they have over centuries. Perhaps that is why the need to exterminate the civilization of Kashmir is so strong in a certain group of people who would like Hinduism to become extinct. Kashmir remains a reminder of what Hinduism was in the past. The awakening of Kashmir will directly awaken the very soul of Hindus.

Research studies show that one terrorist killing is enough to create a circle of influence around a large number of people who stay permanently terrified and in a state of 'learned helplessness' for decades.

As I understood in my talks with terrorists, the goal today is not to kill more and more Kashmiri Hindus as was done in the past by invaders, but recreate that terror in their hearts that is as real and palpable as it was centuries ago. Called 'trans-generational trauma,' it is today the biggest impediment in Hindu revival to autonomy and collective identity. Today, as many are coming to believe, a new Hindu identity can only be built around the collective memory of persecution.

When I worked in the camps for Kashmiri Hindus, the most predominant emotion that they shared was religious terror. The terror of being beheaded, the terror of being sawed into pieces after a rape, the terror of being killed and mutilated for solely belonging to their religion, was something that they discussed in almost every meeting. The terror often crossed generations, to centuries back when they were drowned for refusing to convert and to leave their religion because they were 'infidels'.

Sarpanch Ajay Pandita had refused to give in to that terror that he believed was gone. He believed that they wouldn't touch him. That he could stay in the middle of that terror, in the ecosystem that hated his religion, his beliefs and his status as a Hindu leader. It didn't help that he belonged to Congress, a party for whom the Kashmiri Hindus do not even exist. He perhaps believed that the spirit that drove out half a million people thirty years ago wouldn't apply to him because he was speaking their language, something that his party does without batting an eyelid. He perhaps also believed that the people had changed and a new era would emerge out of it. Maybe he even thought that if terrorists came looking for him like they did for Kashmiri Hindus in 1990, this time his neighbors would come to protect him.

They would protest and stand by him. After all his party has been speaking on their behalf only. But it didn't help. His killing shows the mindset hasn't changed in Kashmiris in thirty years and will not in near future. The hatred, the vilification will remain as strong as before for every 'infidel'.

As Toni Morrison says in her celebrated work, "...the very purpose of bigotry is to identify the other as an outsider and to separate him so that one can define one's own self..." In Kashmir the Kashmiri Hindu has been 'the other' for far too long. The need to see him as 'the other' made the Kashmiri Muslim what he is. He drove him, the Kashmiri Hindu, out from his land, took away his home because that was the only way to define himself. That was the only way he could lay claim to the entire land by destroying the very civilization of Kashmir. In this there was no space or meaning for co-existence as long as the religion was different.

The reason Kashmir has been such a fertile ground for international terrorism has been due to its history, values and culture. It is impossible to understand this unless one understands the children who are made to grow indoctrinated in a culture of hate. The children were told to celebrate when the Kashmiri Hindus were forced to run away. The exodus of Kashmiri Hindus, the rape and the murder of Kashmiri Hindu women exists as narratives of victory over the infidel. They will tell you that it was their land and what their fathers and forefathers did was an act justified for this reason. When they pick up stones and hit the Indian army, they are told they are doing an act justified by their faith. With large scale violence, beheading and torture as the main imagery they grew up with forming their identity, how will we stop the death of persons like Ajay Pandita?

Today, more than the Kashmiri Hindu, it is perhaps the Kashmiri Muslim who needs to go to his roots and understand that it is he who is alienated from his land, his people and trying to define himself by detaching from his brother, the



Photo Credit: [www.google.com](http://www.google.com)

Kashmiri Hindu.

It is time to understand that abrogation of article 370 was no magic. The psychology of the people, the hatred and rancor need a far deeper understanding. I hope the tragic death of Ajay Pandita would once again teach us that painful reality of Kashmir.

The exodus and the genocide of Kashmiri Hindus ranks as one of the greatest crimes of the twentieth century. Like all great mass crimes of history involving mass rape, violence and cultural annihilation, the perpetrators of Kashmir have evaded all accountability and still stand clean in the eyes of the world. They blame the survivors with half the world still believing them. History shows that unless the survivors rise from a slumber and relentlessly confront the perpetrators, no mass perpetrators come forward to take responsibility and this is true for the perpetrators of 19th January 1990. The men and women who rejoiced at seeing Kashmiri Hindus running away, watched them being sawed and killed should tell the world why they felt so and the world must acknowledge it as a genocide of a race who desired nothing more than to live in their homes and follow their religion. Till then, all peace will be elusive in Kashmir. ■

#### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

*Rajat Mitra is a Psychologist, Speaker and Author of 'The Infidel Next Door'*  
[www.rajatmitra.co.in](http://www.rajatmitra.co.in)



# VISIT TO SAC HOSTELS IN GUJARAT

Earlier in 2020, the SAC (Support A Child) team decided to visit SAC hostels in Gujarat. The SAC is supporting six hostels in Mahisagar, Gujarat and three hostels each in Dediapara, Dang and Anjar. Gujarat has a very large tribal and underprivileged population. While urban Gujarat is relatively better served with charitable initiatives, rural Gujarat has a significant greater need. That is one of the main reasons behind the major efforts by SAC in these tribal and relatively poorer areas.

Our journey started from Ahmedabad to Santrampura, which is a Tehsil in the Mahisagar district. We traveled 170 km to a beautiful remote town of Santrampura. During the route, we took in the beautiful scenery filled with sights of cotton

(Kapaas) fillies, white flowers, and dark green branches. The Maahi River keeps this area fertile.

There are 36 districts in Gujarat, with 14 out of the 36 districts classified as backward. Mahisagar is also the breeding ground for proselytization. This area lies at the border of Banswara, Rajasthan and is the home of the Bheel tribe. They speak a dialect, which is a mixture of Gujarati and Rajasthani language since it is at the border of Rajasthan and Gujarat. A large number of the labor force in Gujarat hails from the Bheel community and are popularly called “Mamas”, who have to leave their hometowns and go to other parts of Gujarat for labor jobs. With many of their parents having to travel for work, their children have to face more difficult circumstances. This is where

the noble mission of SAC in housing students comes into picture. The local SAC hostels in the area houses close to 800 children (both boys and girls) in three different hostels.

1) Rtimbhara Ashram Shala (located in the Nana Nagvan Village) was established in 2004, providing housing to over 200 girls, also functioning as the resident school. The students start from the 1st to the 10th grade. Future plans also include extension of the facilities up till 12th grade in the coming years.

2) Ramakrishna Ashram Shala (located in the Neemda Muaadi village), established in 1999, is the home of approximately seventy-five male students as well as seventy-five female students. This hostel also functions as the resident school and most of the students come from the Vaadi community (which is a local underprivileged community). These children are very resourceful and are especially in tune with the local wildlife and environment. This school is also from the 1st grade to 8th grade with a plan to extend to the 12th grade. This hostel is also the training center for area school children.

3) Vande Maa Bharati Ashram Shala was also established in 1999 and houses over 230 boys and 200 girls. The local community is also known for producing many members of the military as well. This hostel caters to over 150 nearby villages, with students coming from over 100 kilometers away.

These hostels function more similarly to a community Ashram. In each Ashram setting, everyone has an assigned task ranging from cleaning, cooking, laundry, and other basic tasks. Though there are cooks and other domestic help, every resident has duties to perform to assist in the functioning of the ashram. During the daytime, a school is run in the building and in the night, the same facility becomes a dormitory. Twice a year, when the parents come back from their labors, the students get a chance to meet their parents. The Ashram also conducts parent-teacher meetings to counsel them on education, good values and samskaras with an emphasis on eliminating the scourge of drinking alcohol and its ill effects. Most of the teachers and their families also live in the same ashram, which leads to a deep bond between the teachers and students.





The students follow a strict schedule, getting up at 5:30 am in the morning and going to bed by 10 pm in the evening. The schedule includes personal work, collective cleaning and chores, yoga, sports, schooling, homework, and prayers. Additionally, the students practice the rich traditions of music, dance, and art that are part of the tribal heritage. The students played beautiful tribal instruments and performed mesmerizing folk dances.

When we visited, there was a training workshop underway at the Ashram. When we asked the teachers about the notable qualities of the students in the ashram, they all said discipline, values, and work ethic of the students from the tribal background were particularly notable. These students do better in studies than their counterparts in regular schools. This ashram has also been winning best school award from the local authorities over the past five years, with all schools run by VHP Bharat unit.

Janki Ashram located in the Dang area houses approximately 66 girls in the resident hostel.

There is also a need to open one more hostel there to meet the burgeoning population. The ashram does not have much land and additional land is needed for expansion. The school is running up to 8th grade, with plans to extend education to the 12th grade. Dang is one of the most backward areas in Gujrat with the Pawar, Bale, Kotiavadi and Kudabi tribes inhabiting these areas. These members from the tribal background work in sugarcane farms and factories.

The Janki Ashram located in Dediapara is a well-known name in the area. Dediapara is approximately 140 km from Vadodara on the border of Gujrat and Maharashtra. The Vasaava community is the main tribe of this remote backward tehsil in the Narmada District. The drive was beautiful on the bank of Narmada River with hills covered by thick forests. The newly built Statue of Unity celebrating the Iron man of India, and the Sardar Sarovar Dam is nearby as well.

The Janaki Ashram houses 140 girls, who are in the 9th to 12th grade. There is a government school up to the 8th grade only, there was a great need for a local high school. The Ashram was opened in 1998.

The school is also run by VHP Bharat, the Janaki Ashram School recognized with numerous awards and honors, is the best school in the area. Due to its achievements, many parents want to leave their children at the hostel so that the children can take advantage of the educational opportunities.

We were privileged to witness a great cultural





program at the school with hospitality being extended throughout our visit. The Ashram itself has eight acres of land, with the land being used for agriculture to grow vegetables. All of the students eat fresh organic food. The ashram also has a Gaushala to provide milk and other dairy products. All teachers, staff, and students eat the same food that is prepared. There is also Hanumanji mandir in the Ashram and all students pray there regularly.

Notable mention: I want to particularly mention Varshaben Seth who came from Ahmedabad 32 years ago leaving a very comfortable life and made Dediapara her home. Varshaben Seth has dedicated her life to the upliftment of the Dediapara and Dang area. She and her team used to knock on doors and went around the local communities to inspire tribal families to send their girls to school and to receive education to empower their lives. Due to the influence of Christian missionaries, the work of the local unit of the Vishwa Hindu Parishad was de facto “banned” in the area. Varshaben with her associate Shri Sonjebhai made a Satsang

group, which started going village to village and became involved in local community events. This worked very well and they were able to win the confidence of the local families. These efforts came to fruition in 1998 when this hostel was opened. ■



# MANY US UNIVERSITIES INSTITUTIONALIZE HATRED AND PREJUDICE



*Arvind Kumar*

*It would be appropriate if the Conference on the Study of Religions of India and Georgetown University's Berkley Center on Religion are declared hate groups and the people associated with them are placed on a blacklist and permanently banned from visiting India for attempting to create social strife.*

The conference to attack Hinduism that was scheduled to be hosted by the Department of Christian Studies at the University of Madras in July has been cancelled after the expose in this column caused a massive public outcry. The earlier piece, USCIRF against India: prejudice and hate in the time of coronavirus, had pointed out the links between various groups such as USCIRE, Georgetown University, University of California at Davis, Butler University, Elon University, St. Michael's College in Toronto, and professors in the Department of Christian Studies of the University of Madras, and explained how they worked in tandem to further certain foreign goals of identified interests to undermine Hinduism in their often open project of converting India's population to a faith of the millennial theology.

People like Dr. Subramanian Swamy took note of the report and acted. Organizers of the conference now claim they cancelled it due to the disruptions related to coronavirus. The conference webpage hosted by Butler University states, "As indicated above, the conference had already been postponed due to coronavirus."



This claim is as laughable as the email from James Ponniah of Madras University's Department of Christian Studies announcing the cancellation of the conference is dated 14 May 2020 (see image), four days after the article appeared on these pages and long after the organizers had been pushed on the defensive by the ensuing public anger. And long after the virus struck the world.

The webpage also tries to rebut the previous article using claims never made in the article. It then uses carefully constructed sentences in order to make it appear that the conference was an

Madras University



independent effort that had nothing to do with the Department of Christian Studies at the University of Madras. Or that there has never been any connection between the taxpayer funded Christian theocratic group called the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) and the organizers of the conference. These claims are disingenuous as the university's faculty clearly made arrangements to use university resources available to them in order to host this patently anti-Hindu conference and further the goals of USCIRF, which includes active proselytism around the world.

**THIS CLAIM IS LAUGHABLE AS THE EMAIL FROM JAMES PONNIAH OF MADRAS UNIVERSITY'S DEPARTMENT OF CHRISTIAN STUDIES ANNOUNCING THE CANCELLATION OF THE CONFERENCE IS DATED 14 MAY 2020 (SEE IMAGE), FOUR DAYS AFTER THE ARTICLE APPEARED ON THESE PAGES AND LONG AFTER THE ORGANIZERS HAD BEEN PUSHED ON THE DEFENSIVE BY THE ENSUING PUBLIC ANGER.**

Besides, Chad Bauman, who is a key organizer of the conference, has co-authored at least one work with James Ponniah in which they attack Hinduism and has published at least one paper in which he admits to advising American foreign policy specialists "on how to intervene in (and/or not intervene) productively" in support of "religious freedom" [otherwise called frank proselytism,] and "religious minorities in India." The cynical claim in this paper that not only not extending reservations to Muslims and Christians amounts to discrimination by Hindus, but granting special privileges to them too amounts



to discrimination as it would provide fodder to Hindus to claim that minorities were appeased, has become a cornerstone of American foreign policy. He has also been involved with Georgetown University's Berkley Center for Religion, Peace and World Affairs, which works with USCIRF Commissioners. It may be mentioned that numerous proselytizers were given red carpet receptions in India during the Sonia Gandhi decade of untrammled power (2004-14). When some of these were withdrawn by the current government, it became the target of a vicious attack that has brought

**IT WOULD BE APPROPRIATE IF THE CONFERENCE ON THE STUDY OF RELIGIONS OF INDIA AND GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY'S BERKLEY CENTER ON RELIGION ARE DECLARED HATE GROUPS AND THE PEOPLE ASSOCIATED WITH THEM ARE PLACED ON A BLACKLIST AND PERMANENTLY BANNED FROM VISITING INDIA FOR ATTEMPTING TO CREATE SOCIAL STRIFE.**

in fundamentalist and conversion lobbies in several countries on the common platform of demonizing Hindus. As though Hindus were those who killed Christians in Iraq, Libya and Syria or minorities (including themselves) in Pakistan.

The same webpage makes the claim that the conference is not anti-Hindu and invites "those interested to browse the Tables of Content of the volumes CSRI conferences have produced over the years, or (even better) to read the chapters themselves" and then provides a link to material that cannot be accessed without a payment. There is no need to pay the

organizers to judge them, as that can be done for free, based, for example, on the contents of the “Conference on Religions of India” held in 2018 at Davis.

The main organizers of that conference—who also happen to be involved with the 2020 conference—are Brian Pennington, Chad Bauman, Reid Locklin and Archana Little (who slickly markets herself as Archana Venkatesan, thus obfuscating her actual connection). Several presentations are listed in the official schedule of the conference organized by them. Every single presentation launched a vitriolic attack against Hinduism as can be seen from their titles.

Those titles were: “Tell Us Your Name and Do as We Say!': Concealing and Revealing in the Making of Family Gods in Tamil Nadu”; “Divine Deception or Priestly Artifice: Its Rationale and Justification in Śrī Svasthānīvrata”; “When Spirit Possession is Deception: Reassessing Religious Tradition as Modern Industry”; “Dissimulation in Early American Yoga”; “Celebrity, Scandal and the Modern Godmen of India”; “Beware the Charlatan: Sant and Asant in Niṣkūḷānanda Svāmī's Cosath Padī”; “Desire, Deception, and Sinister Sovereigns”; “Shadows of Inauthenticity: History and Hagiography in Vīraśaiva/Liṅgāyat Origin Stories”; “Arts of Artifice: Transformations of the Hindu Divine”; “Two Stories of the Origins of the Pāṇḍavas: Yudhiṣṭira's Authenticity, Legitimacy and Deceit”; “Nikṛtyā Nikṛtim Hanyāt: Defending Deception in the Mahābhārata Commentarial Tradition”; “Will the Real Mirabai Please Stand Up?: Competing Claims to Authenticity and Truth”; “Accommodating Esotericism or Hiding a Secret in Plain Sight: The Social Place of the Śākta Tantras in the Medieval Deccan”; “#Mood: When the Goddess Becomes a Woman on Social Media”; “Devotion to Deceiving Gods or a Dispassionate Being? Objects of Praise and Disdain in Hemacandra's Hymns”; “Necessary Subterfuge?: ‘Hinduism’ and Pedagogy”; “Fictive History, Ignorance, and the Constitution of

American Hindu Communities”; “Reform in Fragments: An Essay on Orthodoxy”; and “(Mis) Translating Self-Realization: Strategic Misreading in an Advaita Commentarial Tradition”.

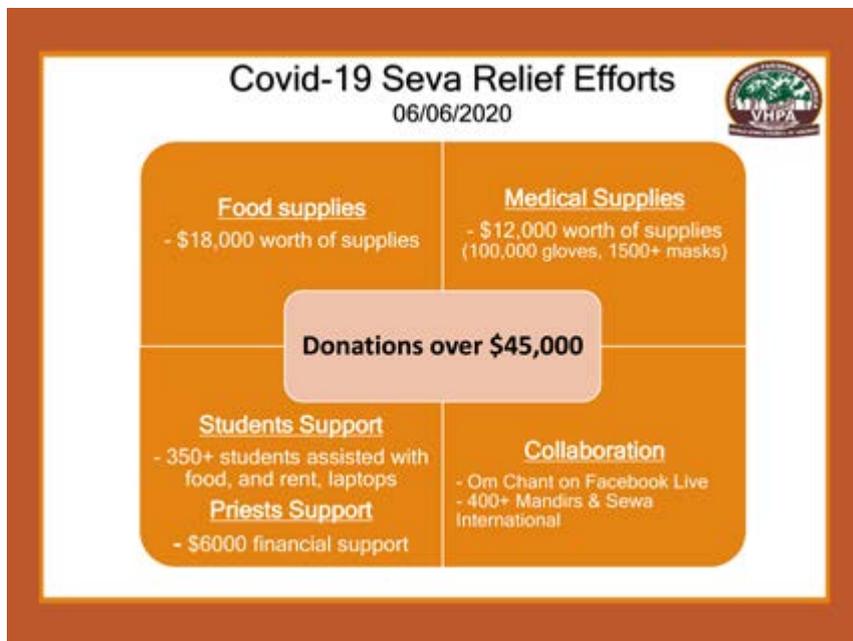
In complete contrast, a course on Indian Christianity offered by one of the main conference organizers, Reid Locklin at Wabash College states that the course objective is “to acquire and demonstrate sympathetic familiarity with the history of Christianity in India” and prescribes books from a Christian religious bookstore named “Crux Books”, establishing Locklin's credentials as an anti-Hindu zealot. Locklin also left no doubts about his intentions in an interview to the Christian group Colledgeville Institute when he stated about his project named “Advaita Mission, Christian Mission”, “[My] project aspires to be interfaith, I suppose, but it is still a very Christian project: I am a Christian theologian who studies Hindu traditions for the purposes of a renewal of Christian theologies.”

It would be appropriate if the Conference on the Study of Religions of India and Georgetown University's Berkley Center on Religion are declared hate groups and the people associated with them are placed on a blacklist and permanently banned from visiting India for attempting to create social strife. The wounds created by the toxic policies of Sonia Gandhi are still festering, in part because of the kid glove treatment that those responsible have got from this government, including Sonia Gandhi and her extended family, details of whose wealth remain a secret hidden in government records in multiple countries that could easily be made public, once there is the political will to do so in the leafy and luxurious confines of Lutyens Delhi. ■

Source: <https://www.sundayguardianlive.com/news/many-us-universities-institutionalise-hatred-prejudice>

# SEVA IN AMERICA

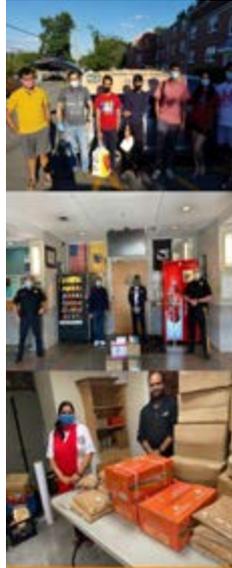
## Covid 19 Seva Relief Efforts at a Glance



1



2



## A Closer Look



- CT**  
Working with Food Share Connecticut.
- GA**  
Food supply every Saturday to Food Bank, county police. Masks supply to nursing homes.
- IL**  
Food, water bottles and PPEs supplies to local community. Supported international students.
- MA**  
Food and masks supplies to Hospitals. Supported Students of Northeastern Uni. Helped local Temples and Priests.
- MD/VA**  
One month of groceries to 100+ university of MD students. Served Hispanic and Nepalese communities.

3



## A Closer Look



- MI**  
Care & hygiene packages to Detroit communities. 65 vulnerable seniors served.
- NJ/NY**  
Distributed 100,000 gloves, 1200 masks, thermometers to EMS. Supported local area Priests and Nepalese students.
- OH**  
Masks supplies to nursing homes, food supplies to Food Bank, Helped women's shelter.
- PA**  
Masks supplies to nursing homes, laptops to school students.
- TX**  
Contributed for PPE equipment to Trinidad.

4

How You Can Help:

There are 4 ways to donate:

Facebook: @VHPAmerica.org

Web: [www.vhp-america.org/donation/](http://www.vhp-america.org/donation/)

[charity.gofundme.com/o/en/campaign/covid-19-priests-appeal](https://charity.gofundme.com/o/en/campaign/covid-19-priests-appeal)

Check: Payable to:

VHP of America  
54 Scheurman Ter  
Warren, NJ 07059

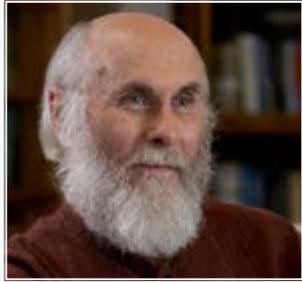


सर्वे सन्तु निरामयाः

Please continue to contribute and support those in need.

5

# Psychological Impact of COVID-19 Pandemic



*Dr. David Frawley*

**T**he Covid-19 Pandemic is causing a massive loss of life, particularly for the elderly, and millions worldwide have tested positive for the virus. Yet the psychological suffering the pandemic causes may be as difficult as the physical suffering.

First is the psychological suffering that goes with the disease itself and the loss of life involved. The psychological stress of the health care workers treating it also can be enormous. In addition is the suffering of the relatives whose loved ones are taken away by the disease. Yet there are psychological ramifications extending to the entire society as each person has many associations and connections in life.

Second is the widespread fear, sometimes panic, among people that they or someone close to them may come down with or succumb to the virus, which is highly contagious, making physical human contact into a danger to be avoided.

Yet in addition to these health considerations there are many other problems caused by the pandemic. The economic fallout from the lockdown pushing the world to the brink of a financial depression is a matter of great concern for everyone. It is threatening the jobs, savings and investments of entire populations, which have taken many years for people to accumulate.

Economic uncertainty hangs like a cloud over the world along with the disease, even for those who may not any symptoms from the disease. This

results in fear, anxiety, worry, agitation and unrest in the psyche itself. Along with unrest the social disturbances from the pandemic are bringing up deep-seated political, religious, cultural and national divides, not unifying humanity as a whole. We see more polarization socially and politically in a number of countries, with people getting emotionally disturbed accordingly. Yet these cannot be resolved without removing the fear behind them, which inhibits right judgment.

## YOGA AND AYURVEDA

How then are we to deal with the psychological ramifications of this massive pandemic? Here Yoga and Ayurveda provide many tools to bring peace and clarity to our psyche.

Fear is the root of all mental disturbances in Vedantic thought. It is the first emotion that arises from ignorance of our true nature that gets us caught in duality, conflict, uncertainty and suspicion. We must also go beyond the fear of death or even the fear of suffering in life. To remove fear we must remove our attachment to the separate self and look to our higher Self that is one with all and beyond all death and sorrow.

According to Ayurveda, fear is the main emotion that imbalances the primary biological air humor, Vata Dosha that holds our Prana. By increasing Vata dosha in the mind and nervous system, fear upsets our entire equilibrium for body, prana and mind, down to instinctual and subconscious levels. It can literally paralyze us.

Fear promotes Apana Vayu, the downward movement of Prana, disrupting digestion, disturbing sleep and reducing acuity of mind and senses. It causes inertia, negative thinking and negative attitudes, leading to anxiety and depression.

From a yogic perspective, Pranayama, Mantra and Meditation work to counter fear by opening up the prana and mind. Fear blocks the prana and reduces its flow, creating a pranic paralysis. Pranayama restores the power and the flow of prana dispersing fear, particularly if we practice

slow and deep inhalation. Fear causes superficial or rapid breathing or even forgetting to breath, which inhibit the positive prana in the lungs and heart. To counter fear we must breath from the navel and let of any emotional stress held there. Above all we should learn to witness our fear from the standpoint of the Seer within us, our true consciousness. Whatever we deeply see and witness in our thoughts will naturally get transformed.

There are many Ayurvedic herbs for the mind (Medhya Rasayanas) that help counter fear like Brahmi, Manduka Parni, Jatamamsi, Shankha Pushpi, Amla, Ashwagandha and Calamus for increasing circulation in the nervous system, opening the channels, calming the mind and countering the Vata dosha behind fear. A regular nutritive Vata-reducing diet is also helpful to support these herbs. An Ayurvedic practitioner can help you with these.

### ACTION AND INACTION

Sometimes fear requires that we act. If you are confronted with fear from direct causes, like finding a snake in your room, you act quickly to counter the danger. This is the case with the pandemic. We must act to deal with its dangers for both ourselves and humanity as a whole. It may require changing our how we live and think, particularly working to increase our immunity at both physical and psychological levels, living more in harmony with nature, following yogic and Ayurvedic lifestyles.

Yet sometimes to overcome difficulties, inaction may be required, as in the case of lockdowns, much like Ayurvedic practices of rest and relaxation for deep healing, and how yoga practices of retreat and solitude can be very transformative. But these should not go too far, as our capacity for movement may become permanently impaired if suppressed too long.

Overall we must learn to keep our minds free from outside disturbances, which the media constantly throws at us, provoking fear and

panic, or just distracting us with fantasy and entertainment. We must beware of taking in too many negative sensory impressions through the media. We must learn to draw our mind and prana within through meditation..

President Franklin D. Roosevelt's statement in World War II comes to mind here that we have nothing to fear but fear itself.

Fear paralyzes us, makes us doubt anything we can do to improve our situation, or worry about anything negative that may possibly happen. First we must challenge our fears and move beyond them with a respect for the cosmic dharma, using difficulties for inner growth. What takes us forward in life is not that we never fall down, but that we always get up and keep going, even if we fall for a while.

After all, we are immortal souls with the consciousness of the entire universe dwelling deep within us.

There is no challenge we cannot overcome with a higher awareness, but fear can prevent us from doing so if we linger in its shadows. Lord Shiva grants freedom from fear, as does Ma Durga and Ma Kali. In fact the Divine grace and presence, however we best relate to it, will neutralize all fear. But we must be open to it. ■

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### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

*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.*

Source: <https://www.vedanet.com/psychological-impact-of-covid-19-pandemic/>

# Rakhigarhi and After IV: The AIT Brigade after Rakhigarhi

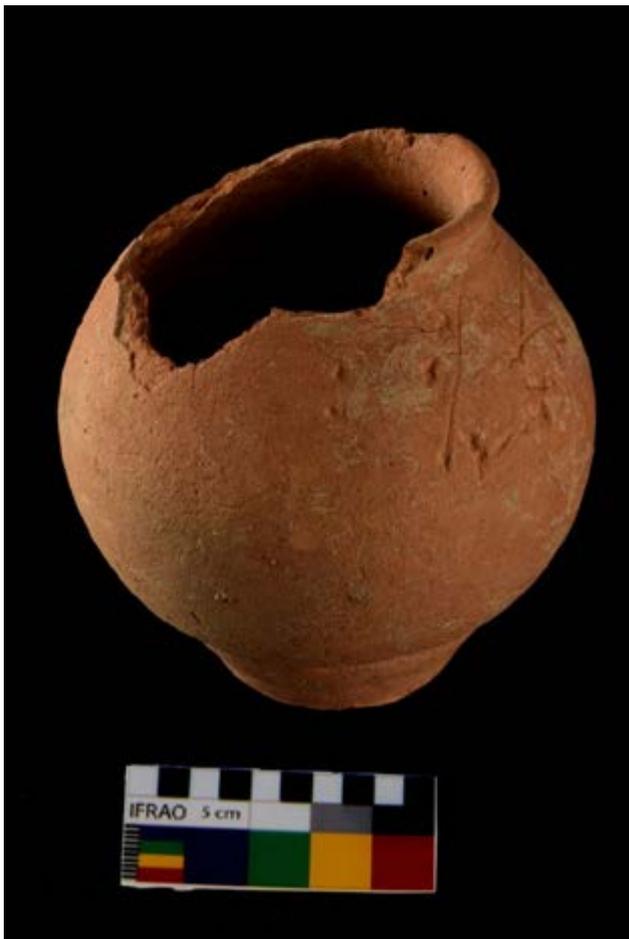
*Editor's note: This is the fourth part of the multipart article*



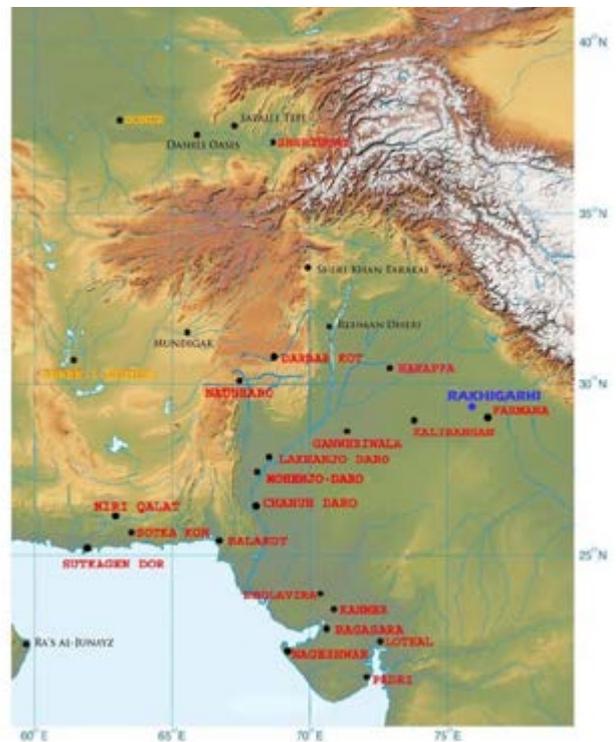
*Shrikant G Talageri*



Ancient DNA from the Indus Valley Civilization was found in this individual buried at India's Rakhigarhi archaeological site. (Image credit: Vasant Shinde)



A red pot found near the head of the Indus Valley skeleton that yielded ancient DNA. (Image credit: Vasant Shinde)



A map of the Indus Valley, or Harappan, Civilization. Rakhigarhi, the location of the burial that yielded ancient DNA for analysis, is highlighted in blue. (Image credit: Vasant Shinde)

Strictly speaking, nothing new is being said by the AIT Brigade after the Rakhigarhi report other than making an issue of the doublespeak of certain geneticists who were co-authors of both the genetic reports. Apart from that, the same things are generally being said which were said by Tony Joseph in his book “Early Indians”, which I have torn to shreds in my book “Genetics and the Aryan Debate”. Whatever the AIT Brigade says now on the subject of the so-called “genetic evidence” or the AIT-OIT issue in general, will most likely already have been fully answered in my book.

So I will just pick up a few snippets from two of the writers whose post-Rakhigarhi articles I have enumerated at the beginning of this article, which raise different points, to show the utterly unscholarly nature of their ranting:

#### A. VIR SANGHVI:

Vir Sanghvi converts this issue into a Hindu vs. Muslim debate.

1. Sanghvi sums up the AIT vs. OIT debate as follows: “It is a measure of the mood in today’s India that archaeology, genetics and racial purity have now been co-opted in a debate about current politics. Not since the middle of the 20th Century has racial purity been as important in the politics of a major nation. And yes, the term ‘Aryan’ is being bandied about with a worryingly familiar ease.”

Who has made the “Aryan” issue into a question of “racial purity”? Certainly not the Hindutva side, which totally rejects the idea of an Aryan race as much as the idea of an Aryan invasion. It is their opponents (like Vir Sanghvi himself in this article) who “bandy” the term with “a worryingly familiar ease”.

2. He pontificates: “Once you base your ideology on racial and religious purity, then you commit yourself to a different kind of politics where the battles of thousands of years ago resurface in a modern contest and where research is not a scientific tool but a weapon in political

skirmishes. Something like that is happening in India today.”

Again, the same idea: there are certainly orthodox Brahmin groups who speak and think in terms of racial purity, but it is these groups which in fact, support the AIT. The Hindutva side, which opposes the AIT, is not using research as “a weapon in political skirmishes”: it is in fact groups hostile to the Hindutva idea, like missionaries, leftist ideologues, casteist “dalit” groups, Dravidianists, and others who are using this idea of “racial purity” as a “weapon in political skirmishes”, and the Hindutva side rejects and opposes this idea of “racial purity”, and tries to use research to counter such activity..

3. He further alleges: “According to the right, the Hindus were the original inhabitants of India. Muslims were invaders. Nobody questioned the right of Muslims to live in India but they needed to accept that they had come to a Hindu county from elsewhere.”

No-one - at least no serious OIT scholar -

**“ACCORDING TO THE RIGHT, THE HINDUS WERE THE ORIGINAL INHABITANTS OF INDIA. MUSLIMS WERE INVADERS. NOBODY QUESTIONED THE RIGHT OF MUSLIMS TO LIVE IN INDIA BUT THEY NEEDED TO ACCEPT THAT THEY HAD COME TO A HINDU COUNTY FROM ELSEWHERE.”**

says either that “the Hindus were the original inhabitants of India” or that the Muslims, i.e. Muslim people, had “come to a Hindu county from elsewhere.”

Even in my first book in 1993, where I dealt with the political corollaries of the AIT (which includes much of what Sanghvi says above) and was sharp in my criticism of Islam and Christianity in India, I specifically wrote as follows: “Muslims

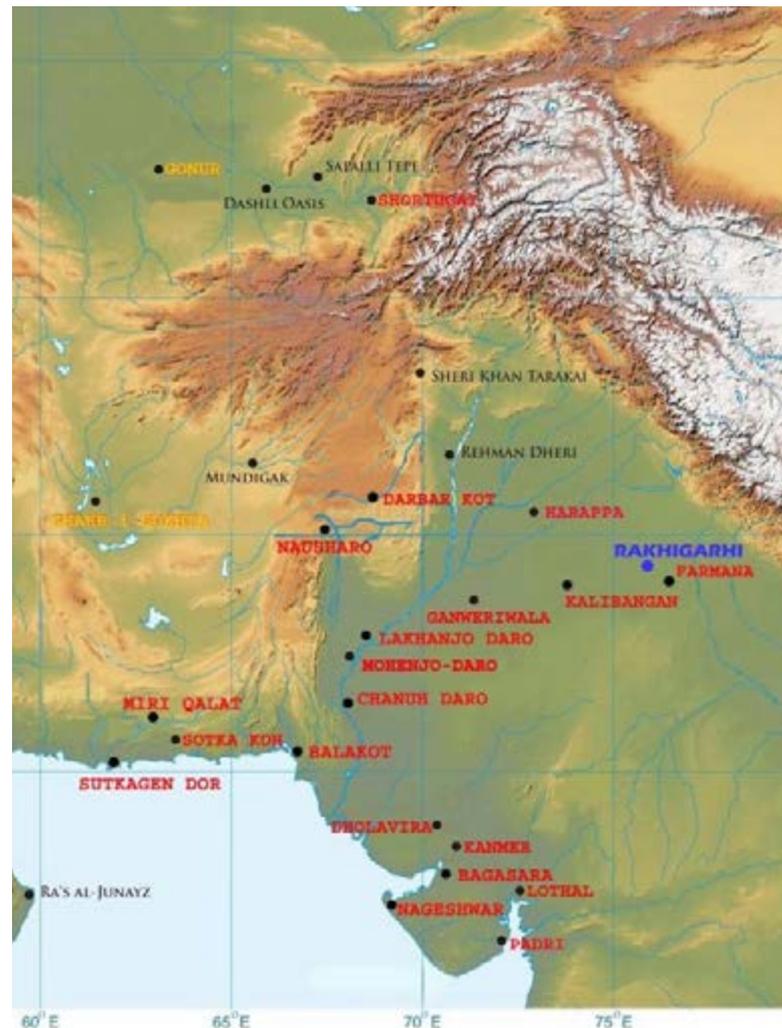
and Christians are not ‘foreigners’ in India. Muslim and Christian fundamentalists may identify wholly with their foreign brethren, and some Muslims may even gloat at the idea that they are the descendants of Islamic heroes who ‘conquered and ruled’ a land teeming with kāfirs, but the fact remains that they are all Indians as much as the Hindus (including the ‘Aryans’). At a certain point of time, their ancestors were the more helpless among the Hindus who were forcibly converted to Islam. [...] in historic times there were invasions of India by Persians, Greeks, Scythians, Kushans and Huns. Many of the invaders stayed in India and got integrated into the population. Today some anthropologist may manage to dig out material and claim that some community or other constitutes the descendants of one or the other of those invaders. But who would treat such a claim, even if it were proved beyond doubt, as the basis for branding that community as a ‘foreign’ community? [...] every single foreign community entering India, right from ancient times, has been completely absorbed into the Indian identity [...] and according to the Aryan invasion theory itself, this happened in the case of the ‘Aryans’ as well [...] Hindu nationalism has nothing to do with the childish, petty and ridiculous idea of dividing Indians into ‘outsiders’ and ‘insiders’ on the basis of whether or not their ancestors, actually or supposedly, came from outside.” (TALAGERI 1993:46-47).

Incidentally here is where the corner elements among the left, right and secular categories unite: “the Hindu Right has struggled to prove that the people of the Indus Valley were Hindus and that today’s Indians are directly descended from them.”

Why should Hindus all over India be “directly descended” from “the people of the Indus Valley”? At the most, the people living in the areas where the Harappan culture flourished could, rightly or wrongly, make such a claim - and these include the Muslims in Pakistan. But it requires a very

“invasionist” or “colonialist” outlook to brand people, whether Indo-Aryan language speaking or (as Tony Joseph insists) Dravidian language speaking, from other parts of India as the “direct descendants” of the Harappans or, indeed, of the Vedic people (who, also, as I have pointed out in my books, were just the Pūru tribes of Haryana and Uttar Pradesh). Were huge parts of India an uninhabited desert a few thousand years ago, that the present-day people residing in those parts should be sweepingly regarded as “directly descended” from the then inhabitants of any one other particular part of India?

4. Finally, he seeks to equate the Aryan invaders with later Muslim invaders (remember, it is Sanghvi, not our side, which seems to sub-consciously identify present-day Indian Muslims as “direct descendants” of the Muslim invaders):



“the Aryans were also invaders or, at the very least, migrants. And as there was little evidence to suggest that the Indus Valley Civilization was Hindu, then even Hinduism was a religion that had come to India from elsewhere.” Later, he refers to “those who believe that the so-called Aryan-Dravidian divide does not exist and that Hinduism is an entirely indigenous religion. If the Aryans came from the Steppes and brought an early version of Hinduism with them, then how were they so different from the Muslims who came much later?”

Let me clarify things to this kindergarten child: the Aryans, who allegedly came from the Steppes, and Muslims, who did come much later, are ghosts from the past. Whether or not they were different is immaterial: present-day Hindu people and Muslim people are both of Indian descent.

But yes, “Hinduism is an entirely indigenous religion”, and, except by a diseased brain, it can in no way be treated as “a religion that had come to India from elsewhere.” Islam and Christianity did “come to India from elsewhere”. It does not require an ideology to understand these facts: a schoolboy’s Atlas of the World is enough. And denying basic facts is neither piety nor wisdom.

I had elaborated these points in detail in my first book (1993). Let me quote that section here, even at the risk of being branded as “communal”:

“1. Hinduism had no founder, but every single holy man, seer and sage, and every single hero (or for that matter, villain) mentioned in every single ancient Hindu text and scripture is an Indian.

Islam was founded by Muhammad, an Arab. He was followed by four ‘pious’ Khalifas (the first three of whom are not accepted by Shias), all of whom were Arabs. Then followed a long line of lesser Khalifas (not all of whom are accepted by all sections of Muslims, who indeed broke into different sects on the basis of the struggles for

succession to the throne of Khalifa), not one of whom was an Indian.

Christianity is based on the life of Jesus Christ, a Jew from Palestine. His twelve apostles

**ARABIA IS THE HOLY LAND FOR MUSLIMS. THEIR PRINCIPAL PLACES OF PILGRIMAGE ARE MECCA AND MEDINA IN ARABIA, FOLLOWED BY JERUSALEM IN PALESTINE (ISRAEL), AND FOLLOWED BY A FEW OTHERS, NOTABLY KARBALA IN IRAQ, ALL IN WEST ASIA.**

were Palestinians and Romans. Christianity was founded by Paul, a Palestinian Jew and Roman citizen.

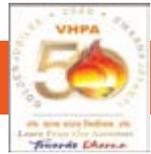
2. The sacred language of Hinduism is Sanskrit, which even the Aryan invasion theory cannot assign to any country other than India.

The sacred language of Islam is Arabic, the language of Arabia.

Christianity, perhaps, has no such thing as a sacred language, but, if one were to be named, Hebrew (the original language of the Old Testament), or Aramaic (the language reportedly spoken by Jesus Christ), or Greek (the language which hosted the first Christian Bible, Old plus New Testament, and indeed, which gave the word Bible), or Latin (the liturgical language of the ‘Holy See’, the Vatican City) would be better candidates for the post than any Indian language.

3. India is the holy land for Hindus. All Hindu pilgrim centers and holy places are situated in and around India.

Arabia is the holy land for Muslims. Their principal places of pilgrimage are Mecca and Medina in Arabia, followed by Jerusalem in Palestine (Israel), and followed by a few others, notably Karbala in Iraq, all in West Asia.



Palestine is the holy land for Christians. Their principal places of pilgrimage are Nazareth, Bethlehem and Jerusalem, all in Palestine.

(If there are any places of pilgrimage for Islam or Christianity in India, it may be noted that: a) These are very minor ones as compared to the major ones in the West, more in the nature of local shrines; b) The persons commemorated by these shrines are almost invariably foreigners or converted Indians who turned against their ancestral Indian society and culture).

4. The sacred books of all the three religions claim to have the whole world as their stage. But, in reality, they are all geographically localized. The Hindu texts are centered in and around India. The Quran and Hadis are centered in and around Arabia and Palestine. The Bible is centered in and around Palestine and the Mediterranean region.

5. The heads of all Hindu religious sects are Indians. All Hindu religious centers are in India. All Hindu organizations (even those, like the Vishwa Hindu Parishad, whose names suggest an international character) are based in India, and

The ultimate heads of all Christian sects are foreigners — the Pope being a prime example. The major Christian religious centers, in the form of the headquarters of each sect, are in foreign countries — that of the Catholics in the Vatican city, and those of the various Orthodox and Protestant churches, and modern fundamentalist sects, in Europe and America. The innumerable international Christian organizations are based in foreign countries and headed and controlled by foreigners.

All these points are so obvious that anyone who says that Hinduism is as foreign to India as Islam or Christianity, deserves to have his head examined. The followers of both Islam and Christianity have full knowledge of and pride in the time and place of origin of their religions outside India, the early history of their religions outside India, the arrival of their religions into India (brought in by invaders and imperialists), and the manner in which their religions were established in India. On the other hand, until the Aryan invasion theory was mooted by the

European imperialists, no Hindu had ever suspected that any foreign connection could be attributed to his religion. Even today, with the Aryan invasion theory being instilled into every Hindu brain right from childhood, no Hindu worth his salt would accept the contention that Hinduism is of foreign origin.

Even the strongest advocate of the Aryan invasion theory cannot, in all honesty, point out any specific spot outside India to which the origin of any, simply any, aspect of Hinduism could be attributed. Even if, for the purpose of this chapter, it is presumed that the 'Aryans' came from outside India, and that they imposed the Hindu religion on local inhabitants (two questions which will be dealt with subsequently in this book), it will have to be admitted that there is no trace of any foreign connections in

**THE ULTIMATE HEADS OF ALL MUSLIM SECTS ARE FOREIGNERS. THE MAJOR MUSLIM RELIGIOUS CENTERS ARE SITUATED IN FOREIGN LANDS. THERE ARE MANY INTERNATIONAL ISLAMIC ORGANIZATIONS OF DIFFERENT KINDS, BUT ALL THESE ARE BASED IN FOREIGN COUNTRIES, AND HEADED AND CONTROLLED BY FOREIGNERS.**

headed and controlled by Indians.

The ultimate heads of all Muslim sects are foreigners. The major Muslim religious centers are situated in foreign lands. There are many international Islamic organizations of different kinds, but all these are based in foreign countries, and headed and controlled by foreigners.

Hinduism, much less the consciousness, of any such connections, among Hindus—and least of all, any foreign loyalties, associable with such foreign connections”.

5. Funniest of all, Sanghvi’s title for his article is: “Why a 4500-year-old skull is key to the politics of India’s Hindu-Muslim divide”.

Sorry to say, but, except for some particular articulate, evangelical and western-educated Muslims, few Muslims are bothered about the AIT. No Muslim is bothered by the fact that Hinduism is of Indian origin and Islam is of foreign origin. He is not a Muslim because he wants to believe Islam is an Indian religion, or because he believes his ancestors were Arabs, but simply because it is the religion in which he was born, or at the most because he believes it is “the One and Only True Religion”. The AIT is in no way connected to the “Hindu-Muslim divide”, not even in the minds of Hindutva activists who react (if at all) to the AIT only when provoked by so-called “dalit” activists, Dravidianists, anti-Hindu leftists, and missionaries. They feel Hinduism is an Indian or indigenous religion because it is one, see above, and not in relation to Islam, much less to Muslims.

Sanghvi is very fond of the word “divide”. He refers to Hindutva people as “those who believe that the so-called Aryan-Dravidian divide does not exist”, a contradiction: does this divide “exist” (and the Hindutvites err in not believing that it does) or is it just “so-called” (and therefore non-existent, and therefore the Hindutvites are right)?

Indo-European and Dravidian are indeed two different language-families, which neither automatically means that one of them came from “outside” or that a “difference” is necessarily a “divide”. Unfortunately, Dravidianist ideologues treat it as a “divide”, and many Hindutvites, perhaps as a reaction, treat “difference”=“divide” and reject the idea that both are different language-families.

Vir Sanghvi could do with a little education on



all these issues.

### B. GIRISH SHAHANE:

Girish Shahane’s articles are full of pieces of arrogant half-baked comments based on embarrassingly half-baked knowledge, spiced with a liberal amount of venom.

1. “If the roots of Sanskrit lie outside South Asia, as it is clearer than ever they do, it weakens the Hindu nationalist demonization of Christianity and Islam as faiths alien to India”.

This is just a repeat of what Vir Sanghvi said above. I have shown how Hinduism is definitely Indian, while Islam and Christianity are definitely not Indian. These are geographical facts: the “demonization” is in Shahane’s mind.

But note the venom behind the declaration that the hypothetical ancestral origin of the Sanskrit language in a hypothetical proto-Indo-European language in a hypothetical Homeland in the Steppes makes the Hindu religion “alien to

India”.

2. “Hindutva activists, however, have kept the Aryan Invasion Theory alive, because it offers them the perfect strawman, ‘an intentionally misrepresented proposition that is set up because it is easier to defeat than an opponent’s real

**INDIAN WRITERS SUPPORTING THE AIT ARE PARTICULARLY NOTORIOUS FOR THE EMBARRASSING HABIT OF CITING OLD AND OUTDATED ARGUMENTS, WHICH WERE COMMON TWO CENTURIES AGO AND HAVE NOW BEEN GIVEN A QUIET BURIAL IN THE WEST.**

argument”.

It is refreshing to see Hindutva activists being accused of keeping the AIT “alive” rather than trying to kill it! A perfect example of “an intentionally misrepresented proposition that is set up because it is easier to defeat than an opponent’s real argument”.

3. “The earliest proof of horses being ridden and yoked to spoke-wheeled chariots appears in Eastern Europe and Central Asia, not India.” Shahane had made this claim in the 2018 article as well: “The innovation of the steppe people was to domesticate them, ride them, and hitch them to spoke-wheeled chariots.”

Shahane’s claim seems to be that “spoke-wheeled chariots” were brought by Indo-Aryans into India all the way from the Steppes through Central Asia!

Even the most elementary student of Indo-European knows that spoked wheels developed after all the different branches had dispersed from the Homeland (wherever it be located), and there is no common word for “spoke” in the different branches. Not even in Indo-Aryan and Iranian.

In the Rigveda, spoked wheels or spokes are found only in the New Rigveda. They are completely absent in the Old Rigveda. This fits in with the fact that the Old Rigveda goes back

beyond 2500 BCE, since spoked wheels were only invented in the second half of the third millennium BCE.

4. “The words for flora and fauna common across Indo-European languages are of animals and plants that flourish in temperate rather than tropical or subtropical climates. For example, words for the birch tree (Sanskrit: , bhūrjā) are similar in dozens of Indo-European tongues, while India’s national tree provides no Indo-European root. In fact, most European languages use a variety of ‘banyan,’ a modern term derived from observing Indian traders (or banias) conducting business in the generous shade of these trees.”

Indian writers supporting the AIT are particularly notorious for the embarrassing habit of citing old and outdated arguments, which were common two centuries ago and have now been given a quiet burial in the west. It is now recognized that common words for flora and fauna in different branches of Indo-European languages are simply based on the flora and fauna actually found in the historical areas of those branches. It is known now that most Indo-European branches have common words for “temperate” flora and fauna simply because these are found over the entire area from Europe to India, while “tropical or subtropical” are found in India but not found in Europe and so any common names simply died out in Europe in the course of time. Flora and fauna found only in Europe do not have a common name in India either, and Witzel explains this by telling us that they “have simply not been used any longer and have died out” (WITZEL 2005:374). And the Gypsy or Romany languages, which are known to have spread out from India just over 1000 years ago have also not preserved any Indian word for “tropical or subtropical” flora and fauna, including the “banyan” tree cited by Shahane.

But now, it is being recognized that there are, in fact, a few common names for “tropical or subtropical” flora and fauna which have survived and which now directly point towards an IHT (Indian Homeland Theory). The most glaring example is the common word for “elephant/ivory”, which has become a big headache for western supporters of the AIT: with the proto-form \*leHbho-nth- or \*Hbho-nth- is found in at least four branches: Indo-Aryan íbha-, Greek eléphas (Mycenean Greek erepa), Italic (Latin) ebur, and Hittite lapa-. With a transfer of meaning to “camel”, it is found in two more branches: Germanic (e.g. Gothic) ulbandus, and Slavic (e.g. Old Church Slavic) velibodŭ.

5. There are persistent ludicrous references, in his 2018 article, to what “Hindutvavadis” would have wanted, or what they believe, in the matter of genetic data (specifically R1a) in the Aryan debate:

Speaking about the Rakhigarhi DNA, he tells us: “one such haplogroup, known as R1a, has become integral to the fierce debate about India’s ancient history. An individual who died some 4,500 years ago in Rakhigarhi in present day Haryana is entangled in the R1a controversy. Political pressure delayed an eagerly awaited study of that man’s genetic make-up, but it finally seems ready for print, and its findings were summarized in India Today by the magazine’s Managing Editor Kai Friese. Friese’s article was less about what the researchers found than what they didn’t find. What they didn’t find was the marker R1a. Had that marker been detected, Hindutvavadis would have been ecstatic. They would have felt vindicated in their belief that the Indus Valley people were no different from the Vedic people”.

“The presence of R1a would have undercut the idea that a migration originating in the steppes brought Sanskrit to India at a time when the Indus Valley civilization was in decline.”

“In the Hindutva view, Indian horse riders migrated to the steppes, taking with them R1a and the mother of Indo-European languages, not the other way round.”

Well, we must be grateful to Shahane for telling us what would have made us go ecstatic, and what our view is. Who will know the Hindutva viewpoint better than this clairvoyant? None of us knew that Savarkar, who coined the word

**IF WE ALLOW THEM TO DO SO, THE AIT BRIGADE WILL KEEP US ENGAGED IN DISCUSSING SUCH TRIVIA. LET US NOW SEE THAT THE ONLY ITEM THAT WILL BE DISCUSSED BEFORE ANY OTHER IN THE ARYAN DEBATE IS THE CHRONOLOGY AND GEOGRAPHY OF THE RIGVEDA.**

Hindutva, was a votary, and in fact the originator, of the Out-of-India Theory. Probably Savarkar himself did not know it. But this revelation is made by Shahane in an article on 10/8/2016 in (where else?) scroll.in, entitled “Despite Hindutva twists, it’s clear that the Indus Valley flowered before the Vedas were composed”: thanks to him, we now know that “The Out of India thesis originated with Hindu nationalists such as Savarkar and Golwalkar”!!!

If we allow them to do so, the AIT Brigade will keep us engaged in discussing such trivia. Let us now see that the only item that will be discussed before any other in the Aryan Debate is the Chronology and Geography of the Rigveda. ■

#### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

*Shrikant G. Talageri, based in Mumbai and author of several books, has been interested in Wildlife, Comparative Music, Religion and Philosophy, History and Culture and Linguistics. His major work appears in his book The Rigveda: A Historical Analysis.*

Source: <https://talageri.blogspot.com/2019/09/rakhigarhi-and-after.html>

# Bringing My Dearests to Safety!



*Sitangshu Guha*

I guess this was hidden in my memory for a long time. Nobody ever asked me, nor did I know that it was so painful or important. But when IsPad (Indian Subcontinent Partition Documentation) asked me, I suddenly became so emotional that, I could not talk for a few moments and my eyes became watery. Initially, it was just an interview, but soon I realized that, I became emotional in some instances, especially when it became my family affairs. When I was talking about my mother and how I had brought her from Dhaka to Chandpur in 1971, I became emotional and still now if I have to talk again about that, I know I will be emotional again.

Here, I will try to write what I had told in response to a question about my mother and younger siblings during IsPAD interview on 28th January 2011 on Indian sub-continent partition by Dr. SabyaSachi Ghosh Dastidar, Distinguished Professor at SUNY Westbury, Long Island, NY. It was a casual interview and I had no idea what shall I say and what I will be asked. This is just a segment of the whole interview and nothing in comparison to what others' had faced during the partition of India and during the liberation struggle of Bangladesh.

The days of are not easy to forget. The price of a human life was no more than a Pakistani

butcher's dagger on anybody's throat. With a quick Islamic chant, he could slaughter any non-Muslim without committing any sin, so much he was brainwashed. The main chore for Pakistani soldiers and their collaborators was to find religious minority Hindus and progressive minded Muslims and slaughter. The smell of death was always in the air and any good citizen could have been rounded up at any time and vanished without any trace and witness. While Bengali Muslims could spend their days with some fear and prayers, the Hindus were targeted and hunted down with no mercy when they were caught fleeing from the cities or villages. My journey to and from Chandpur to Dhaka is simply chilling and I do not think I will ever forget the trauma my family and I had to suffer during those darkest days of Bangladesh's independence war.

In 1971, my parents and my siblings lived in two different places due to my father's work at Chandpur while rest of my family members were residing in Dhaka. My immediate elder brother, mother, two younger sisters and a younger brother lived in Dhaka, the capital city of the then East Pakistan. My father used to visit Dhaka very often to see the family, and he was in Dhaka in mid-March 1971. It was in the 3rd week of March 1971, when my elder brother came to Chandpur with a plan to go to India for a job interview. I was in Chandpur then. I helped him to travel to Agartala via Brahmanbaria, Comilla. On 24th March 1971 I came back to Chandpur and saw that my father also came back from Dhaka. I was supposed to go to Dhaka within one or two days but that was not to be. On 25th March 1971, Pakistani military seized Dhaka and began massacre of innocent civilian population.

Our Dhaka house was adjacent to Sadhana Ousadhanalya (An Ayurvedic medicine

manufacturing company) in Gandaria (old Dhaka). My mother along with my two little sisters and a young brother were stuck in Dhaka. One of my sisters was sixteen at the time and had just finished her School Secondary Certificate examination and was waiting to get into any of the Dhaka city colleges. Other two siblings were ten (sister) and eight (brother). After Dhaka crackdown, people from all spheres of life were fleeing from the city because of the insecurity created by Pakistani military and its collaborators. My family was pretty much helpless with no adult male around in the house at that critical time. In addition they were Hindus and that was known in the neighborhood.

My father and I were also helpless in Chandpur and we could not do anything to rescue my mother and siblings from Dhaka. My father talked about them every day while I was busy with my friends and kept an open eye on what was going on in and around Dhaka. About a week passed, my father told me to inquire about Dhaka and wondered whether I could go to Dhaka and

see our family. It was almost impossible to make the trip because of the horrible atrocities that had been going on there at the time. March passed and April came with no news from our family members from Dhaka and people of all spheres of life were coming back from Dhaka in flock by various means, even on foot or by break journey. I used to go to the river ghat (boat harbor) to see if any boat was leaving for Dhaka, but found none. On 4th April, I saw some engine propelled boats were going to Munshiganj, an area close to Narayanganj. And, Narayanganj is few miles away from Dhaka. I consulted my father and he advised me to go Dhaka.

I do not remember the exact date, it might be on 2nd or 3rd April of 1971, the owner of Sadhana Oushadhalaya, a prominent Hindu was brutally killed by Pakistani military. Because our house was located next to Sadhana Oushadhalaya, the drug manufacturer, my father was almost sure that none of our family members would be alive in Dhaka. Almost every day, he used to tell me to go and bring the news to confirm what exactly



happened to our family. So, the time came to travel to Dhaka but all our kith & kin's and friends advised us not to take that dangerous journey.

I failed to understand the gravity of the situation and decided to go to Dhaka at the first opportunity I had. It was important to console my father with whatever news that was waiting for us to face. I was the only young male, who was capable of taking that trip. My mind was blank and I did not think that much about the danger. My father understood the situation and perhaps, others told him about the deadly danger about taking the trip. But when time came, my father was reluctant to send me. I felt that I should go and bring the family back, if not otherwise. I told my father on 5th April that I would be going to Dhaka the following morning. He did not say much but agreed with my decision.

Next morning, may be, around 5am, I set out for Dhaka. My father gave me money and told me to come back as soon as possible. I took an engine propelled boat and started my journey to Dhaka around 7 am. That time, everybody was friendly with each other and everybody was ready to extend their hands for each other. I was a good swimmer and considering the smaller size of the boat, I was not too scared of drowning in big rivers like Padma and Meghna. But, in retrospect, the journey was dangerous and I could have been killed if we had faced any Pakistani military patrol boat or a strong rain storm.

It took me almost 12 hours to reach Munshiganj and it was already evening. No military were there. I asked one shopkeeper whether I could spend the night somewhere around in that area. He advised me to spend the night in a college,

which was open and ready to provide shelter to those in need. I bought some bread and banana and ate for the night and slept on a bare bench in a class room of Haraganga College. Yes, I slept well. Early in the next morning, I took a boat with others, mostly day laborers, who were heading for Narayanganj business center for daily work. It took over an hour to reach Fatullah (a place close to Narayanganj) and it was about 7 am.

The boat stopped at a place, which was not a regular passenger stop, but a place where passengers came on board or got off from the boat. I got off and in ten minutes, I arrived at

Fatullah Fruit Bazar (market). The market was burning. Amid the fire, I saw a baby's leg. People told us that the previous night military came and set the whole market on fire killing a few market vendors. Military left at about 4am and then the local people came out and put out the fire by themselves. I did not stop there and took a tempo (open taxi that takes about 10 people) towards old Dhaka. It was about an hour ride and on the way I got off at Gandaria and walked half a mile to our Dhaka house. I saw a few Biharis

(Urdu speaking refugees who were collaborating with Pakistani military Junta at that time) but nobody asked me any question. I finally reached our house.

I knocked the main door of our house and there was no response. I knocked the other doors and banged the windows and still there was no response. I was thinking about my next step. I knew some people around our house but was not brave enough to go around finding those people. After ten minutes passed, I thought I should knock the upstairs door, where owners

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SHELTER TO THOSE  
IN NEED.**



used to reside. I started knocking the door and nothing happened. To my desperation, I went to a side door of our house and knocked, and still nobody opened the door. This time, I really felt very sad and was thinking what I would tell my dear father. Suddenly, the side door opened and somebody just dragged me inside. Most of the doors were locked from outside except only few that were locked from inside.

My teenage sister pulled me in and I saw my mother and two other siblings. The meeting was pretty shocking! Everybody was very excited to see me and probably sensed a glimmer of hope to get out of the hellish Dhaka house. I looked at my mother and I was truly surprised with her appearance. My Hindu mother was forced to dress like a Muslim widow to stay alive. She had neither vermilion nor any white bangles (sankha) in her hands, rather dressed white as a widow. She looked older than her age and the fear of being detected as a Hindu mother was noticeable on her face. A Hindu mother was forced to give up her precious tradition to save herself and her family from the Pak butchers' daggers. My brother and sisters were very distressed from their traumatic

situation and we could not speak for a while.

By this time, the landlord and his wife came to see me. The land lord told me that it was great that I came because he was about to send my mother and siblings with his family to his village home, where they should be far safer than staying in Dhaka. When he asked me about my plan, I told we should be going to Chandpur as soon as possible. He asked me whether there was any military there and I replied no. I looked at my mother, land lord's wife and told them that we would be leaving within half an hour. I did not know where I found the voice, which sounded like a strong decision. Nobody argued against that quick decision. Land Lord wanted to know how we would go about that journey. I replied saying a taxi would be better choice to get away since we were five. So, he went out to get a taxi for us.

The landlord was a Bengali Muslim, who had migrated from India and looked as an aged gentleman with a long beard. He was a religious man in both his looks and personal life, which was a great help for us. Landlord's wife talked about the ordeal they had to suffer the following days

of 25th March military crackdown. My mother told me to eat and I ate some rice, dal and boiled potato and was ready to start the risky journey. She said they had been eating that kind of food for last few days and they were tired of eating the same but it was not easy for them to get anything else better at that time.

Soon the taxi came. It could carry six/seven people at a time. So, it was perfect for all of us to travel together in one vehicle. I saw another gentleman came with the landlord, who was a friend of my elder brother and incidentally, he was from Muslim Leaguer. My mother got ready with a single dress with no baggage. Even her gold ornaments were left with the landlady. We, five sat in the rear seats of the taxi while our landlord and my brother's friend sat by the side of taxi driver. The Good-Bye time was really worrisome because the journey was dangerous and we could have been stopped at any time by the military and we could have lost our lives if they found out we were Hindus.

The time was around 10 am and our driver stopped at a gas-station for gas. We were all very nervous and scared, and those ten minutes' stoppage felt like almost ten hours. One Bihari man came towards us and asked the landlord where we were heading? Landlord politely answered that he was sending his family to the village for a short time. Bihari man asked him again whether we will be coming back soon. Landlord nodded to answer yes. The Bihari man left the place and our taxi driver started to drive again. We were finally relieved and felt very happy. There was no more problem on the road and we reached Fatullah before noon. We almost jumped out of the car and rushed to

a boat, which was heading towards Munshiganj.

On the road, we did not talk at all and I am sure that my mother was only praying. Our landlord took a heroic and humanistic decision to provide us a safe passage to Fatullah risking his own life. The other friend also took a big risk to accompany us with that critical journey to the freedom. He knew that his company would provide us the safe passage and his presence would have helped us, had we have encountered any military checkpoint. Till today, after 49 years, I still salute the elderly gentleman and my brother's friend for their kindness and bravery.

Later my mother told us that when I knocked the door of the house at ground floor, nobody could hear the knock because they were not living there. Our family was living in a room at the second floor with the land lord's family and they treated them very well. When I knocked at the second Floor door, everybody got alerted and scared. Because at that time, any sudden knock on the door meant military men might be at the door. After second and third knocks on the door,

someone from the land lord's family tried to find out who would be knocking at that time of the day. One of landlord's daughters saw me partially but could not recognize me. She called my mother and sister and they instantly figured out it was me, who was at the door.

Anyway, we started by a boat from Fatullah. The landlord and my brother's friend waited there as long as we could see them. Soon our boat was in middle of the river and we all felt relieved. The boatman told us that military did not raid in the river and we got more relaxed. I also knew there were no military men in Munshiganj. I was

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THE OTHER FRIEND ALSO TOOK  
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US WITH THAT CRITICAL  
JOURNEY TO THE  
FREEDOM.**

thinking that we should travel to Chandpur on the same day as soon as we reach Munshiganj. Otherwise, we may not have a place to spend the night. About a quarter of an hour or more, we saw a launch in the river heading to some destination. The launch was better and a bit bigger than the engine propelled boat that we used the day before. We started shouting from our boat with raising our shirts as to signal that we needed immediate help.

Some people in the launch saw us and luckily the launch stopped and picked us from our smaller boat. Our boatman tried his best to reach to the launch. Finally, we reached the launch and with the help of some good people, we got into the launch for the next leg of our journey. Actually, other passengers just pulled us from the boat to the launch.

That was an incredible moment, when everybody became brothers and sisters. People gave us the best cabin and my mother and other siblings just felt asleep soon, as if they did not sleep for a long time. I started gossiping and playing cards with passengers. They were asking a lot of questions, and I told them the story.

The captain told me that they will first go to Chandpur and there they will decide the next stop. We felt very lucky. Till today, when I think about that moment, I think how great were those people, they waited for us to be picked up in the middle of the river and how helpful were they to take us to that launch. Till today, I thank those unknown people who helped us. That was a great moment indeed. We reached Chandpur in the evening and say 'good-bye' to the fellow passengers. We took rickshaws to reach home safely.

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LAUNCH.**

My father was surprised to see us all and felt like something incredible had happened at that moment of the time. Before I left for Dhaka, he told me several times that our family members might be already dead. My father went to market for a quick grocery shopping and mother cooked some fish and rice. Till today, I would

consider that dinner was one of best that I ever had in my life. I had no idea that this beautiful thing could happen to our family within only forty eight hours' time. We were all under one roof in Chandpur and we felt really great. A dream finally came true when we were expecting the worst.

The true story was part of my interview about the adverse effect on us for the 1947 partition of India. If this story makes you interested to see and listen to my interview, please visit the 'You Tube' and write my name, and or India Partition website. ■

#### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

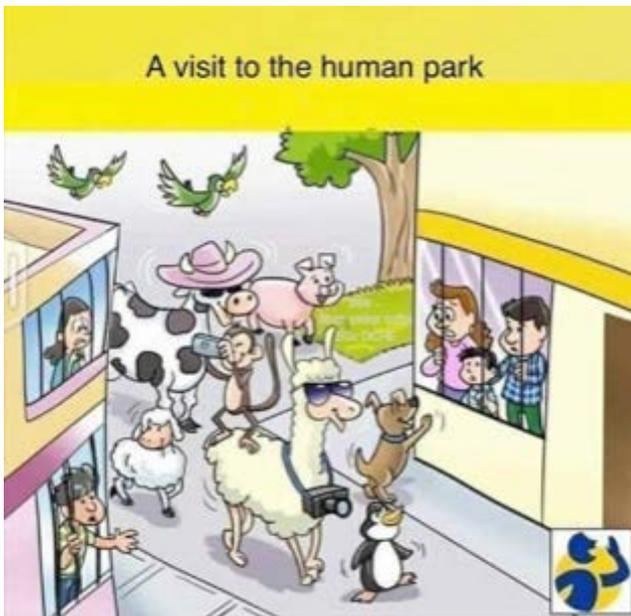
*Sitangshu Guha, a columnist, a former college professor, an internationally known Human Rights defender, is playing a pivotal role against persecution of Hindus and other religious minorities in Bangladesh and campaigned worldwide to save Bangladesh from the grasp of militant Islamists. Guha, a Bangladeshi, immigrated to USA in 1990. While serving at all levels in different organizations, he reached global Human Rights institutions by strongly advocating injustices committed against the Hindus and did his best to make Bangladesh a pluralistic democracy as well. Mr. Guha compiled and published several books. He lectured at the UN on 13th May 2003 and met Bharatiah Rastrapati in 2014 along with dignitaries in USA, Europe, and South Asia.*

# WE CAN ALL HELP

## Words of Wisdom

### Siddheshwari Devi (Didi ji)

**A**lthough we should be helpful at all times and in all seasons, these days it's especially important to extend a helping hand to others. I have some ideas that I have received by some of you who are implementing them already in your life. I applaud you!



Make a phone call to family, friends and acquaintances just to see how they are doing. Give priority to the elderly and those who are not well. Remember; a text message is not the same as a call. Sometimes a person just needs someone

to talk to. People are scared right now. A friendly voice eases the anxiety a little bit. If you can laugh and get the other person on the line to laugh, you have helped greatly.

Here's something that I received. I laughed when I saw it; hope you will also.

Not everyone is tech savvy. You can teach a novice how to pay bills or place an online order on the phone. Be patient. Different generations have different talents and specialties.

You can order a meal for someone and have it delivered to their residence. A simple gesture like this shows that you are thinking of them. If you know a health care giver, recognize the sacrifices. A heartfelt 'thank you' goes a long way.

If you have a sewing machine and material, you can make masks for your local hospital.

Open your heart; ideas will flow.  
Stay safe!

### MAKE FRIENDS WITH YOURSELF

The best kind of ship is 'friendship.' Friends are a special breed. Chances are that you have friends. You may have many; you may have a few; you may have just one good friend. Did you ever

take the time to befriend yourself? Yes? Good! No? Let's fix that. Here's what you need to do.

**Spend time with yourself.** How did you get to be such good friends with your BFF? By spending time with him/her. Do the same with yourself. Spend time alone and ask yourself questions such as, "What do you like to do in your free time," "What are your hobbies," and "What are the things important to you in life?"

**Take care of yourself.** Maintain your physical health by eating properly, exercising and getting enough rest. Take care of your spiritual health by having faith in God and spending time in meditational prayer. Be kind to yourself. Allow yourself to say 'no' when you cannot manage. Don't push yourself to the brink just to please others. You are not doing any favors to yourself by doing that.

**Forgive yourself.** You wouldn't beat up a friend over something from the past, would you? You wouldn't do that to someone you care deeply for. Then why are you beating yourself up over past failures, weaknesses and mistakes? Let bygones be bygones and move on. You are not the sum total of all that you have done wrong in life.

**Help yourself.** Sometimes, the greatest help you can give yourself is by asking it from others. Don't hesitate to admit that you can't do it all alone; that you need help. Mental health is very important. Don't take chances to jeopardize it. Don't try to be Wonder Woman or Super Man. These are fictional characters. Take help from family and friends and from various resources that are available to you.

**Love yourself.** Understand your true worth. Give yourself a pat on the back for all the goodness that's in you. Don't let others define you; they don't know you as well as you know yourself. Love yourself. You deserve it!

Happy Mothers' Day to all the mothers!

## HAVE YOU NOTICED?

- We become more resourceful when we are lacking resources.
- Kindness and Compassion are very important traits in a person.
- Birds sing very beautifully in April.
- Life can throw a curveball when you least expect it.
- Humans are extremely resilient; we adjust quickly.
- Even though we have more time, we are not finding time for daily devotion.
- Home is not such a terrible place after all.
- Homemade food is simply the best, even if it's very simple.
- The pandemic is a life-changing experience in many positive ways.
- Life is like a bubble rising in water one moment only to burst the next.
- Nature shows us the perfect color combinations.
- When put through challenges, we show our true mettle.
- Something we cannot even see has brought us all to our knees.
- Behind that something is Someone we cannot see who has brought us to our knees.
- The ways of God are very mysterious.

## WISDOM OF RAMAYAN

- A pure heart attracts God but a deceitful heart repulses Him.
- God says – Take all your worldly attachments and string them together into a garland. Offer that garland to me, accepting me as your one and only.
- There is no one who does not become intoxicated with pride due to wealth.
- Heart of a saint is softer than butter, for butter melts due to its own suffering (when it is heated) but the saint's heart melts seeing the suffering of others.

- The great ones tolerate the insults of the evil ones just as a mountain tolerates torrential rainfall.
- The body is laying in front of you and the soul never dies. For whom do you grieve?
- The servant who obeys God's instructions is very dear to God.
- Knowledge leads to faith, and faith leads to love.
- The omnipresent God is visible only to those who love Him.
- The reason behind love in the world is the fulfilment of self-interest.
- You may extract butter by churning water, and oil from churning sand, but you can never transcend Maya without devotion to God.



## ALWAYS CHOOSE LOVE

There are many choices in life, and as a human you have the freedom to choose. Whenever you find yourself at the crossroads, you can choose the path of anger, path of revenge, path of envy, path of hatred, or the path of love. Choice is yours.

Your choice of path will depend on whether you believe in God. The question is simple and straightforward: do you believe in God? If the answer is yes, you will invariably choose the path of love. Why? Because God is Love. You cannot believe in God without believing in love. You cannot seriously call yourself a believer, and yet succumb to anger, envy, revenge and hatred. If you do, you are fooling yourself. You are not a believer. Believing in God is more than just saying, "I believe in God." Your belief in God must become visible in how you react to situations and behave with others. By ourselves, we are all good. When we live in close proximity to people, we are tested and challenged. It may be your own family, but you will be challenged daily. As a believer in God, always choose Love. Is it easy? No. Does it come automatically? No. Is it rewarding? Extremely! Is it enriching? Absolutely!

When you are confronted with hostility and you react with anger, you give over the power to an individual. Is this the lesson your Father has taught you? Is this what will please Him? Do you not realize that it was never between you and anyone else? It was always between you and God.

Always choose God. Always choose Love. ■

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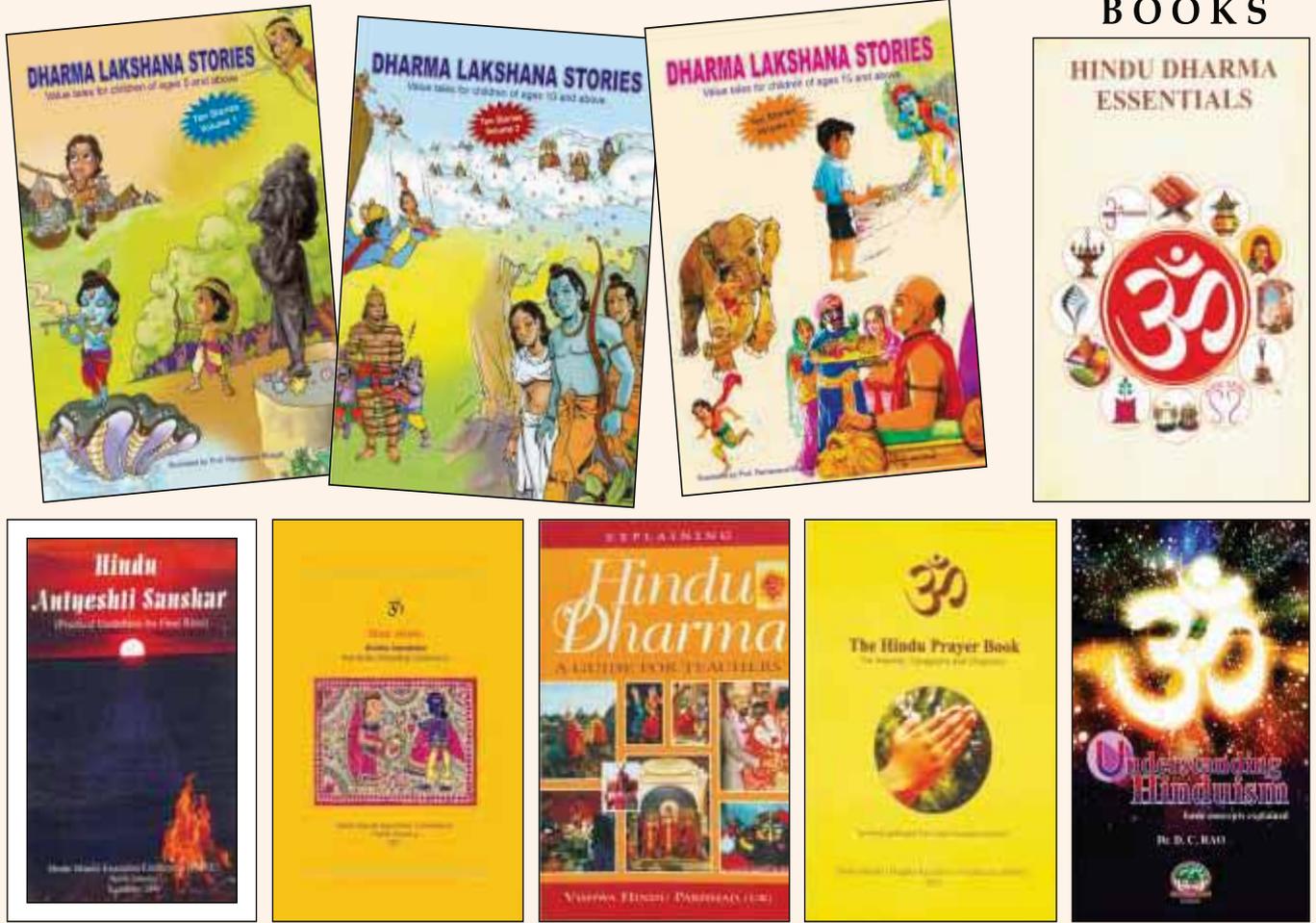
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*Om, Asato Maa Sad Gamaya; Tamaso Maa Jyotir Gamaya Mrityor Maa Amritam Gamaya*

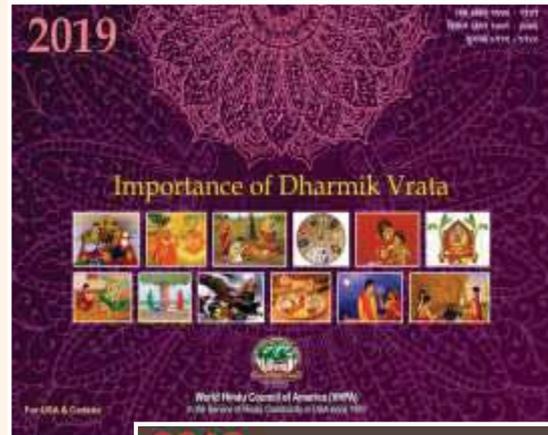
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