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HINDU VISHWA

Vishwa Dharma Digest

ANJLEEBAHEN

A Story of
Determination
and Perseverance
(1949-2021)

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Anjeeben Pandya
(1949-2021)

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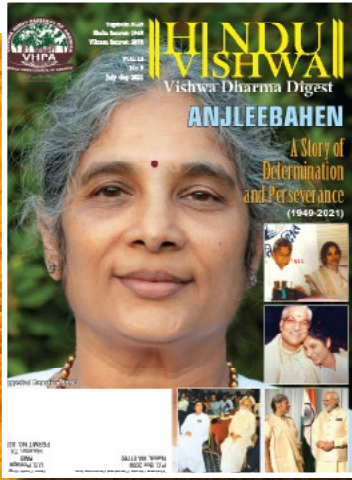
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Tel.: 732-744-0851
office@vhp-america.org

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EDITORIAL TEAM

Managing Editor
Shyam Tiwari
srtiwari@hotmail.com

Editor
Sanjay Gupta
sgatlanta@gmail.com

Advisors
Dr. Abhay Asthana
abhayaji@gmail.com

Ronica (Rajranee)
Jaipershad
ronica@ronica.com

द्वविमौ पुरुषौ लोके क्षरश्चाक्षर एव च ।
क्षरः सर्वाणि भूतानि कूटस्थोऽक्षर उच्यते ॥

- श्रीमद्भगवद्गीता 15.16

There are two kinds of beings in creation, the kshar (perishable) and the akshar (imperishable). The perishable are all beings in the material realm. The imperishable are the the liberated beings.

dvāv imau puruṣhau loke kṣharaśh chākṣhara eva cha
kṣharaḥ sarvāṇi bhūtāni kūṭa-stho 'kṣhara uchyate

Bhagvad Gita 15.16

ABOUT THE HINDU VISHWA

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Advertising Contact: Shyam Tiwari
Tele: (770) 962-2669 Email: srtiwari@hotmail.com

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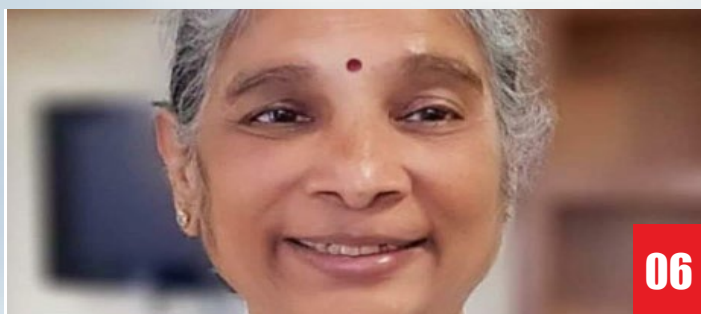
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ON BEHALF OF SRI YAGNAVALLABH SWAMIJI

SMT. ANJLEEBEN PANDYA, A DIVINE SHAKTI



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EDITORIAL



Anjleeben Pandya

AN INSPIRATION

This issue of Hindu Vishwa is devoted to the memory of someone who has contributed immensely to this magazine and the cause this publication purports to advance. We have included many reminiscences and close personal memories from the life of Anjlee Ben Pandya in this issue, who set out for an onward journey beyond her current life on May 19th, 2021 after battling cancer for several years at a hospital in Amdavad. She had been living in India after moving there a decade ago from the USA.

While going through the remembrances about her, one cannot miss a common thread that binds them together. It is beautifully captured in Chapter 6 Verse 7 of Bhagavat Gita. Bhagavan Shri Krishna is teaching Arjuna:

जित्मनः प्रशान्तस्य परमात्मा समाहतिः |
शीतोष्णसुखदुःखेषु तथा मानापमानयोः ||

**jitatmanah prasantasya paramatma samahitah
sitosna-sukha-dukheshu tatha manapamanayoh**

SYNONYMS

jita-atmanah—of one who has conquered his mind; prasantasya—of one who has attained tranquility by such control over the mind; paramatma—the Supersoul(God); samahitah—approached completely; shita—cold; ushna—heat; sukha—in happiness; dukheshu—in distress; tatha—also; mana—honor; apamanayoh—in dishonor.

TRANSLATION

For one who has conquered the mind, God is already reached, for he/she has attained tranquility. To such person happiness and distress, heat and cold, honor and dishonor are all the same.

(This state is practical samadhi or absorption in the supreme.)

What comes out from reading through the life instances of Anjlee Ben is the equanimity with which she handled every difficult situation and person in her life. She was equally at ease with the head of state or the youngest camp attendee at the VHPA samskara camps. The happy and energetic countenance and her very challenging personal family tragedy that she overcame to achieve something greater for society is an inspiration to all those she came in touch with.



सत्यमेव जयते

 प्रधान मंत्री
 Prime Minister

नवी दिल्ली

०४ ज्येष्ठ, शक संवत् १९४३

२५ મે, ૨૦૨૧


સ્નેહીશ્રી હરીવભાઈ,

અંજલિભેનના અવસાનના સમાચાર જાણી ઘણું દુઃખ થયું.

બહુ નાની વયે જીવનસાથી ગુમાવ્યા બાદ સંઘર્ષભરી પરિસ્થિતિમાં તેમણે સામાજિક સેવાકાર્યોનું મિશન અવિરતપણે આગળ ધપાવવાનું કાર્ય કર્યું. ભારતીય અભ્યાસ, સંસ્કૃતિ અને ઉત્સાહને વિદેશની ધરતી પર વ્યાપક મંચ પુરું પાડવામાં તેમણે મહત્વની ભુમિકા ભજવી અને એ રીતે અંજલિભેન વિદેશમાં ભારતના સાંસ્કૃતિક દૂત સમાન બની રહ્યા.

વિશ્વ હિન્દુ પરિષદ ઓફ અમેરિકા સહિત સંઘ પરિવારની વિવિધ સંસ્થાઓ સાથે તેઓ સક્રિયપણે સંકળાયેલા રહ્યા અને કાર્ય વિસ્તારની મહત્વપૂર્ણ જવાબદારી નિભાવી. દેશ વિદેશમાં ઘણાં ધાર્મિક - સાંસ્કૃતિક આયોજનમાં તેમણે કુશળ પજ્જમાન તરીકેની ભુમિકા સફળતાપૂર્વક ભજવી. સંઘ પરિવાર પ્રત્યે તેમનો સમર્પણભાવ અને સાર્વજનિક સેવા ભેત્રે તેમનું પ્રદાન સૌ માટે પ્રેરણાસ્પ છે. તેમની વિદાયથી પરિવારે એક નિઃશ્વાસન કાર્યકર ગુમાવ્યા છે.

પ્રભુ સદગતના આત્માને શાંતિ આપે એવી પ્રાર્થના. સમગ્ર પરિવાર તથા સહકાર્યકરોને શિવસોજી.



(નરેન્દ્ર મોદી)

Shri Haril Pandya

Email ID : rilpandya@aol.com



प्रधान मंत्री
Prime Minister

New Delhi

04 Jyeshtha, Saka Samvat 1943

25 May, 2021

Dear Harilbhai:

I am grieved by the news of Anjleebahen's passing away.

After losing her life partner at a young age and in circumstances full of struggle, she worked ceaselessly to move forward the mission of social service (Seva). She played an important role in providing broad platform for Bharatiya spirituality, culture and celebrations in a foreign land and in that sense, Anjleebahen became a cultural ambassador of Bharatiya culture in foreign country.

She remained actively associated with various Sangh Parivar (family) organizations including Vishwa Hindu Parishad of America and handled important responsibility of expanding field of action. She successfully played the part of a skillful host in planning of many religious and cultural events across the world.

Her total dedication towards the Sangh Parivar and her contribution in the field of social service (Seva) are source of inspiration for all. In her passing, Parivar has lost a sincere volunteer.

My prayer is for Prabhu to grant peace to the departed soul. My condolences to the whole family and the coworkers.

Signed

(Narendra Modi)

Shri Haril Pandya

Email ID: rilpandya@aol.com

Note: Since English version is not an official document, translated from Gujarati by Gaurang Vaishnav.



On behalf of Sri Yagnavallabh Swamiji

We would like to extend our heartfelt condolences and sincerest prayers for the eternal peace of Shri Anjleeben's atma. The entire Hindu community values her tremendous work and service to the traditions and beliefs of Sanatan Dharma. She will be remembered as a strong example of a life filled with selfless service. May all gain the strength to bear the loss of her passing. May all be inspired by her life of service.

ALAK PARMAR

National Mahila Coordinator
BAPS North America

Anjleebahen, a Moving Spirit Behind VHPA

**Swami Jyotirmayananda,
Kanhagad, Kerala**

Dear Sri Gaurangbhai,

It was so kind of you to have given me an opportunity to offer my reverential *Shraddhanjali* to *Swargiya* Anjleebahen Pandya, Director, International Liaison, VHPA.

At the very outset, I am reminded of the significant words of Swami Vivekananda who wrote poetically and in his inimitable style, to his ardent devotee and disciple, Sister Nivedita, the following memorable lines, showering his blessings on her, for her total devotion and dedication to the noble cause of serving the country of her adoption, India:

- “The mother’s heart, the hero’s will, The sweetness of the southern breeze,
- The sacred charm and strength that dwell On Aryan altars, flaming, free;
- All these be yours, and many more No ancient soul could dream before -- Be thou to India’s future son,
- The mistress, servant, friend in one.”

As we offer our Homage in memory of Anjleebahen, we sincerely feel, the above significant lines are aptly applicable to her too. A dedicated Hindu Leader, endowed with a mother’s heart, coupled with a hero’s will, the sweetness of the Indian breeze, the sacred charm and strength that dwell on the Indian altar, flaming free -- all these were hers, and much more, which no recent Indian mother could ever dream of. She was indeed a rare mother from India, an utterly dedicated soul, a true friend, all in one, far away from her motherland,



Anjleebahen singing a Bhav geet at Second Southeastern Hindu Conference, 1985

offering her heart and soul for the noble cause of serving the Hindu *Samaj*, in the U.S.A., for a couple of decades.

Always sporting on her countenance, a broad, beaming, divine smile, she was ever ready for the service of people around her, in whatever way possible, in particular to the VHPA *parivaar*, to which she was totally dedicated for so many years, while in the U.S., and thereafter even in India, after her return, for a decade, she was actively engaged, till the last, in the noble work of rural empowerment/development, through the based NGO., ‘Global Indians for Bharat Vikas’.

Personally speaking, I had the initial *darshan* of this Beloved Mother, during my first visit to the U.S., as far back as 1993, to attend the VHPA’s prestigious International Program of ‘Global Vision 2000’, in Washington, DC, marking the celebration of the centenary of Swami Vivekananda’s Appearance at the Chicago’s Parliament of the World’s Religions.

It is still etched on my memory, on my arrival at the place where I was to stay during this program, she graciously came beaming her usual divine smile to reverentially receive me, and enquired about my journey etc. Later, she was also kind enough to introduce me to Sri Hasitbhai, in-charge of the VHPA Emporium, and this indeed proved to be of great help with regard to the logistics related to my publication on Vivekananda which was specially brought from India and made available to the participants of the conference, through the VHPA Emporium at the venue.



Even before I had met her in person in the U.S., it was Anjleebahen who had not only sent me an invitation for the said program, but also a letter of support on behalf of the VHPA, to enable me to secure the required U.S. visa, for the first time. Besides, she had also silently done something gracious for my visit, without which I could never have visited Washington DC for the said program, even with the required visa in hand. She had, on her own initiative, contacted at Mumbai Sri Anand Shankar Ji Pandya, the renowned diamond merchant, philanthropist, as also the Vice-President of VHP, and arranged for my air passage from Chennai to Washington, DC. and she did all this without any publicity or fanfare, whatsoever.

The next time I met her was at Boston when I had an occasion to visit the residence Sri Maheshbhai, and later on also at Boston, at the VHPA Governing Council Meeting. Again, I had a couple of other occasions to see her, including the one at New York, during my participation in the United Nation's Millennium Peace Summit.

Since the initial impetus for my first visit to the U.S., got sponsored by this Gracious Mother, in 1993 (with a gap of six years, till 1999), by the divine grace, I have been able to visit abroad, continuously, every year, for about two decades now, to participate in various International Indological Conferences, and programs, the last couple of years being in the service of a 'Global Directory of Dharma Organizations' (www.disoa.org), conceived and initiated by Sri K. Suryanarayana Rao (1924-2016), Akhil Bharatiya Seva Pramukh of Rashtriya Swayam Sevak Sangh, and an ardent student of Vivekananda Literature.

As I gratefully remember the kind invitation and

support for my first visit to the U.S., from Anjleebahen for the VHPA program in Washington DC, I join you all:

- In respectfully recognizing her dedicated services and her self-effacing contributions for the noble cause of the VHPA,
- In recalling about her being a moving spirit behind the VHPA's major conferences, her dexterous handling of the task of bringing together various religious leaders on a single platform for the good of the Hindu *Samaj*,
- In appreciating her enthusiasm, exuberance and excellence in her work with children and youth,
- In remembering that widowed at a young age, being in the US, facing many challenges, how in fullness of time she blossomed into an inspiration to each and every one facing hardships in life, and gained a clear understanding of the issues of the Hindu society in USA and the management of a growing organization.
- In acknowledging the fact that a repository of enthusiasm, energy, service and dedication that she was, with the unstinted support from Smt. Raginibahen, and under the dependable guidance and mentorship of Sri Maheshbhai, she dedicated her entire life for the service of the Hindu *Samaj* not only in the U.S., but across the world, herself endowed with an innate ability to take everyone enthusiastically along with her, thereby earning the trust of one and all, by dint of her relentless hard work, imbued with the sense of self-sacrifice.

Today, even as we remember her unflagging devotion and total dedication for the noble cause she had chosen, may we invoke the divine blessings for her Eternal Happiness (*shaswat sukh*). Hari Om Tat Sat.

(Puja Swami Jyotirmayananda is attached with famous Anandashram in Kanhangad, Kerala. He is the Chief Coordinator of the Global Directory of Dharma Organizations. He spends part of his time in USA and can be contacted at Arsha Vidya Gurukulam, PA.)

Anjleebahen: Cheerful, Smiling and Welcoming

Swami Veditatmananda

Dear Gaurangbhai,

Harih Om! Salutations!

SHRADDHANJALI

Whenever I saw Anjleebahen, I found in her, a cheerful, smiling and a welcoming person. She established a warm relationship in a short time and, in our case, was always ready to attend any event we invited her to. She did not make any demand in return—truly a giving person.

Like many others, I also regularly received her greetings and good wishes at the time of Diwali and

Raksha Bandhan. She was a simple and unassuming person, and one would not imagine that she was an extremely busy and hardworking person who had successfully organized so many important events in India and abroad on behalf of VHPA.

With her loss, Hinduism has lost a dedicated, efficient and a tireless Sevak and her countless friends, colleagues and admirers have lost equivalent of a family member. Her loving smile is something that I will always remember.

With best wishes and love,

Swami Veditatmananda

(Puja Swami Veditatmananda Ji is the spiritual head of Arsha Vidya Gurukulam in Pocono Mountains, PA and Tattva Tirth Ashram, Thaltej, Gujarat.)



I am sorry to hear the departure of Anjleeben Pandya. My sincere condolences. We have lost a great Karma Yogi and a loving Mother who constantly thought of the good of humanity. I sincerely pray for her Sadgathi.

**With Love and Om
Shantananda**

Chinmaya Mission, USA



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Deepest Condolences on Nidhan of Anjleeban Pandya



Anjleeban Pandya – First from left

Hari Om!

We are saddened by the Nidhan of the eminent Hindutwa Karyakarta Anleeben Pandya (72) in a hospital in Gandhinagar, Gujarat on May 19, 2021!

Anjleeban used to say, Hindu Karya is Iakwariya Kaarya – God’s Work – and so she tried to do it with all commitment and devotion.

She served the Vishva Hindu Parishad of America (VHPA) in various capacities including as its General Secretary, and also as a fulltime Karyakarta for a long time. Vishva Hindu Parishad has always appreciated her contribution to the Hindu cause.

She had moved from Boston, USA to Ahmedabad, Gujarat about a decade back. She was under the medical care of oncologists for the last six months. She is survived by her son Haril A. Pandya & family.

She was also a former member of the Central Board of Trustees and the Governing Council of VHP and coordinated between the Central VHP and the VHP of America for long.

1993 was the first centenary year of the 1893 Parliament of the World’s Religions held in Chicago (USA) in which 100 years ago Swami Vivekananda had delivered his historic speech (<https://www.vhp.org/india/2019/09/19/1893-Parliament-of-the-Worlds-Religions-Chicago-USA/>). On this centenary occasion, the VHP of America organized the “Global Vignis-2000” programme in 1993 in Washington DC. Anjleeban played an important role in organizing this programme.



दूरभाष ११ ११ २६१६१३६६ २६१६०६६२
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 Fax 91-11-26195527
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 SANKAT MOCHAN ASHRAM, SECTOR-VI, RAMAKRISHNA PURAM, NEW DELHI-110 022 (BHARAT)

The Millennium Peace Summit was held at the United Nations in New York in the last week of August 2000 in which representatives from all religions of the world participated. A delegation of 300 Sant-Mahatmas, social workers and industrialists from Bharat also participated in it. Anjleen was a member of the team that looked after the hospitality of this big delegation. She always tirelessly looked after all concerned.

In the Hindu Sangam programme organized by the VHP of America in Staten Island, New York after the Millennium Peace Summit, especially to have an enlightening get-together with the big delegation and dignitaries from Bharat, the late Prime Minister of Bharat Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee was also a speaker. The present Prime Minister of Bharat Shri Narendrabhai Modi was also present in this programme. Anjleen played a crucial role in organizing this programme.

Anjleen was in the coordination team of the "Vishva Dharma Prasar Yatra" that took place between 2001 and 2003 which covered 40 countries.

She used to remain present in all the main programmes of Vishva Hindu Parishad. She was actively involved in all the major events of the historic Shri Ram Janmabhoomi Mukti Yajna.

The "World Hindu Conference-III" was organized by Vishva Hindu Parishad at the Triveni Sangam riverbed during the annual Maugh-Mela at Prayagraj in 2007. Anjleen was the main coordinator for the delegates from outside Bharat.

We never saw her getting disappointed. She always wore a smile and radiated friendliness, happiness and energy wherever she went.

Every Karyakarta and near & dear ones and friends, who were connected with her for a long time are extremely saddened by her Nidhan. We were also shocked!

Vishva Hindu Parishad expresses its deepest condolences to her son Chi. Haril A. Pandya and her numerous Sah-Yogis and well-wishers!

May Anjleen be granted a guide of place in the Nitya Amar Dhama! Om Shantih, Shantih, Shantih!

-Milind Parande
 Secretary General, Vishva Hindu Parishad
 -Swami Vigyananand
 Joint General Secretary, Vishva Hindu Parishad

VHP Website: vhp.org; Date: May 28th, 2021

p.a. - Condolence message can be sent to Late Anjleen's son Chi. Haril A. Pandya; E-Mail: <rilpandya@rediffmail.com>; Ph.-617-985-4843.

Anjleebahen

One Who Never Got Disappointed

हरि ॐ ।

विश्व हिन्दू परिषद आफ अमेरिका की पूर्व महामन्त्री, केंद्रीय प्रबंध समिति की पूर्व सदस्य, बहुत समय तक केंद्रीय विहिप और अमेरिका विहिप के बीच समन्वय का काम करनेवाली श्रीमती अंजली बहन पंड्या का परलोक गमन हो गया, वे विगत जुलाई मास से गुजरात के अहमदाबाद नगर में ही अपोलो चिकित्सालय में चिकित्सकों की देखरेख में थी, वे केन्सर रोग से ग्रस्त थीं। पति वास्तुविद (Architect) थे, अमेरिका के बोस्टन में रहते थे, पुत्र के जन्म के एक या दो वर्ष पश्चात ही पति का देहावसान हो गया था, पति के परलोक गमन के पश्चात ही पति के सामाजिक कार्यों को पूरा करने का संकल्प अंजलि बहन ने ले लिया था, उनके पतिदेव भी अमेरिका में रहते हुए परिवार का पालन और सामाजिक जिम्मेदारियां दोनों निर्वाह करते थे, उन्हीं का कार्य अंजली पंड्या ने अपने ऊपर ले लिया। अमेरिका में एक विशाल सम्मेलन संभवतः स्वामी विवेकानंद जी के शिकागो भाषण की शताब्दी के अवसर पर आयोजित किया गया था, इस सम्मेलन की व्यवस्थाओं की जिम्मेदारी अंजलि बहन पंड्या ने स्वीकार की थी, वर्ष 2000 अगस्त अन्तिम सप्ताह में न्यूयार्क में संयुक्त राष्ट्र संघ सभागार में विश्व के सभी धर्मों के प्रतिनिधियों का वैश्विक सम्मेलन हुआ था, भारत से भी 300 सन्त महात्मा, उद्योगपति आदि प्रभावी व्यक्ति वहाँ उपस्थित थे, उनकी सेवा का दायित्व निर्वाह करने वाली टोली में अंजलि बहन प्रमुख थीं, वे सदैव सभी के सम्पर्क में रहती थीं।

सम्मेलन के पश्चात न्यूजर्सी में विश्व हिंदू परिषद अमेरिका द्वारा आयोजित कार्यक्रम में सभी सन्त महात्मा व कार्यकर्ताओं के मध्य स्वर्गीय अटलबिहारी वाजपेयी जी का उद्बोधन था, इस अवसर पर सभी सन्तों के लिये परिवारों में निवास की व्यवस्था अंजलि ने करायी थी, भारत के प्रधान मन्त्री माननीय नरेन्द्र मोदी जी भी इस कार्यक्रम में उपस्थित थे। परिषद के सभी कार्यक्रमों में वे उपस्थित रहती थी, श्री राम जन्मभूमि मुक्ति यज्ञ के सभी आयोजनों में उनकी सक्रिय भागीदारी रहती थी, सन 2007 में प्रयागराज में संगम तट पर विश्व हिंदू परिषद की ओर से तीसरा वैश्विक सम्मेलन आयोजित किया गया था, अपेक्षा थी कि इस सम्मेलन में भारत के बाहर के देशों से 15000 प्रतिनिधि भागीदारी करेंगे, यह सम्मेलन माघ के महीने में था, संभवतः फरवरी के प्रथम सप्ताह में, सर्दी का काल, संसार के अन्य देशों से आने वाले 15000 प्रतिनिधियों के लिये सुख सुविधाओं के निर्माण करने का दायित्व अंजलि बहन ने निर्वाह किया था, (यह संयोग है की प्रथम दिन ही भीषण वर्षा के कारण सब कुछ बिखर गया), अंजलि बहन कभी निराश नहीं होती थी, सदैव प्रसन्न रहती थी, उनकी सद्गति के लिए श्री परमेश्वर के चरणों में मस्तक रख कर प्रार्थना करता हूँ, लंबे काल तक उनके संपर्क में रहे, उनसे जुड़े रहे मित्रों, संबंधियों और कार्यकर्ताओं को उनके देहावसान से कष्ट हुआ है, मुझे भी धक्का लगा, परमात्मा सभी को मानसिक शक्ति प्रदान करें। ॐ शान्ति शान्ति शान्ति।

प्रस्तोता-चम्पत राय, उपाध्यक्ष, विश्व हिंदू परिषद, अयोध्या- 20
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(Champat Rai Ji is the Vice President of VHP, Bharat and is the General Secretary of Shri Ram Janmabhoomi Teerth Kshetra, Ayodhya.)

सुश्री अंजली बहन पंड्या एक चलता फिरता कार्यालय

Dr. Shankarrao Tatwawadi, Nagpur, Bharat

सुश्री अंजली बहन का अवसान उनकी तुलनात्मक कम आयु तथा उनके प्रसन्न एवं उत्साह भरे व्यक्तित्व को देखकर कुछ असामयिक ही लगती है।

अंजलीबेन पंड्या। दो शब्द और मात्र पाच अक्षर! परंतु इन दो शब्दों के उच्चारणमात्रसे ही सामने खड़ी होती है सफेद साड़ी में लिपटी हुई एक दुबलीसी काया और निकलती थी आदेश देने वाली परंतु स्नेहपूर्ण वाणी।

लगभग दो वर्ष पहले कर्णावती के प्रवास में मेरा उनसे मिलना हुआ था। उस समय उनके पैर में अस्थिभंग था परंतु उसके रहते हुए भी वे मुझे श्रीमान महेश भाई मेहता को मिलाने स्वामीनारायण अस्पताल में ले गई थी और श्री सुभाष मेहता से भी मिलवाने का उन्होंने प्रबंध किया था। उसके पश्चात मेरे कर्णावती के दूसरे प्रवास में यद्यपि मैं श्री महेश भाई और श्री सुभाष भाई को फिर से मिल सका तथापि अंजली बहन से मेरी भेंट न हो सकी और तभी मन में कुछ अशुभ की आशंकाएं खड़ी हुई थी।

इधर कुछ वर्षों से वे अमेरिका के विश्व हिंदू परिषद के कार्य में सक्रिय नहीं थी फिर भी जिन लोगों ने उन्हें 1980 या उससे जुड़े हुए कालखंड में देखा है उन्हें अंजली बहन की स्फूर्ति, उनका चैतन्य और किसी भी कार्य को पूर्णता और सफलता की ओर ले जाने की उनकी क्षमता इसका अनुभव हुआ होगा।

विवाह के पश्चात अंजली बहन अपने पति श्री अंबरीश जी पंड्या के साथ अमेरिका आई थी परंतु दुर्भाग्य से कुछ थोड़ेही कालांतर में उनके पति का आकस्मिक देहान्त हुआ। उस समय उनका सुपुत्र हारिल मात्र शिशु अवस्था में था। छोटे आयु के पुत्र के भविष्य की भी संभवतः उन्हें चिंता रही होगी। आघात तो पहाड़ सा था, परंतु अंजली बहन ने डॉक्टर महेश भाई मेहता के आश्वस्त निर्देशों के बल पर न केवल अपने को संभाला परंतु विश्व हिंदू परिषद के कार्य में महेश जी के साथ स्वयं को जोड़ लिया। इस अंतर्व्यथा और आघात को

भुला कर अपने को परिषद के कार्य में उन्होंने समर्पित कर दिया और अपनी अंतर वेदना को कभी प्रगट नहीं होने दिया। इस रूप में उनका व्यवहार निःसंदेह एक सफल कर्मयोगी सरीखा ही था।

अंजलि बेन से मेरा प्रथम साक्षात्कार सन 1979 में हुआ था जब मैं भारतसे अमेरिका में 2 वर्षों के लिए संघ विस्तारक के रूप में आया था।

संघ कार्य का विस्तार उस समय 4 शाखाओं तक सीमित था। उत्तर में शिकागो, पूर्व में न्यूयॉर्क, दक्षिण में ह्यूस्टन और पश्चिम में लॉस एंजेलिस। विश्व हिंदू परिषद की गतिविधि श्रीमान महेश मेहता जी के नेतृत्व में अच्छा स्वरूप धारण कर रही थी। मुझे स्मरण है की बाल शिविर के रूप में विश्व हिंदू परिषद के तत्वावधान में बालकों का प्रथम शिविर का कार्यक्रम उस वर्ष 'रहोड आइलैंड' में हुआ था। जिनको भारत में संघ शिक्षा वर्ग का या शिबिरों का अनुभव था ऐसे कार्यकर्ता यह सप्ताहांत में लगाने वाला शिविर चला रहे थे। श्रीमान महेशभाई, मधु भाई झवेरी, मुकुन्द मोदी जी, श्री विजय रुईकर आदि कार्यकर्ता शिबिर के संचालन में कार्यभार संभाले हुए थे। बालक बालिकाओं का वह संयुक्त शिबिर था। जिनको शिबिर जीवन के अनुशासन का कुछ भी अनुभव नहीं था उन्हें प्रातःकाल उठाकर प्रार्थना के लिए पंक्ति में खड़ा कर फिर दिन भर शारीरिक और बौद्धिक या तत्सम कार्यक्रमों में व्यस्त रखना यह बड़ा कठिन कार्य था। अंजलि बेन का मेरा प्रथम परिचय उसी समय हुआ था। वह उस शिबिर की व्यवस्था में थी। फिर बादके दो वर्षोंमें अमेरिका के वास्तव्य में श्री महेश भाई और अंजली बेन के निवासस्थान 'नीडहॅम' में अनेको बार उनसे मिलने का अवसर आया और उनके आतिथ्यका भी अनुभव हुआ।

1980 के बाद के 25 वर्षों में अंजलि बेन की कितने ही कार्यक्रमों में भेंट होती रही फिर वह अमरीका में विश्व हिंदू परिषद की बैठक हो या वर्ग हो या भारत के बाहर के अन्य देशों में परिषद का अधिवेशन

हो या संघ के विश्व संघ शिबिर सरीखा कार्यक्रम हो या संघ के जेष्ठ अधिकारियों का प्रवास का कार्यक्रम हो - इन सब में विश्व हिंदू परिषद के प्रमुख कार्यकर्ताओं के साथ अंजलि बेनकी भी उपस्थिति रहती थी और उनसे मिलना होता था। भारत में होने वाली विश्व हिंदू परिषद की बैठकों में भी हम लोग साथ साथ रहते थे। ऐसे कार्यक्रमों में आपसी संपर्क और औपचारिक तथा अनौपचारिक वार्तालाप के लिए भी पर्याप्त समय मिलता था।

इतनी दीर्घ कालावधि में उनके साथ जो संपर्क आया उसका वर्णन किसी पुस्तक के एक बृहत खंड से कम स्वरूप का नहीं होगा परंतु अंजलि बेनके कार्यबाहुल्य की जानकारी अपने सभी कार्यकर्ता बंधुओं को हो सके इसके लिए उनमें से कुछ का आंशिक उल्लेख मात्र यहां पर होना आवश्यक है। आरंभ में इन में से अधिकांश कार्यक्रमों में अंजलि बेन श्रीमान महेश भाई मेहता के साथ उपस्थित रहती थी, बाद में स्वतंत्र रूप से भी वे ऐसे कार्यक्रमों में आने लगी थी।

डॉ. महेश जी के कार्यों को अंजलि बेन ने अपने सक्षम हाथों से संभाला और वह परिषद के कार्य में अमेरिका में सहायक सिद्ध हुई। उन दिनों माननीय श्री लक्ष्मण राव भिड़े जी विदेश प्रवास में अमेरिका जाते थे। उनके अपने क्षेत्र में प्रवास की व्यवस्था भी वह करती थी। उनको कार से अन्यत्र ले जाने का काम उन्होंने अपने ऊपर ले लिया था। अपने व्यक्तिगत दुख को उन्होंने मानो सामाजिक कार्य में विस्मृत कर दिया था। महेश भाई का निवास स्थान (निडहैम, बोस्टन) यही अंजलि बेन का भी स्थायी पता बन गया था।

आरंभ में परिषद में मात्र व्यवस्था के कार्य को ही देखने वाले अंजलि बेन ने क्रमशः कार्य के साथ जुड़ी हुई अन्य जिम्मेदारियों का भी वहन करना शुरू किया और अमेरिका के कार्य की वह आधार स्तंभ बनी। परिषद के सभी अधिवेशनों में उनकी उपस्थिति दिखने लगी। भारत के बाहर भिन्न-भिन्न देशों में परिषद के जो भी बड़े कार्यक्रम हुए थे, उन सब में डॉक्टर महेश मेहता जी के साथ अंजलि बेन भी सहभागी होती थी।

1985 का डेनमार्क में कोपनहेगन में हुआ विश्व हिंदू परिषद का यूरोप का अधिवेशन था, उस समय कोपनहेगन के कार्यकर्ता श्री शादीलाल जी शर्मा के परिवार में ही हम लोगों का निवास था। परिवार के सभी छोटे बड़े सदस्योंसे अंजलि बेनका उस अधिवेशन में परिचय हुआ और वह स्नेहसंबंध आगे अनेक वर्षों तक दृढ़ रहा। अधिवेशन के तुरंत बाद ही विश्व हिंदू परिषद के तत्कालीन महामंत्री

श्री हरमोहनलाल जी, अंजलि बेन, शादीलाल जी, उनके सुपुत्र रवी और मैं स्वयं कार से कोपनहेगन से 'स्टॉकहोम' और 'ओस्लो' गये थे। पूरा प्रवास कार में हुआ था। श्री हरमोहन लाल जी भी थोड़े अंतर तक कारवाहक बने थे और अंजलि बेन हरमोहनलाल जी के आदेशानुसार गियर बदलने का काम कर रही थी। वह बड़ा ही विनोद पूर्ण दृश्य था। 'स्वीडन' में श्री डोगरा नामक कार्यकर्ता ने हरमोहनलाल जी के भाषण से वहां के परिषद के समिती के कार्य का शुभारंभ किया था।

प्रवास की बात आती है तो श्री हरमोहनलाल जी के साथ ही मैं स्वयं, अंजलि बेन, और श्री मनोहर पुरी नामक सज्जन रेलगाडी से पुर्तगाल में लिस्बन तथा स्पेन में मैड्रिड और बार्सिलोना ऐसे हम गए थे। पुर्तगाल में परिषद के कार्य की जानकारी तत्रस्थ बंधुओंको दी गई तथा विश्व हिंदू परिषद के एक नये इकाई का गठन भी वहां हुआ। मैड्रिड में उन दिनों कुछ राजनीतिक अस्थिरता थी इसलिये हमें स्मरण है की रेलवे स्टेशन रात भर के लिये बंद था और हम सब लोग अपने सामान के साथ स्टेशन के बाहर मैदान में ही बैठे रहे और वार्तालाप में हमने पूरी रात गुजारी थी। मैड्रिड से बार्सिलोना आकर वहां से हमारा फ्रैंकफर्ट में आना हुआ था। उस समय स्मार्टफोन या मोबाइल का कोई प्रचलन नहीं था। स्पेन से जर्मनी में कैसे फोन करना इसकी भी किसीको जानकारी नहीं थी। किसी प्रकार फ्रैंकफर्ट में श्री रमेशजी जैन को सूचना दी गयी और जब वे स्टेशन पर मिले तो एक लंबी चिंता से हमें मुक्ती मिली। उस समय की घटना को स्मरण करके आज भी अपने अज्ञान पर हमें हसी आती है।

युके का 1989 का विराट हिंदू संमेलन एक अविस्मरणीय अनुभव है। जिसमें एक लाख हिंदु लन्दन के पास 'मिल्टन केन्स' में इकठ्ठा हुए थे। इतने हिंदुओं का भारत के बाहर एकत्रीकरण यह एक अनहोनी बात थी। अंजलि बेन उस में भी उपस्थित थी। बाद में भी अनेको बार जब वे युके आई तब उनको प्रवास में कई कार्यक्रमों में ले जाने का भी अवसर मुझे मिला था।

1992 में फ्रैंकफर्ट में विश्व हिंदू परिषद का यूरोप का अधिवेशन हुआ था और वाशिंगटन में 1993 में श्री विवेकानंद जी के शिकागो भाषण के शताब्दी के अवसर पर जो विश्व हिंदू परिषद का और एक अधिवेशन हुआ था उन दोनोंमें भी अंजलि बेन की उपस्थिति अवश्यमेव रही होगी।

1995 में दक्षिण अफ्रीका में दरबन के विशाल हिंदु सम्मेलन में भी वे साथ थी और सम्मेलन में सन्तो की व्यवस्था का सब भार

स्वामी सहजानंद जी के आश्रम में उन्हीं के पास था। भारत से बहुत बड़ी संख्या में संत पुरुष और महात्मा लोग उस अधिवेशन में आये थे जिनकी व्यवस्था का भार अंजली बेन की ओर था। वह व्यवस्था उसने खूब अच्छी प्रकार से निभाई थी। हम दोनों साथ ही थे। उसका सभी लोगों के साथ अत्यंत स्नेहपूर्ण व्यवहार था। बड़े बड़े संत महात्माओं के द्वारा भी कुछ आवश्यक कार्य वे आग्रह पूर्वक करवा लेती थी।

मंच की व्यवस्था और प्रत्यक्ष मंच संचालन में भी उन्होंने मेरी सहायता की थी। और उसमें उस देश के तत्कालीन राष्ट्रपती श्री नेल्सन मंडेला उपस्थित थे तथा श्री दत्तोपंत ठेंगडी जी, श्री मुरली मनोहर जोशी जी और माननीय अशोक जी सहित कई ज्येष्ठ अधिकारी और भन्ते ज्ञानजगत जी सरीखे सन्त वहां उपस्थित थे।

भारत में जब भी कोई बड़ा कार्यक्रम विश्व हिंदू परिषद के तत्वावधान में होता था, तब अंजली बहन महेश भाई के साथ वहां अवश्य उपस्थित रहती थी। भारत के सभी ज्येष्ठ संघ अधिकारी, यथा माननीय सुदर्शन जी, माननीय शेषाद्री जी आदि के साथ भी अंजली बहन के बड़े सहज परंतु आदर युक्त संबंध थे। परिवारों में वह बड़ी सहजता से घुलमिल जाती थी और रसोई घर तक उसका संबंध बन जाता था। परिषद के कार्यक्रमों में सामान्यतः सन्तों की व्यवस्था का भार अंजली बहन को ही दिया जाता था। बड़े ही अनौपचारिक ढंग से वे सन्तों से भी काम करवा लेती थी।

भाषण, चर्चा या बौद्धिक आदि कार्यक्रमों में अंजली बहन की विशेष रुचि नहीं थी। परंतु किसी भी कार्यक्रम में नेपथ्य की व्यवस्था का संपूर्ण भार वे बड़ी कुशलता पूर्वक सम्हालती थी। उनका स्वभावभी परिश्रम का ही था। आवश्यकतानुसार बड़ी सभा में भी अपनी बात योग्य शब्दों में आग्रह पूर्वक रखकर वे मनवा लेती थी। तब ध्यान में आया की अमेरिका आने के पूर्व भारत में समिती या विश्व हिंदू परिषद के कार्यका पूर्वानुभव न होते हुए भी परिषद के कार्यस्वरूप को श्री महेश भाई और अन्य ज्येष्ठ कार्यकर्ताओंके सहवास में रहकर अच्छी प्रकार से हृदयंगम कर लिया था और एक अनुभवी कार्यकर्ता के रूप में परिषद के विभिन्न दायित्वोंका वे सफलतापूर्वक निर्वहन कर सकती थी।

वह एक चलते फिरते कार्यालय का काम भी बड़ी सहजता से संभाल लेती थी। महेश भाई के सचिव के समान उनका दायित्व था, महेश भाई के भाषणों की पुरानी प्रतियां और उसके संदर्भ यह सब उनके पास रहता था। एक प्रकार से महेश जी के काम की वह

संदर्भ सूत्र थी। राष्ट्र सेविका समिति के अधिकारी बहनों के साथ भी अंजली बहन के बड़े अनौपचारिक और निकट के संबंध थे।

इधर लगभग एक दशक से संभवतः स्वास्थ्य के कारण से या कुछ पारिवारिक अनिवार्यताओं के कारण उनकी सक्रियता विश्व हिंदू परिषद अमेरिका में या परिषद के वैश्विक कार्य में बहुत कम रही। अमेरिका का वास्तव्य समाप्त कर वह इधर कुछ वर्षों से कर्णावती आ गई थी। आरंभ में उन्हें अपने परिवार के ज्येष्ठ व्यक्तियों के स्वास्थ्य संबंधी व्यवस्था देखनी पड़ी और उसके बाद तो वह स्वयं ही कर्करोग से बाधित हो गयी थी। एक प्रशंसा का विषय है की, स्वास्थ्य की गड़बड़ी के पश्चात भी वह कभी उदास नहीं रही। इन दिनों में भी उनकी चिर परिचित हंसी कायम थी। उनके सुपुत्र हरिल और पुत्री समान स्नुषा सीमा तथा अन्य आत्मीय उनकी चिन्ता करते थे।

विश्व हिंदू परिषद अमेरिका का कार्य इस समय काफी बड़ा है। परंतु उसके आरंभ के दिनों में उस पौधेको सिंचने का और पोषण देने का कार्य जिन कार्यकर्ताओं ने किया उन में अंजली बेन के योगदान को भुलाया नहीं जा सकेगा। उनका व्यक्तित्व बहुत मिलनसार था। वे लोगोंसे उबती नहीं थी और लोग भी उनके सान्निध्य में प्रसन्नता का ही अनुभव करते थे। उनके इस स्वभाव को देखते हुए गीता के १२ वें अध्याय का एक श्लोक स्मरण हो आता है जिसमें भगवान के प्रिय भक्त का वर्णन है।

**यस्मान्नो द्विजते लोको लोकान्नो द्विजते च यः।
हर्षामर्षभयोद्वेगैर्मुक्तो यः स च मे प्रियः ॥**

संसार का कोई भी प्राणी जिससे उद्विग्न नहीं होता है (और जो संसार से उद्विग्न नहीं होता जो हर्ष-क्रोध -भय (और अन्य) उद्वेगोंसे मुक्त है वहह (भक्त) मुझे प्रिय होता है।

अमेरिका के विश्व हिंदू परिषद के एवम संघ के समस्त कार्यकर्ता तथा अन्य परिचित बंधु भगिनी इन सबने अंजली बहन के रूप में एक स्नेहिल बहन को खोया है।

अंजली बहन को विनम्र श्रद्धांजलि ॐ शांति: शांति: शांति:

शंकर तत्ववादी

डॉ. हेडगेवार भवन, महाल नागपुर. 440 032

+91-98118-20014

svtatwawadi@gmail.com

(Dr. Shankarrao Tatwawadi is a lifelong Pracharak of RSS. For years he was the International Coordinator based in UK as well as USA.)



Anjlee - My Link to All People is Gone

Dr. Mahesh Mehta, Bopal, Gujarat

(As told to Srimati Ragini Mehta)

ANJLEE came in our life after my brother in law passed away at a very young age leaving behind a little boy Haril with her. I saw sadness, insecurity and helplessness in her eyes. I decided to be a pioneer for her life. She had good qualities. Right direction can put her in the right place.

I got her involved in Hindu Vishwa work. In the beginning, she was doing typesetting, designing and arranging for printing. She did not see day or night. In those days, life was not easy in the USA for this work. She learnt a lot from articles, talking to people- she got courage and found her direction of working for

Hindu Dharma.

Then she got involved in VHPA work. She loved to work with people and her country. While arranging events and programs, she developed her people skills, working skills, political skills and interpersonal skills. Good relationship made good friends. She travelled with me in different countries. Her confidence and decisiveness helped her to achieve her goal.

In Bharat, her skills developed even more. She was a lovely daughter to many senior leaders and Didi to her younger friends. Her smiling face, dedication and selfless services made her known to Hindu organizations around the world. She was never afraid to take any risks.

Anjlee was a good singer, good artist, and a good writer. Always dresses so neatly, she helped women and girls elegant way of wearing sarees. She loved elegance. Her home was as beautiful as she was.

We will have her in our hearts as always. My link to all people and all volunteers is gone. Our prayers to God to give her Atman peace.

OM Shanti.

(Dr. Mahesh Mehta , Anjeebahren's husband's brother in law, is the founding member of VHPA. He served as the General Secretary, President and Chairperson of Advisory Board of VHPA.)

Anjeebahren, Sensitive and Dedicated to a Cause

Prof. Ved Prakash Nanda, Denver, COLORADO

Long back, I started working with respected Mahesh Bhai, Ragini Bahen, and Anjlee Bahen. It seems like yesterday or perhaps eons ago – meetings, projects, planning, and implementation – Anjlee Bahen was always there. As with all she worked with or even met with for a short time, she was cheerful, with a smile and an insightful conversation. I remember numerous occasions when with great sensitivity and care she would handle a delicate situation. One incident especially comes to mind: I was in New York at VHPA's first International Hindu conference in 1984 and invited to speak. My wife was in Denver, ready to give birth to our child. I received word that the birth was imminent, and I should return immediately. I mentioned it to Anjlee Ji because I was supposed to speak the next day and I was in a dilemma. She changed the speaking order and arranged for me to speak that day so that I could take

the next flight home. This, of course, is how she dealt with people around her. However, when it came to an issue of Hindu cause and not necessarily undertaken by the VHPA, she was fiercely dedicated to providing any assistance, any support, any leadership, needed to ensure that what was needed was done.

At the same time, she suffered no fools, minced no words, and fearlessly acted. How selflessly and tirelessly she worked, helping Mahesh Bhai, the VHPA's projects in the U.S. and in India, and how unequivocally she was committed to promotion and protection of Sanātana Dharma!

Sadly, she is gone, but her spirit lives to constantly guide us. I know that she is watching over us.

(Dr. Ved Prakash Nanda is former head of Hindu Swayamsevak Sangh, HSS, USA and advisor for all Sangh activities.)



My Mother Anjleebahen

Haril Pandya, Needham, MA

Talk given at VHPA's online Shraddhanjali to Anjleebahen Pandya on June 5, 2021

Namaste.

Respected Elders, My Dear Family , My VHPA and VHP Family, and Loved Ones,

“To all of you, Jay Hatkesh and Jay Guru Datta

Please do not cry for me

My wishes are that you all celebrate my life.

Please know that if I have wronged anyone, I do sincerely apologize.

I am leaving, but I will be back soon – in what form? I do not know.

But I know we will meet again. Until then, Jay Hatkesh and Jay Guru Datta”

These were my mom's words and wishes for you all, her family, friends and colleagues.

Four years ago, my mom – in her way - sat me down at her dining table in Amdavad and made me write down these words and all her wishes. Everything she wanted after she had departed this physical world. As her son, these things were not only hard to hear or accept, but harder to sit and write seeing her smiling right in front of me. There

is a level of finality when we write these words. A level of sadness, weight and meaning. But it was important to her, to her being and for everything she believed, practiced and followed.

I never thought I would have to say these words or write this speech because mothers are supposed to be immortal. They are our guiding lights, our caregivers, our teachers, our doctors, and our anchors.

Today, I am honored you are all here to pay your tribute to her. She would not only be grateful, but mostly embarrassed. To all who are here, she would say, I don't deserve this.

When my father died, I was three, from then on, she had spent the next 47 years of her life to one and one cause only, her passion for Hindutva, Bharat, and its people. Meeting and working alongside all of you, was for her - an honor and a privilege. You can imagine all the stories growing up, she had told me of all of you and how she learned so much from you. Everyone, she would say, has taught her something she held dearly. Her presence in working with you was that of a powerful, strong, funny, and committed woman of India in a white sari. To me she was ... my ma. My mom.

Here in America, as a child, I was embarrassed as to why my mom was the only mom wearing a sari, a white sari, every day. Why couldn't she wear jeans like all the other moms. Why did she spend so much time ironing her saris so crisp and perfect? She took great pride in how she

presented herself. She used to say wearing a crisp starched and ironed sari was important to her because it's how Saraswati mata wore her sari in the photos. She embodied that beauty, power and assurance. That was my mom.

Today, sadly there is not enough time to go into all the amazing stories of my childhood, or family, all the funny stories, or any stories she had of me - all the hundreds of national and international programs she helped organize, youth camps, countries she had visited, homework she had helped with, amazing food she has prepared, songs she had sung, jokes she had told, or smiles she had given. There are not enough pages of any book that can describe her love and commitment to Bharat. Or her stories of Shri Ram Janmabhoomi, , Ayodhya, the Emergency of 1975, helping organize so many conferences or even attending and graduating college in America at the age of fifty! Her greatest pleasure was gaining knowledge and serving India and working with all of you. For the last few years, after she became sick, I was able to hear so many of these stories. She was so proud. She spoke of everyone fondly, lovingly and knowing she loved her India.

I know she was proud to be not only surrounded by you all, but moreover to be a woman of strength, determination

and will. She never gave up, she never appeared to struggle, she was the role model for so many and the person I will look up to, respect, and fall at her feet (with sashtang pranam) forever.

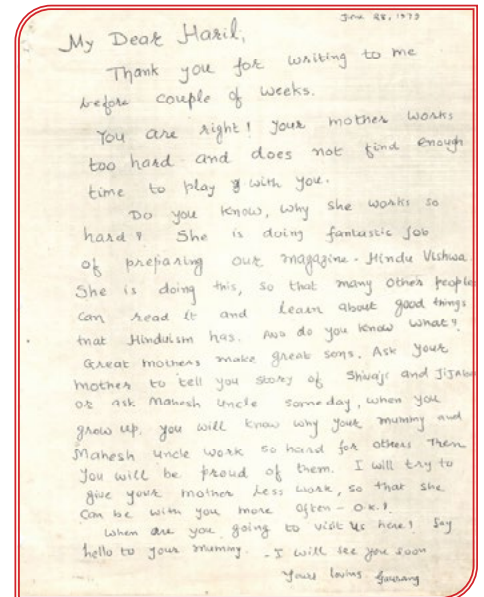
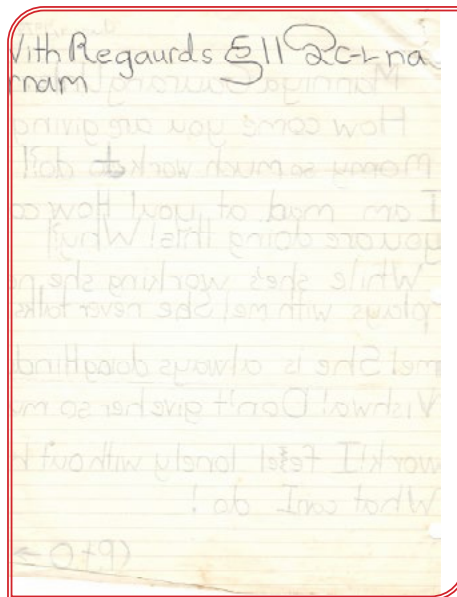
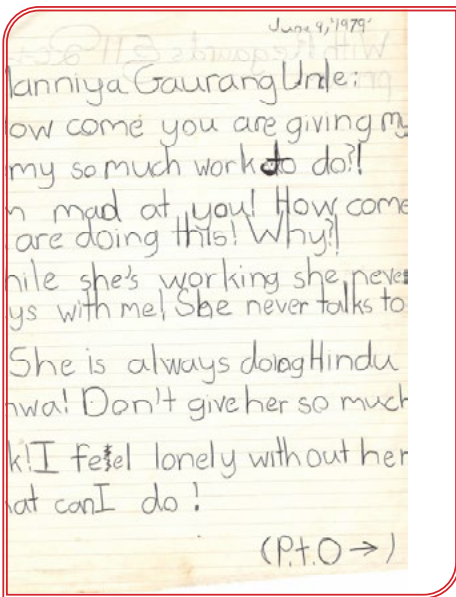
She was not only my ma, to me she was Bharat ki chhoti ma. I hope every May 19th, you will not only honor and remember her, but put that day aside and remember how she made you feel. She always tried to make you feel important and most of all – loved. That was her power.

Thank you for being a part of this and all the lovely words and memories. I carry you all with me every day. As much as you all carry her. To me, you are all my family. I grew up with you and now I mourn with you. Everyone in this world deserves to hear what is said after they are gone, while they are still on this earth. If we practiced this, we would instill more love and remind each other what is important and what we love about each other.

मैं आप सबको प्रणाम करता हूँ और सबका आभारी हूँ कि मेरी मां की श्रद्धांजलि के लिए आप यहाँ है।

(I bow to all of you and thankful to you because you are here for the tribute to my mother.)

Thank you, मेरा प्रणाम, नमस्कार। (bowing to you, salutations.)



A letter from Anjleebahen's son Haril at age Seven and a Response

(Haril Pandya is the only son of Anjleebahen. He is an architect by profession, has designed covers of Hindu Vishwa as a child and made a conceptual drawing of Hindu Heritage Center. Haril lives in Needham, MA.)

ANJLEEBAHEN

A Story of Determination and Perseverance

Gaurang G. Vaishnav, Tampa, FL

I consider myself most fortunate to have been closely associated with Anjleebahen for almost 45 years. We both entered Vishwa Hindu Parishad of America (VHPA) family quite raw and around the same time. I joined VHPA in 1972 and she did in 1973. I didn't know much about Anjleebahen until in April 1974 I got a call from a colleague that Anjleebahen's husband (and brother-in-law of Maheshbhai Mehta) Ambarishbhai whom I had met a few times, had died suddenly. Later on, we went to meet her, which was my real introduction to her. One can only imagine the plight and mental condition of a 23-year-old young woman with no work experience, with a three-year-old child, who had been in the USA for hardly two years and suddenly rudderless. It was due to magnanimity and foresight of Maheshbhai and Raginibahen (sister of Ambarishbhai) that Anjleebahen decided not to return to Bharat. Maheshbhai and Raginibahen took Anjleebahen under their wings and treated her as their daughter, taking care of her son Haril's total wellbeing.

EMERGENCY RULE IN BHARAT

In June 1975 Mrs. Indira Gandhi clamped dictatorial "Emergency" on Bharat and put all leaders of opposition parties as well as volunteers of RSS, VHP and Jansangh (now BJP) in jail. RSS and all affiliate organizations were banned. A movement to oppose the Emergency and bring out the truth to the world (as media in Bharat was muzzled), Indians For Democracy (IFD) was formed here in the USA under the leadership of Maheshbhai and Dr. Mukund Mody. It was during

those 19 months that Anjleebahen came in her own. She put aside her grief and plunged headlong in the movement. Those were the days when there was no social media, no emails, not even fax machines. Xerox was done on machines that had wet toner and copies came out like a wet papadam until they were dried. Anjleebahen took up the task of writing hundreds of letters, typing a newsletter/magazine named Satyavani, and took care of the needs of several prominent figures who had escaped from Bharat and landed in the USA. Anjleebahen used to observe Vrats which was her way of penance. When the Emergency was imposed on Bharat, she took a vow not to eat rice or dishes made with rice until the emergency was lifted. I had the good fortune to offer her a teaspoonful of cooked rice at a celebratory function in Hartford, CT when the emergency was lifted, and Indira Gandhi and her party were defeated in the national election that followed.

PUTTING TOGETHER HINDU VISHWA MAGAZINE

One reason I came very close to Anjleebahen was that sometime in 1976 at the height of the fight against Indira Gandhi, Maheshbhai entrusted me with editing Hindu Vishwa, VHPA's publication which was a monthly at that time. Anjleebahen was our resident graphic artist and typesetter. She labored for hours on an archaic typesetting machine with the material that I would send her, printed out the galley, and then prepared camera-ready art for printing using pasting glue. Over



Anjeebahen with Gaurang and Asha Vaishnav 1977

the years typesetting machines evolved and it became a little easier to work. Anjeebahen was a quick learner and whatever machines she was given; she would learn how to use them quickly.

Since we worked very closely producing Hindu Vishwa every month, we became very close- she became my younger sister. And as it happens in any family, we rejoiced together and fought with equal vigor. She used to have a metal ruler for her graphics work. Whenever I became too adamant, she would pick up the ruler, point it at me, and say (in Gujarati) Maar Khavo Chhe? (Do you want a thrashing?) This became a running joke between us, so much so, that when Asha (my wife) and I were visiting her at her Karnavati residence in 2019 and I was joking around and teasing, she said to Asha, "Ashaben, where is my ruler?" Anjeebahen held this unpaid job for many years until VHPA was able to outsource the typesetting work.

1984 - FIRST INTERNATIONAL HINDU CONFERENCE

When Anjeebahen came to VHPA, she was like a raw lump of coal. With Maheshbhai's diligent effort and Anjeebahen's ability to absorb everything, she turned into a polished diamond in a few years.

In 1984, VHPA organized the first International Hindu Conference at Madison Garden, New York which was attended by 4500 delegates from several countries. Anjeebahen corresponded with dozens of religious, spiritual, social, and political leaders sending them invitations, getting their messages, and following up

with all of them. She took care of every dignitary making sure that they felt at home and were not inconvenienced. For the 18-months long preparation of the conference, the core team of VHPA (about twenty people) would routinely travel to New York every weekend for planning meetings and meeting with the Hindu community and Hindu organizations in the greater New York area. My colleagues Ramesh Patel, Jyotish Parekh, Hasit Parikh, Kokila Parikh, and I would travel from Connecticut and Anjeebahen, Maheshbhai, Madhusudan Jhaveri, Ram Prakash Agarwal, Nand Kishore Sharma, Brij Bhushan Garg, CBS Patel, etc. would travel from Boston and further north. Several others traveled from New Jersey and Delaware. I remember one particular meeting at Subhashbhai Mehta's (Maheshbhai's younger brother) apartment in Brooklyn. While the meeting was going on, Anjeebahen was called inside the home as she had a call from Bharat. She received the news that her matushree had passed away. We were all taken aback. But after a few minutes, Anjeebahen returned to the meeting composed and showing no emotions. The meeting continued. It was an example of fortitude and commitment to the cause.

YOUTH CAMPS

In 1978 VHPA started its first summer camp for children in Rhode Island. This camp moved to Tolland, MA in 1981 and has been in operation continuously since then. Anjeebahen was a fixture at these camps. Her extraordinary organizational ability coupled with her infectious smile contributed to the growth of these camps and happy smiles on the faces of the children as well as adult volunteers. She would work in the kitchen and also receive swamijis or important guests. She taught art and craft to children, and she would also sing camp songs.

GUIDING CONFERENCES IN DIFFERENT COUNTRIES

Anjeebahen served briefly as the General Secretary of VHPA but gave up because there was a big demand for her services in other parts of the world. She remained VHPA's Director of International Liaison till the end.

After the 1984 conference, Anjeebahen was well

recognized for her managerial abilities. She was invited to help and train volunteers for conferences in UK, Frankfurt, Copenhagen, and Durban. I witnessed her amazing style of communicating with saints and swamis, the politicians, and the local people at the Durban Hindu Conference in 1995. Many of us were hosted by Swami Sahjananda Ji at Divine Life Society Ashram. Saints from Bharat, political leaders like Murli Manohar Joshi, Uma Bharati Ji, RSS leaders like Ma. Sudershan Ji, Dattopant Thengadi Ji, VHP's Ashok Singhal Ji and Acharya Giriraj Kishore Ji and many other luminaries were staying under one roof. Anjleebahen was the link between them and the local team of volunteers. By her pleasant nature, she became everyone's sister and daughter to many elders. She would request, cajole and even order them to get things moving. One can imagine the magnitude of this conference where the opening session was at a stadium with 30,000 Hindus in attendance and the Chief Guest was President Nelson Mandela. Anjleebahen assisted Dr. Yashvantrao Pathak from RSS who was the mastermind and worked for months leading the conference planning team.

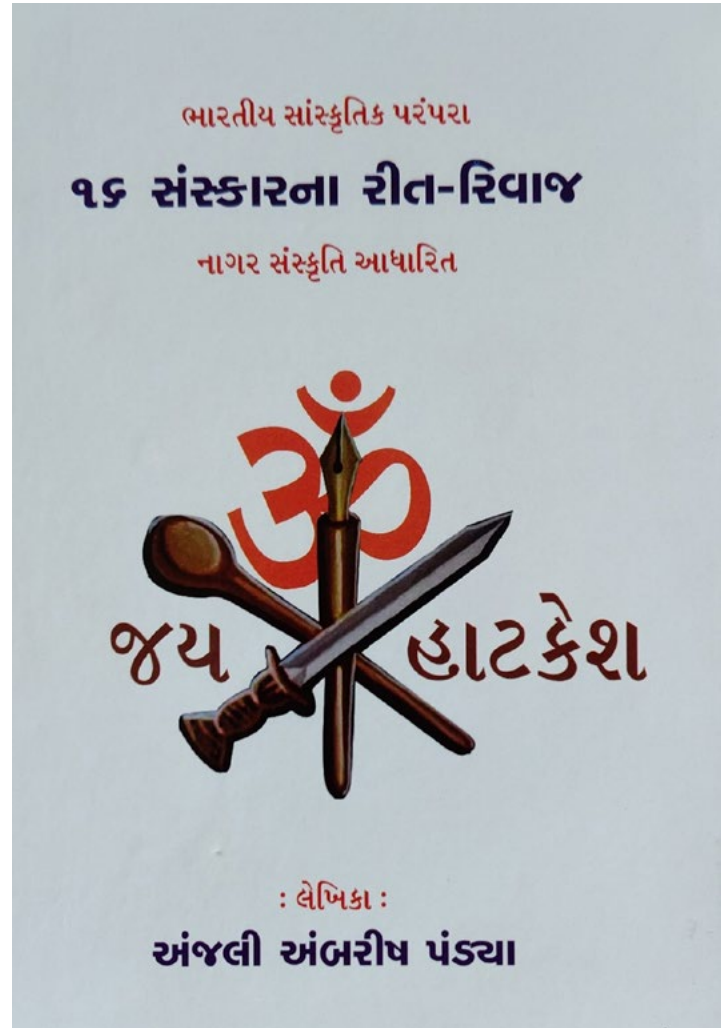
LATENT TALENT

Anjleebahen traveled extensively in the USA as well as around the globe promoting the work of VHPA and the Hindu cause. She was the right hand of Maheshbhai. Maheshbhai published "Hindu Philosophy in Action-In Search of Universal Well-being" in 2003. The book traces the journey of the Vishwa Hindu Parishad of America and its Global Vision. This book wouldn't have been possible without Anjleebahen's extensive notes of Maheshbhai's talks and lectures over the years. She put this skill to good use when after moving back to Bharat in the early 2000s, she wrote a book in Gujarati detailing sixteen Samskaars and their application as observed by the Nagar community (Narsinh Mehta's community) in Gujarat and elsewhere. The title of the book is भारतीय सांस्कृतिक परंपरा- 16 संस्कारना रीत-रिवाज- नागर संस्कृति आचारित (Unique Indian Cultural Customs: Tradition of 16 Samskara based on Practices of Nagars). It is a well-researched book and none of us knew about this adventure of Anjleebahen and her writing skills at this level until it was published. She desired it to be translated into English. The work remains to be done.

MANAGING IMPACTFUL EVENTS

Two major events with which Anjleebahen was heavily involved before moving to Bharat were the Global Vision 2000 conference in August 1993 in Washington, DC with eight thousand delegates and the Millennium World Peace Summit of Religious and Spiritual Leaders in August 2000 by the United Nations in New York. 108 Saints and swamis from Bharat along with their assistants had come to participate in this summit and VHPA was given the responsibility for the complete management of this delegation before, during, and after the Summit. It was a Himalayan task, but Anjleebahen carried it out with aplomb with the help of volunteers from NJ, NY, and CT states.

Late Dr. Romesh Diwan from Albany, NY in his report on the Global Vision 2000 conference wrote: "The conference ended just before dinner with an



outpouring of love and affection for two workers, the visible Mahesh Mehta and the force working relentlessly behind the stage, Anjlee Pandya.” G. Narayana, Director of Excel Industries, Mumbai, a speaker at the conference averred “Dear Anjleebahen! You were the caretaker of each of the contributors and the whole Global Vision (2000.) Your Seva-oriented approach and dedication were exemplary.”

FEARLESSNESS

Anjleebahen was so fearless that she accompanied Murli Manohar Joshi and Narendrabhai Modi to unfurl Bharatiya tricolor in Srinagar’s Lal Chowk on Independence Day in 1992 when terrorists ruled the roost and there was every possibility of being showered with machine gun fire. Also, in 1990 she accompanied VHP leaders for Karseva at Shri Ram Janmabhoomi in Ayodhya where the state government ordered firing killing scores of innocent people.

SISTERLY LOVE

Anjleebahen developed contacts at all levels in many countries, especially in Bharat because of her deep involvement with programs and projects conceived and organized by VHPA and VHPs around the world. She used to send a “Rakhi” with a greeting card and also a Deepavali card to a list of about five hundred contacts in several countries. I was privileged to receive those cards up until two years back. I have saved those cards as they exude undiminished love of a sister. Her peculiarity was that no matter wherever she was, she would always send those greetings to arrive on time.

WORKING IN BHARAT, WORK COMES FIRST

Once in Bharat, she engaged herself with Global Indians for Bharat Vikas (GIBV) to educate the citizenry of their right and duties. She was involved in guiding volunteers in the national elections in 2014 and 2019 to defeat anti-Hindu forces.

Her failing health forced her to curtail her travels and activities in the last few years, but her spirit was indomitable. When I was in Bharat for the 2019 election

campaign, she used to attend twice-weekly meetings of the volunteers. She was in pretty bad shape but kept postponing the start of her chemotherapy treatment as she wanted to see the campaign through the elections. I requested her several times not to delay the treatment and assured her that we would be fine in her absence, but she was resolute about her decision. She went to the hospital only after the campaigning was over.

Anjleebahen was not fond of microphones (a common disease of many people in social life). But she was a good singer and loved to sing inspiring songs at all our meets. She was also a very good artist- drawing was one of her strengths. In a lighter mood, she would also do mimicry of high and mighty as well as colleagues.

ACCESS EVERYWHERE BUT AVOIDING MISUSE

Anjleebahen won the hearts of many. She was able to enter Vajpayeeji’s home without any hindrance when he was the Prime Minister of Bharat. She was as much at ease with Ma. Ashok Singhal Ji as with Sar Sanghchalak late Sudershan Ji. She was especially close to Shri Narendrabhai Modi, the current Prime Minister of Bharat. One reason was that in earlier days, as a Pracharak, Narendrabhai was looking after an RSS residential gurukul type school complex called Sanskardham on the outskirts of Karnavati. Anjleebahen spent some time volunteering there too. Even with these high-level contacts, Anjleebahen never misused them for the personal benefit of her relatives.

THE LAST MEETING

I last met Anjleebahen in January 2020 at her home. Her home was always impeccably decorated and in good taste. She was very sophisticated, though I have always seen her in a white saree only. No Punjabis, no western dress, but in a well-ironed saree. She was weakened by her fight against cancer, but her radiance was intact. I had also seen her at the hospital when she was in very bad shape. Compared to that she looked better. As was her wont, she wanted me to eat something. I refused but she got up anyway and brought some sweets telling me that it was “prasad.” When I left there, I had no idea that it was our last meeting because I was supposed to return

to Bharat in November of that year. Alas, fate had other plans. COVID-19 changed everything. Anjleebahen was in and out of the hospital and sometime later in the year, she went to hospital to never return home. She passed away on May 19th, 2021. My only regret is that no one could be near her in her final days due to COVID-19. But for the pandemic, I could have gone to Karnavati and be there during her sickness.

I feel saddened that I am working on putting together this souvenir issue in memory of Anjleebahen with

whom I worked to put together so many souvenir issues over a period of time.

Anjleebahen has left a void, but she has left many sweet memories and a blueprint for all of us in VHPA showing how to turn adversity into opportunity, how to imbibe Seva-bhav and how to give our best for the Hindu cause. She had said, "I will come back to serve;" Yes Anjleebahen, as King Rantidev said, "Neither do I want a kingdom, nor the heavens; I only desire to be born to serve the oppressed and take away their pain."

(Gaurang Vaishnav is a volunteer assigned responsibility as the Director of Office Administration. His former assignments were as the General Secretary and Executive Vice President of VHPA. He also serves as the Executive Vice President of Global Indians for Bharat Vikas, GIBV <vicharak@gmail.com>)

Anjleebahen - An Inspiration for Generations to Come

Dhiraj Shah

Priya Haril, Aadarneeya Maheshbhai and Raginiben
Namaste!

It was a deep shock to learn the passing away of Anjleeben yesterday. Only few days back I had remembered her and was intending to call her on WhatsApp, not realizing that she had been in the hospital for last few months. Fond memories flash through the mind over so many years of our relations, first started in 1976 when you visited UK for the First International conference of FISU and subsequent our visit to USA when we stayed at your place (Haril was 3-4 years old). Since then, we met on numerous occasions of various Sangh Parivar events. She visited our home in

Birmingham and stayed overnight. Since so many years, she sent "Rakhi" on Raksha Bandhan without fail with very touching and inspiring message. Sarla and I had the fortune to meet her last year in February in Ahmedabad at her apartment and shared so many fond memories. In spite of her serious illness, she was full of positive thoughts and sense of humor. Mentally she had prepared herself for final departure – a feeling I observed in her chat.

Anjleeben was a dedicated and committed Karyakarta who gave her whole heart and soul for Hindu Sanghathan mission of VHP. In spite of personal tragedy and challenges in life, she never wavered from her life mission. Her contribution to Hindu cause worldwide through VHP will always be remembered and honored for many years. She will be an inspiration for generations to come, particularly those engaged in Hindutva movement. Sarla and I shall miss her annual Rakhi with touching message which kept us in contact in spite of big distances. She will be in our heart and fond memories and also a source of inspiration.

We sincerely pray for eternal peace and Sadgati to the punya Aatma and for strength to you all to bear this great loss.

Aum Shantih ! Shantih! Shantih!

Pranaam Kind regards

Dhiraj D Shah

07753 982 592

(Dhiraj Shah is the Sanghchalak and Trustee of HSS UK and also Director/Trustee of Sewa International UK.)

Memories of My Only Bhabhi



**Atul: Raginibahen Mehta, Meenal Pandya, Anjleebahen.
Haril and Subhashbhai Mehta 1977**

Atul Pandya, Wellesley, MA

My memories of Anjlee Bhabhi go back to our very young days when she was engaged with my only dear brother. I was part of their daily life of new love birds and shared going to movies and restaurants with them as well as visiting her at her house and singing favorite songs together since their family was a musical family.

After marriage and our migration to the US, I once again became an integral part of our larger family living together. This joy was short-lived though as my brother passed away unexpectedly, short of 2 years of his stay in the US. These tragic circumstances threw Bhabhi's life in a turmoil with a two year old son, Haril, to care for and without a steady income. I was still a student pursuing my master's degree and the support Maheshbhai and Raginiben provided to her became the very foundation of her emotional and financial needs. This lifestyle encouraged her to volunteer her time and efforts for VHP work eventually blossoming into a full-

fledged satisfying activity.

We are so glad for her that she was able to travel the world and come in contact with some very famous and important people, many of whom relied on her services and willingness to support the Hindu cause.

It was a loss to our family when she decided to make India her home, but we all supported her efforts to lead her own life and pursue her goals and ambitions.

Losing her at a premature age is a huge loss for our entire family especially for her son, Haril and his children. She enjoyed her daily video calls with her grandchildren to the day she lived.

We miss her dearly and pray for her peaceful journey into her new life which she always wished was with my brother again, to him she remained a loyal wife till the end of her life and lived the life of a true Hindu woman.

(Atul Pandya, brother in law of Anjleebahen (Devar) is the former member of the Governing Council of VHPA and a Camp Coordinator.)

TRIBUTE TO ANJLEE BHABHI



Meenal Pandya, Wellesley, MA

When Shri Gaurangbhai asked me to write about Anjlee Bhabhi, I was at a loss. What do I write about someone I have known for almost all my life? Someone with whom I have shared many different moods, situations, and places? Someone who has become such an integral part of my life that every small and large event brings back a memory? How can a few hundred words sum up everything that Anjlee bhabhi and I have shared laughter and tears, fears and aspirations, conversations from intimate to formal, and mundane to magnificent? How can the words do justice to the feelings of a loss of someone this close for so many years that you have forgotten what it was like before you two met? I met Anjlee Bhabhi the day arrived at the JFK airport in 1976. She, along with Maheshbhai, and Ragiben were there to welcome me to America. Ever since, she and I worked side by side, be it a family event, or a Vishwa Hindu Parishad program. She and I have been together attending Vishwa Hindu Parishad meetings, planning and participating in conferences, sharing cabins in youth camps at Tolland, Massachusetts, and singing national and devotional songs together.

Although most people know Anjlee Bhabhi as a social worker who devoted her life to Hindu cause, for me and my family, she was a close family member. She was a bhabhi that I turned to anytime I was planning any event, be it a birthday party for my daughter, a family Diwali get-together, a Raksha Bandhan, or just a summer cookout. To my daughters, she was a beloved “kaki.” In the 1970s when there were very few Indians in America, and even fewer who had family here, I was blessed with family members like Maheshbhai, Raginiben and Anjlee Bhabhi. For many decades we shared everything, recipes, programs, friends and family. Even after she moved to India for the last fifteen or so years, we stayed connected through technology and shared many aspects of our lives. I have always enjoyed her sense of humor, her total dedication to any project that she took on, her helping nature and most importantly, her delicious cooking. Her contribution to the Hindu world is very well documented in this magazine and other places but I wanted to share the memory of her as a family member. Her untimely departure has created a void in our lives that will be hard to fill. I pray to Ishwar that her soul finds eternal peace.

(Meenal Pandya has been part of many pioneering activities of VHPA and a volunteer for Coordinating education at VHPA Youth Camps.)

Anjeebahen, Radiance and Inner Fragrance

Dr. Anil Raval, Karnavati (Amdavad)

Anjeebahen Pandya, who had devoted her life for the protection and nurturing of Hindu Sanskruti and Dharma is no longer among us. She left her mortal body yesterday evening after valiantly fighting cancer.

She was a sincere volunteer of Vishwa Hindu Parishad of America (VHPA), and she poured her all energies while managing international level programs and conventions of Parishad.

Anjeebahen used her planning, organizing and execution expertise to propagate the importance, prominence and humanitarianism of cultural nationalism and Hindu Dharma.

We will remember her as the one who was clad in white, endowed with intellectual personality and a bright and ever smiling face, and melodious bhajans and poetry pouring out from her mouth.

Whenever (one had) an occasion to visit her home one experienced spiritual peace, radiance and inner fragrance. Action without attachment (Nishkama Karma), Seva and devotion (Bhakti) exude that special glow in the person and her surroundings.

Ishwar will surely grant her Aatma journey towards liberation (Mokshagati).

With tears in my eyes, I offer this tribute to Sw. Anjeebahen.

(Dr. Anil Raval is a writer engaged in spreading positive and inspirational thoughts; he is a member of Global Indians for Bharat Vikas. This tribute is translated from Gujarati by Gaurang Vaishnav.)

ANJALI...!

Jay Vasavada, Rajkot, Gujarat

“**C**ancer has happened to the body, not to the mind!”

Not only saying so, but living it by example, Anjalibahen Pandya was an intensionalist. She was an organizer of Vishwa Hindu Parishad in America. She was a diehard foundational

voluntary of Hindutva, not for gaining something but for giving with a sense of total surrender, no self-publicity, no selfish desire. She was well-studied, could be called a Pundit. She lived in the USA and worked for the celebration of the centenary of Swami Vivekananda's address to the Parliament of World's Religions in 1893

(Translated from Gujarati by Gaurang Vaishnav)

(VHPA's Global Vision 2000 Conference) there in 1993. She came back to Bharat alone. She was delighted to see the beginning of realization of her dream of Ram Mandir in Ayodhya. She breathed her last on this very land due to cancer.

On many issues, our thoughts were poles apart, but there was no mutual acrimony. We agreed to disagree with respect. It wasn't always that we didn't agree. We had a lot of lighter moments of playfulness. She would regularly read my writings and watch my videos. Since she herself had traveled the world, she was not at all allergic to modern thoughts. While referring to one article of Bhagyeshbhai Jha, taking pride in being a Nagar (Narsinh Mehta's community), she laughingly said, "you haven't seen me many years back. Could a Nagar woman, who keeps her lips red with betel leaf, ever be not beautiful or narrow-minded? Our original culture is itself modern."

Once she asked for my photograph for use in a book she was editing. I sent a black and white photo, but she asked for a colored photo. She liked it and then called. She said, "your writings are colorful, your talks are colorful, and your life is colorful, then how could we do with your black and white photo? Only photo in a red t-shirt would do justice."

When it came to her thinking, her passion appeared fire-spitting. But she was not the one to turn political differences with the other side into a cyber war. She was sober and coolheaded. She was sharp enough to see through the other person. That was the secret of her ability to carry out work that required organization. Once she told me, "sitting at home, you are able to see through anyone's personality. When I read your analysis of a person whom I know, I feel that you have understood that person even without much interaction." I would jokingly say, It is Tapobal (power attained by penances.) She would smile and say, "(because you are) the descendant of Narsinh Mehta."

She had one of the rarest cancers. Her persona and

her work were so impressive that top leaders including the Prime Minister knew her for many years. But she was so independent that she would travel alone by rickshaw to get her chemotherapy. She lived alone and would take care of household work too! There was no expectation of special consideration, there was no ego. She didn't depend on anyone. She was going through clinical trial and her cancer was stubborn and debilitating. However, her disposition was full of fighting spirit. I feel resonance with such people who be spite of having connections (at the top level), staying alone live their whole life with a commitment to honesty, devoid of unethical personal gain, selfishness or palace intrigues. I have lost my mother to cancer, so I know the pain and suffering in isolation, so I was constantly worried about her after the Corona. She was very self-reliant and wouldn't talk about her needs.

It can be said that she took the fight against cancer head-on and with indomitable confidence. You can feel same self-confidence in the first as well as last photo of hers. I had many chats with her that showed her positive outlook as a cancer warrior. Yesterday, she breathed her last. Many a times in her messages would end with 'Anjali' in the American style. Therefore, I have titled this tribute as Anjali.

Her fight is inspiring. Our last communication was around last Diwali when we planned about going out for a dinner together once things became normal. She had wanted to have my book Jayatva (in Gujarati) then. But her health took a turn for the worse. Our communication got snapped. Our desires remained unfulfilled.

One steadfast, strong, proud, well respected woman who always remained behind the curtain, silently exited this world into the world of her favorite Rishis and their Rucha (hymns) from behind that curtain. Her Jeeva merged in Shiva.

(Jay Vasavada is an eminent writer, columnist, orator and media personality. He is very popular with the younger generation because of his modernistic approach to the issues of that generation.)

Anjeeben - Demonstrating Leadership Behavior by Example

Dr. Ajay Shah, Newtown, PA



Anjeebaben at the Governing Council Meeting, Canton, 2003 second row, first left

Recall seeing Anjeeben for the first time in 1984 at the 10th National conference of the VHPA and the First Youth Conference held in New York city. This conference is a milestone in the history of VHPA. I do not recall talking to Anjeeben during the conference. However, I do remember her actively engaged in various activities.

VHPA was founded in 1970. Dr. Mahesh Mehta, a co-founder of VHPA was a visionary leader with a mission to bring together Hindu community in the USA so that the next generation of Hindus who were born and brought up in their parents' adopted land learned about their dharmic and cultural heritage. True

strength of Maheshbhai's leadership was his ability to inspire everyone around him to give their best to the Hindu community in America. When I joined VHPA in 1984, I saw Maheshbhai's vision being implemented in action. I was fortunate to have joined VHPA at a time when inspired by Hindu dharma and motivated by Maheshbhai, many of the VHPA stalwarts were in their prime contributing their unique skills and abilities to build VHPA.

Anjeeben was one of those VHPA stalwarts who got inspiration from Dr. Mehta. A year after the 10th Conference in New York, in 1985, I went to Detroit, MI to attend my first VHPA Governing Council Meeting,

and that is when I met Anjleeben. It did not take me long to get to know Anjleeben. She had the ability to instantly connect. She would say, “bhaila” an endearing term for a younger brother in Gujarati.

From the outset, I thought Anjleeben was unique among others I met at VHPA. There are leaders who bring an abstract vision to life. This ability to organize, mobilize resources, plan and execute successfully is by no means an easy feat. Anjleeben had the uncanny ability to achieve the vision of VHPA through action. In 1993, VHPA organized the Global Vision 2000 in Washington DC, an event to commemorate the 100th Anniversary of Swami Vivekanand’s speech to the Parliament of the World’s Religions. There has not been a larger Hindu event in the USA until today. Over 12,000 people participated in this event which was augmented with a Youth Conference with over 2200 youth participants. I saw Anjleeben camped in Washington DC, working all hours of the day, troubleshooting issues small and large and yet, keeping composure as only she could!

There was one occasion, whereas the General Secretary, Anjleeben was required to be on the stage. However, one of the key participants, a male renunciate, refused to share the stage with Anjleeben, because she was a woman. When I heard about this, I was furious, and I told Anjleeben that we should have disinvited this participant. Anjleeben of course, calmly explained to me how this participant was key to the program and that she will deal with them at another time. While I disagreed with her, Anjleeben did teach me a lesson. I learned that a leader’s response must be expressed at the appropriate time.

Anjleeben attended several Hindu Students Council (HSC) events. It always amazed me that Anjleeben did not come to HSC events to give us instructions (which we would have gladly accepted) or even give us a discourse on an existential issue. Anjleeben came to the events and camps to just be with the students and participate in the activities. She volunteered just like other participants; no task was too small for her. In the end, she taught a leadership lesson that no one

else could. She demonstrated leadership behavior by example.

An organizer, par excellence, a mobilizer, tireless, selfless, ego-less worker for the greater cause, Anjleeben was all that and more. Anjleeben had one ability that is the rarest among the leaders. Anjleeben’s greatest strength came from her ability to connect with people, or as we call it “atmiyata” – a deeper personal connection for which there is no English translation.

Expression of atmiyata made Anjleeben unique. As many have commented since her passing, whether it was Presidents, Prime Ministers or a student who just joined HSC, Anjleeben treated all of them equally with the same “atmiyata.” She made everyone feel special. Once, I noticed that Anjleeben had a compiled a handwritten file of Sangh geets (songs). I asked her if I could have a copy. A few months later, in the next VHPA meeting, she had brought a copy of the songs. Today, this Sangh geet file is my cherished memory of her. I do not recall a year without a Diwali card from her, with a special personal note, even though she had moved to Bharat several years ago.

Many detractors of the Hindutva movement have said that Hindutva groups are antithetical to the empowerment of women. These groups, of course either never knew Anjleeben or deliberately ignored a towering figure that she was for the Hindu movement in the USA. Anjleeben was a “Pracharak” in the true sense of the words, having dedicated her entire life to the Hindu cause and VHPA. Anjleeben was the epitome of selfless service and a true leader. Anjleeben was a strong woman leader who made a positive impact of the kids attending camps and the Presidents and the Prime Ministers attending conferences equally. She will continue to be a role model for generations of women. VHPA will create a fitting legacy to commemorate and celebrate her leadership

As a VHPA Karyakarta, I hope that I never forget the leadership lessons I have learned by observing her and help continue building upon her legacy of Hindu work in the USA.

(Dr. Ajay Shah is the Karyakarta of VHPA, and currently has the responsibility of President of VHPA. He is a co-founder of Hindu Students Council (HSC) and HinduNet, and founder and convenor of VHPA initiatives, American Hindus Against Defamation (AHAD) and HinduPACT.)

Anjlee Pandya Leaves Her Footprints in Our Hearts

Dr. Abhaya & Jaya Asthana, Framingham, MA

Many people walk in and out of our lives, but only a few leave footprints in your heart. Anjlee Bahen was one of them.

Abraham Lincoln said, *In the end, it's not the years in your life that count. It's the life in your years.*

All the touching, heartfelt thoughts and stories shared by people who lived and worked with Anjlee Bahen all these years, are the most poignant tribute to the **life** that she lived.

Anjlee Bahen lived and breathed Vishwa Hindu Parishad of America like none other. The two were inseparable.

The culture of VHP of America was shaped by Anjlee Bahen since its formative years. VHPA will not be VHPA today, without all that she did over the last 50 years.

In many ways, she was a **teacher**.

We learned so many things from her, including, Ekatmata Mantra, Parishad Prayer, Bhavgeets,

how to conduct Satsangs, meetings, camps, conferences big and small.

But most of all, she taught us how to communicate and behave with each other to build a **family and a community**.

A good life is not an amount; it's an attitude, an act, an idea, a discovery, a search.

Anjlee Bahen was the epitome of a selfless volunteer, totally committed to the Hindu cause that she took upon herself at a very early age.

Throughout her life, she inspired people and organizations with her boldness, dedication, determination, creativity, kindness and compassion.

People may forget what you said, people may forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel. Anjlee Bahen was a sister to all. She would make everyone feel special.

I end with the words of Bhagwan Buddha – On life's journey, **shraddha** is nourishment, **virtuous deeds** are a shelter, **wisdom** is the light by day, and **right mindfulness** is the protection by night.

If a person **lives a pure life**, nothing can destroy that person.

May *Ishwara grant sadgati to her atma* on its onward journey.

Om Shanti, Shanti, Shantih.
Hari Om!

(Dr. Abhaya Asthana is the immediate past President of VHPA.)



Anjleebahen at the Governing Council Meeting, North Brunswick, NJ, 2002



At the Governing Council Meeting in NJ, 2002- Tired after a long day

Anjleebahen, Amalgamation of Gyan and Bhakti

Renu Rajvanshi Gupta

Srimati Anjilee Bahen Pandya ji, an exemplification of Nari -Shakti Durga was true Tapasvi, and Sadhak. While being a good mother, sister, friend, volunteer, great leader; and above all she had a real divine personality. She battled cancer with courage and valor. Her departure from this world is a huge loss for the entire VHPA family, Hindu society of the USA and Bharat. As her friends and associates, all of us were fortunate to know her as a very loving and caring person and had an opportunity to experience her divinity. She followed simple living with a strict routine and disciplined lifestyle but always with a sweet smile and sense of humor.

Anjilee Bahen grew up in Ahmadabad in a middle-class family. She went to Gujarat University and graduated with a degree in Arts. Then she got married at 21 to Shri Ambrish Bhai Pandya, an architect by profession. They moved to USA and had son Haril. Unfortunately, Ambrish Bhai suffered a heart attack and passed away in 1974. At that time Anjilee Bahen was only 24 years old with a 2-year-old son Haril. One could not imagine her pain and suffering from the sudden loss of her husband and being a young widow with no professional background or work experience in a foreign land.

Looking at her beginning of her life's journey of pain and suffering from loss of the loved one, it seemed like GOD had a bigger plan for her, a life of a greater purpose. God's mission was to create a future leader out of Anjilee Bahen Pandya's grief. Anjilee Bahen's new public life journey began with a humble start of volunteering for World Hindu Council of America (VHPA). Her brother-in-law, Dr. Mahesh Bhai Mehta founded the World Hindu Council of America (VHPA) in 1970. His wife Ragini Mehta was Anjilee Bahen's sister-in-law (Nanada). With

full commitment and enthusiasm, Anjilee Bahen served as the graphic designer, layout artist and typesetter for VHPA's Hindu Vishwa magazine. and then as the General Secretary of VHPA. Soon her leadership capabilities and dedication to the noble cause rendered her a national leader. Mahesh Bhai, a pioneer has been considered the face of VHPA, while Anjilee Bahen was the backbone of VHPA. Her unique leadership style has established guidelines for all of us. She was very thorough in work, had an efficient way of conducting meetings and showed expertise in organizing camps and large conferences. She was also a great singer, and every meeting and conference would start with her Bhavgeet.

Among many great contributions of Anjilee Bahen, one was mobilizing the public and keeping faith in democracy during the emergency in 1975. She played a huge role during the Hindu Conferences in 1984 and 1993 and the period preceding the Centennial Celebration of Swami Vivekananda Ji's address to the Parliament of the World's Religions in Chicago in 1893. In the year 2000, United Nations hosted the Millennium World Peace Summit of Religious and Spiritual Leaders. Anjilee Bahen managed all the needs of over 108 Hindu saints and their entourage from Bharat and worked hard to keep everyone satisfied and happy.

In our personal experience, we always saw Anjilee Bahen in simple white Saree wearing Gujrati style, no makeup, no jewelry, remarkably simple but graceful. In her simple style she had met many leaders of the world from PM Vajpayee ji, Modi ji to the king of Thailand. Her sadhana practice was amazing, most of the time she would fast strictly on milk and fruits and skipped dinner many times. Anjilee Bahen had a tremendous talent to connect with people, was good at uniting volunteers, and cheered every one with humor and a smile. She was so well-liked that no one could say NO to her.

On personal note, Anjalee Bahen displayed a amalgamation of Gyan and Bhakti (for Hindu cause) with mindset of Vairagya (Non-Attachment). Fifteen years ago, she decided to move back to Bharat, even when her only son and his family were living in Boston.

Our deepest regards and heartfelt tribute to Anjilee Bahen Pandya ji! Her memories, dedication and ethics would keep inspiring all of us for long time.

(Renu Gupta is VHPA's Vice President of Seva and leads a team to expand Support A Child program.)

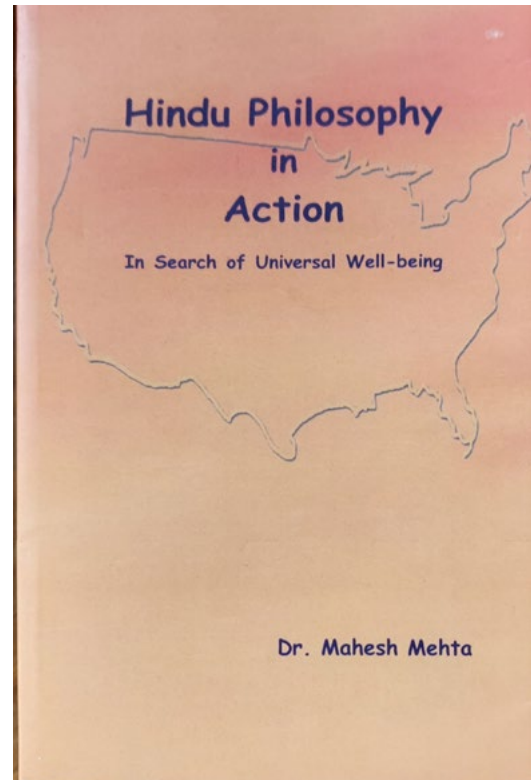
Anjeebahen, a Positive Personality

Girish Gandhi, Boynton Beach, FL

Anjeebahen lived an amazing life full of vigor, dedication and determination to do anything to help the Hindu cause around the globe. One of her greatest attributes was to get along with everyone and be a part of the team; it didn't matter what the task was.

We came in touch with her back in 1982-83 at the VHPA Summer Youth camp in Tolland, MA when we attended the camp with our children Neerav and Sonal at the age of 9 and 7, respectively. I saw this lady and was amazed to see how easy it was for her to talk to anyone regardless of one's age (child/adult/gender) or whether she knew or did not know the person. On the final day of the week, she asked me to give a speech at the end of the ceremony about my impression of the camp and what was my message to other parents whose children attended the camp. This is where I learned that she had that great smile and ability to ask to do anything without any fear and no one was able to say no to her. This personality trait I noticed in her since 1982 till 2021 that she would not take no for an answer to her request. It did not matter to her who you were, Girish Gandhi, Ma. Ashok Ji, Mr. Mittal, Dr. B.K Modi, the Honorable PM Atal ji or then CM (at that time) Shri Narendrabhai Modi Ji. She had a knack of getting things done for the betterment of Hindus. She could do this because she possessed a courageous and confident personality.

In 1992-93, I came back from a work-related assignment in Canada back to Boston area and at that time the preparations were on to celebrate the life of Swami Vivekananda and the 100th anniversary of his speech at the Parliament of the World's Religions at Chicago in September 1893. She prepared the list of places Swami Vivekananda had lived in Northeast in MA, NH, and Maine. She called me and asked me to



jointly plan the big celebration in all those three places where Swami ji spent time in 1893.

She requested and asked me to join her in Washington, DC by taking time off from my work to help to replace and recall all the tickets that were mailed under the name of World Vision 2000 to Global Vision 2000 program because of a legal issue. I spent two weeks finishing the project and she was ready to help in any way she could. She was a true team player.

Anjeebahen was very good at paying attention to details and taking notes. She created a detailed logbook of all the meetings, programs and projects about Hindus and VHPA which eventually became "Hindu Philosophy in Action" book Written by Dr. Mahesh Mehta in 2004. She was not a public speaker but the growth of VHPA cannot be discussed without Anjeebahen's hard work and influence on it. She was the "Shakti" in true sense.

Anjeebahen's dedication and passion for Hindu

cause inspired my wife, Bakula Gandhi to take the responsibility to become Central New Jersey chapter President in 1999.

My family members here in USA and Amdavad knew her very well. Whenever I talked to them, they invariably asked about Anjleebahen. She may have met them once but has left a lasting impression on people about her positive personality.

I spent about a month in Amdavad when we used to see Maheshbhai every day. She would ask me to have lunch with her before we visited Maheshbhai in Bopal (a suburb of Amdavad) and she would prepare Rotalo and Shak(Vegetables). She was a very compassionate person willing to help anyone and would give gift to all the people she knew during Deepawali, and she would not forget one single person. She had amazing ability to care for others.

My respect to Shakti and I am thankful to Ishwar that my sister Anjleebahen came into our life, and we came to know her. Anjleebahen was not only a sister to me, but

she was also a sister to all of us. This was so true, every year I would receive a handwritten letter with Raksha on Raksha Bandhan's day and Deepawali greetings to the entire family. My family, friends and my VHPA friends will surely miss her presence physically, but her spirit and Atman will live with us forever.

We take solace from this verse from Shrimad Bhagavad Gita: chapter 2, shloka 23 (Verse 23):

नैनं छिन्दन्ति शस्त्राणि नैनं दहति पावकः ।
न चैनं क्लेदयन्त्यापो न शोषयति मारुतः ॥2.23 ॥

Nainam cchindanti shastraani nainam dahati paavakah;

Na chainam kledayantyaapo na shoshayati maarutah.

Anjleebahen's soul can never be cut into pieces by any weapon, nor can it be burned by fire, nor moistened by water, nor withered by the wind. She lives forever in our mind. Hari OM.

(Girish Gandhi is a member of the Advisory Board of VHPA and a former Vice President for Seva He remained in close touch with Anjleebahen throughout her sickness.)

“साधु” जीवन शायद यही

**Manojbala (Manju) Tiwari,
Lawrenceville, GA**

आँसू किस लिए बहे ? क्या जाने हुए सत्य के साक्षात्कार से, या
स्नेह के रिश्ते की याद से या
ईश्वर तत्व से बतियाते दुखी मन के प्रश्न से ?
जिसने सेवा के पथ को चुना.....उसके अंतिम क्षण एकाकी,
पीड़ादायक क्यों? जिन साथियों के संग चहकता था मन, उनसे मिलने
का मौका न क्यों? अंतिम संस्कार की रीति पर रक्त सम्बन्ध न क्यों ?
आँसू किस लिए बहे?

अपनी अंतिम यात्रा पर भी किसी अनजाने हाथों को रीति निभाने
को कह गयी अपरिचित जन के बीच अपनापन बनाती
स्नेहांजलि छवि !
“साधु” जीवन शायद यही
मेरे आँसुओं और प्रश्नों के उत्तर भी शायद यही...
ॐ शांति!

(Manju Tiwari is a member of the Governing Council of VHP of America)

Anjleeben Championed the cause of Networking Hindus Worldwide



Anjleebahen taking notes as Swamiji speaks, 2000

Shyam Tiwari

It was 1991-92 timeframe when Manju and I met Anjleeben the first time. She came to Atlanta for the promotion of Global Vision 2000 program and we connected instantly, which was soon followed up with numerous meetings in Atlanta and US, and Bharat over a period lasting almost three decades if it wasn't for the fatal illness that took her away from all of us.

Her innate ability to connect and bond with people of all ages, children and adults alike, stood her apart from everyone else. She maintained cordial relationships over phone, through Diwali cards and sending Rakhi every

year without fail till she could no longer send it due to deteriorating health.

The last message I received on WhatsApp was in 2020. She epitomized pretty much how a karyakarta carries on the duty of sampark (networking) with other organizations and people in higher places of power with ease.

I offer my prayers to Ishwar and homage to her Atman for her onward journey and also wish to the family and karyakartas worldwide to give enough strength and courage to overcome this immense loss and carry on the work she left behind with the same sincerity and passion.

(Shyam Tiwari is a member of the Governing Council of VHPA and a Vice President Publications.)

Anjleeben, A Brave Woman

**Paresha and Dr. Hemendra Acharya,
Mission Viejo, CA**

We are all saddened by the recent passing away of Anjleeben Pandya after battling cancer. She was a major force behind many of the activities of Vishwa Hindu Parishad of America (VHPA) as well as Vishwa Hindu Parishad International. Along with Mahesh Mehta, the founder of VHPA, Anjleeben was the inspiration and motivator for the group's activities and worked tirelessly to make sure that all the details have been worked out. She devoted her life to VHPA and all her efforts were for supporting and expanding the cause of VHPA, and the education of Second-Generation Indian Americans in Hindu culture. Whenever there were conferences or other activities that required a lot of communication and coordination, one could count on Anjleeben doing the work with a smiling face. She worked very hard on all projects with complete dedica-

tion. She traveled all over the world, bringing the message of Hindu Unity to Hindu Communities living in Africa, the Caribbean, U.K, and East Asia. It would be hard to imagine what VHPA would be like without her dedication and hard work.

Anjleeben was a part of our family as we worked together in VHPA in Boston. She was always smiling and generous with her time. She was like a younger sister to us, sharing in both good times and bad. As Maheshbhai was heavily involved with VHPA as well as with prominent people in India, their home was a - place for visitors, including numerous Swamijis, and political leaders. She was graceful in making sure that all their dietary requirements were met and that they were comfortable. She was devoted to Maheshbhai and Sister-In-law Raginiben. She was a very loving person who was always working and never complained about any slights or the work of anyone else. She had a great sense of humor, and her outgoing nature is reflected in her son Haril.

Anjleeben was a brave woman, who despite death threats from Kashmiri separatists, risked her life in going to Kashmir with Dr. Murli Manohar Joshi and a then unknown Narendra Modi to hoist Indian Flag in Lal Chowk in Srinagar on January 26, 1992. She was also a devout Hindu and followed its practices and rituals, and even undertook the adventurous trip to Mount Kailash and Man Sarovar, a trip that is a distant dream to most Hindus. She faced misfortune of losing her husband early, but instead of complaining, she dedicated her life to VHPA and for the Hindu Society.

Anjleeben Pandya will be sorely missed by many Hindus who are concerned about protecting and propagating Hindu values in the world.

(Dr. Hemendra Acharya is the former member of the Governing Council of VHPA and former editor of Hindu Vishwa.)

Anjeebahen Pandya, She Went One Step Forward

Vishnu Pandya, Karnavati (Amdavad)

Anjali sister, you too? When we last met in a program, we decided to meet at home at leisure. It is an irony that we could not find such a time. Your farewell gives us an everlasting shock during this time of Corona.

How many people know your work during the scary "Internal Emergency" imposed by Indira Gandhi during 1975-1977?

Staying abroad you tried to give true picture of crisis to

people in Bharat and elsewhere. You wrote articles, kept in contact with MISA (Maintenance of Internal Security Act) prisoners and the underground resistance in Bharat; you published Satyavani newspaper and worked with the late Makarand Desai. This was historical work. I have detailed it in my book Misavyasam which is a tale of my struggle in the prison at that time.

In his book Gujarat in Struggle (Sangharsh Ma Gujarat), depicting underground resistance to the Emergency, Narendrabhai Modi wrote this about you. "Anjeebahen, originally from Khadia (Amdavad) was a great contributor to the Satyavani newspaper as she is a good artist; she is very sentimental, so sitting away from Bharat she took one step forward. She gave up eating rice, which is a favorite staple of Gujarati women. She partook rice only after total victory."

May the most merciful God give ultimate peace to Anjeebahen's soul.

19 May 2021

(Shree Vishnu Pandya is a well-known author, journalist, historian and lecturer. He has authored a number of books, including Misavyasam, chronicling his experience in prison during the infamous emergency. He is the Chairman of Gujarati Sahitya Academy and was awarded Padma Shree in 2017.)

Do Not Call It a Death

Daksha Munshi, Paramus, NJ

- ▶▶ If the fragrance dissolved into fragrance, do not call it a death.
- ▶▶ If light merges with light, do not call it a death.
- ▶▶ If the path separates, do not call it a death.
- ▶▶ If the play of breathing stops, do not call it a death.

- ▶▶ If the sight is set on: understanding what couldn't be seen with naked eyes, to find and meet the unseeable existence, to unfold the mystery of the distant world, do not call it a death.
- ▶▶ If one leaves the joyous gathering, do not call it a death.

(Dakshababen is the younger and only sister of Anjeebahen.)

Anjleeben: Fearless, Forceful and Farsighted

Ramesh Shah, Houston, TX

I will share a few occasions where we got a chance to work with Anjleeben.

Anjleeben was fearless, forceful, farsighted, full of energy, and a great organizer.

1. Indian for Democracy: 1975

Very much vibrant and helping to organize peaceful agitations and march at Indian consulate in New York.

2. VHPA gathering in NY in 1984. Organized a Hindu summit with a specific agenda.

3. 1993: 100th anniversary of Pujya Swami Vivekananda's speech at the Parliament of the World's Religions in Chicago.

We were lucky to participate and work with Anjleeben for almost a year before the Washington DC program.

Her support and help in planning the exhibition were very encouraging with finding solutions.

4. Hindu conference in Los Angeles was a very productive and memorable experience.

5. During Indian Elections in 2014 and 2019 we worked together in Ahmedabad and other parts of the country to educate voters about their rights and duty to vote and encouraged people to go and vote. We used to meet daily in the evening where her presence and guidance were very encouraging. She will make sure we get some snacks and water.

6. Unfortunately, after March 2020 we could not see her due to Covid.

7. Her support, love, guidance and sometimes demanding actions for the Hindu cause will always be missed.

(Ramesh Shah is the Chairperson of Ekal Vidyalaya Foundation, USA and former member of the Governing Council of VHPA.)

Anjleeben - An Extraordinary Person

I have known Anjleeben for almost four decades due to my association with HUA, VHPA and other Sangh organizations. She was an extraordinary person, with the ability to inspire and organize a variety of functions and programs, be at a major international conference, a youth camp, a tour of a religious, or social leader or whatever.

She had an innate ability to get things done from others, even strangers, to meet high standards of quality programs. She instantly established warm and lasting

Brahm Rattan Aggarwal, Orlando

relationship with anyone she met- young or old, well known or stranger. She would put her point of view without any hesitation even in large meetings to further the real cause of the organization she served.

I am fortunate that I have known such a humble, dedicated, friendly person. VHPA volunteers for years to come will look up to her as a worthy role model to follow. I pray Bhagwan for Sadgati of her soul.

(Brahm Rattan Aggarwal is the former vice president of VHPA and former chairperson of Hindu University of America.)

She is Simply, Anjleeben

Abhinav Dwivedi, Orlando, FL

She is simply Anjleeben, to thousands of people who know her or who have heard of her. To me, since our first meeting in early 1983, she has been like a little sister in age, but much larger is her stature as a dedicated worker, her accomplishments, and as a warm and wonderful human being. Kalyani and I had an instant affection and bonding with her the day she stepped in our home in the spring of 1983. She had come to guide, in reality, to plan and prepare, the 1st South-Eastern Regional Conference, which was to be held in Orlando, FL. Within the first hour of her arrival, we deeply delved into our common roots of Khadia, Ahmedabad, our common Nagar community happenings and found many common acquaintances. She grew up not too far from where my wife grew up! So, that provided so many threads of common bonding. From that day on till her last weeks and months, almost four decades-long association continued. Even after months when we talked it was as if no time had passed. Because of her active involvement and the overall vision of Maa. Mahesh bhai Mehta and others,

the 1st SE Regional Conference was a grand success. That laid the foundation for many more regional conferences throughout the country.

During her stay in Ahmedabad during last few years, I had an occasion to review and suggest changes to the book she was writing, "Vidhi Vidhan No Dastavej", in Gujarati, documenting the unique traditions of dharmik rituals of Gujarati Nagar community. It is the first time such a documented resource is now available. She met and interviewed many scholars and knowledgeable people to collect authentic information.

It is a human folly that when we know someone closely, we do not see the extraordinary gift a person carries with him/her. The natural gift Anjleeben had to make instant friends with almost any one was remarkable. She used it generously to spread the positive and warm image of a simple, dedicated, hardworking Hindu lady and accomplished mighty things only.

May the Divine Mother keep her soul close to Her.

(Abhinav Dwivedi is former Governing Council member of VHPA and ex vice president of Hindu University of America.)

Anit Gupta, Southborough, MA

Extremely sad news. She was the foundation of VHPA in USA and was a true inspiration for all of us.
Praying for Sadgati of Anjleebahen.

Om Shanti.

(Anit Gupta is the Assistant Treasurer of VHPA.)

My ANJLEEMASI

See You Later, Alligator

Daivat Tanmay Mehta, Amdavad

Anjee Masi, is what I called her, even though she was more like a grandmother to me. I knew her better than anyone else; admired her and cared for her dearly.

Speaking about her in the past and knowing that I will never hear her calling me 'Hasmukh,' in her beloved voice again, hits me hard.

Over the years, she effortlessly imparted priceless lessons to my elder sister and me. To be honest, it wasn't really difficult for anyone to learn anything from her. A person as poised as Masi was, she doesn't really need to say a single word to set an exemplary example. Her presence itself was enlightening and her words were enough to create awe in the listener.

As a kid, I was always up to some mischief or the other, but one look from her and I wasn't able to move an inch. At that time, her correcting me and telling me to sit still and not fidget while eating might have felt like a scolding. But in hindsight, I can appreciate that she was slowly shaping my personality. It fills me with great sorrow to think that I will not be able to experience that quiet and gentle guidance ever again.

What I have learnt from simple conversations with Masi, I possibly could not have learnt by reading hundreds of books. For me, she readily become a child once again and would speak with me on any random topic whether it made sense to anyone else or not and yet we would thoroughly enjoy our conversations.

I have never met anyone else who has done so many great and admirable things and yet remained so humble. Every time I met her, I learnt something new. She



At Ambaji with Masi

taught me so much just by setting an example of her way of living. I will always remember her as the strong and confident person that she was and will strive to live by her ideals.

As she always used to say... See you later, Alligator. Love you Masi.

(Daivat Mehta is a 12th standard student. His family is indirectly related to Anjeebaben.) At Ambaji with Masi

A Sad Day for Hinduism

**Dr. Anith Maharaj,
Durban, South Africa**

It is really sad day for us and even sadder for Hinduism. Anjleebahen, whom I met for the first time in 1994 during the preparation for the World Hindu Conference (WHC)1995, was an extremely dedicated soul and selfless soldier for Hinduism. In all those years I have always known her to put aside her personal needs or wants and dedicated

all her time and efforts for Sanatan Dharma. To her, VHP was her first calling. During WHC she was pivotal in organizing the over 30 Swamijis on a single platform and convincing these various divergently different followings to talk in a single voice for Hindi Unity. One of her greatest sacrifices was detaching from her only child Haril and pursuing a life of dedication to Hindu work.

Anjleebahen will be fondly missed by all.

(Dr. Anith Maharaj is a well-known Hindu activist and a leader in South Africa.)

She Put **VHPA** on a Solid Footing

Dr. Ila Sukhadia, Staten Island, NY

Harih Om

I am very sorry to hear about the sad news of Anjleebahen Pandya's departure from this world. many of us knew her personally as well as through her close association with VHPA .

She was very instrumental in establishing VHPA on a solid footing in America working with Maheshbhai and other Founding members and KEY workers.

Her contribution to the Indian community in America as well



Anjleebahen with VHPA Executive Board at the home of Dr. Ila Sukhadia, Staten Island, NY, April 2017

as in Bharat will be greatly appreciated. She lived a very useful and productive life. Her sweet memory will always be in our hearts.

We pray almighty Bhagwan to grant her soul permanent peace and her family strength to bear this great loss. Om Shanti, Shanti, Shantih

(Dr. Ila Sukhadia is the president of VHPA's Staten Island, New York Chapter.)

Anjleebahen

Ability to Do Nishkama Work

Dr. Mona and Vishu Khaitan, Wellesley, MA

Jai Sri Ram. A tremendous loss to VHPA. A life dedicated to Seva. May we learn from her ability to do nishkama work. No work was impossible for her. A way was found to get it done. A challenging life led without the slightest complaint. May Anjleebahen's Aatma find her way back home safely in peace.

Om shanti.

(Dr. Mona Khaitan is the President of the Merrimack Valley, NH Chapter of VHPA.)

Anjleebahen

Synonymous with VHPA

Dr. Radheshyam Dwivedi, Greenbelt, MD

नमस्ते गौरांग जी,

विश्वास नहीं होता की अंजली बेन नहीं रही। उनका स्नेह और आदर मेरी अपनी विशिष्ट स्मृति सम्पदा है। क्या कहूँ? बहुत सी यादें हैं।

अमेरिका में VHP के प्रारम्भिक काल में अंजली बेन मेरी दृष्टि में एक प्रकार से पर्यायवाची जैसे थे। १९९० के दशक तक कोई कार्यक्रम हो और महेश भाई और वह न हो यह सोचना भी सम्भव नहीं। हारिल को फ़ोन किया था। मेरी विनम्र श्रद्धांजलि स्वीकार करें। भगवान उनकी आत्मा को सद्गति प्रदान करें। ॐ शान्ति!

(Dr. Radheshyam Dwivedi is one of the most senior Hindu Swayamsevak Sangh functionaries and has held several positions in the organization.)

Anjleeben - What a Tremendous Sacrifice!

**Drs. Prabhakar and Savita Joshi,
Libertyville, IL**

Just now we are reading about Smt. Anjleebahen's final Prayaan. Our condolences. Her passing away is a tremendous loss to Hindu cause.

We attended numerous conferences and meetings of VHPA when she was always present. Her presence is always remembered because she was every time at the forefront as a most reliable and enthusiastic volunteer. Her enthusiasm had no bounds.

Anjleeben lost her husband at a very early age of twenty-four, according to the reports. She could have easily got remarried and could have enjoyed that married life. But she had no time to relax. It seems she decided to use all that tremendous amount of time that is used by

a homemaker for the cause of VHPA and VHP. What a tremendous sacrifice! Isn't it very commendable?

Anjleeben came with many divine qualities. She could lead, lecture, sing, write, entertain great VIPs with ease and of course volunteer selflessly. Thus, she was a great asset to VHPA and VHP.

While she worked as the Director of International Liaison, we were in her team for a few days. Her excellent leadership qualities were quickly noticed and admired.

Always it was a great joy to meet with Anjleeben and to work with her. People rarely get opportunities to be in the company of such persons of dynamic qualities. Whenever we sent e-mails to her, we received prompt and positive responses. We are amazed how she could keep up with so many multifarious activities.

May God bless her soul!

(Drs. Prabhakar and Savita Joshi are former members of the Governing Council of VHPA.)

I am really saddened by passing away of Anjali Ben. I have so many good memories of her . Always looked forward meeting her at our G C

meetings. Meeting with her was always cordial. She treated me as her own brother. Will miss her . May God give peace to her soul.

Dr. Ram Goswami, Bloomfield Hills, MI
(Former President of Detroit, MI Chapter)

Swargiya Anjleeben Pandya

Girish Chokshi, Cromwell, CT

Vidya and I met Anjleeben for the first time in the late 1970s. Perhaps it was 1977, perhaps 1978. We lived in the Greater Hartford area and were fortunate to have as our friends some of the Parishad's stalwarts like Rameshbhai Patel, Gaurangbhai Vaishnav and Jyotishbhai Parekh. At times, Maheshbhai, Raginiben and Anjleeben would travel to our area to participate in the Parishad's programs. We would also go to Massachusetts to reciprocate. It was during one of these programs that we met Anjleeben for the first time.

What struck us as something unique was her persona. Here was someone who had lost her life partner at a very young age but yet was determined to make a difference rather than continue to suffer in misery. We saw a bubbly young woman enthusiastically doing everything she could to make a success of whatever she was doing. As time went by, we got several opportunities to observe firsthand her work and dedication. In 1987, we spent almost an entire week with her at a VHP

Youth camp in Siddhachalam. We saw a literal human dynamo energizing and inspiring everyone else to stay on their feet. Here she was - in the kitchen helping volunteers prepare food for the camp residents; - in the office to greet the visitors and troubleshooting administrative issues; - in the field and at water hole making sure the campers were having a good time; - in the main hall in the evening helping everyone to make sure that cultural programs were a huge success. We came to realize that she also had a keen sense of humor. 1989, we were privileged to spend some time with her at our home when the CT chapter organized a Maha Yagna in Newington. Then there were Parishad's national programs, conferences and events. She was always there working tirelessly.

It is unfortunate that she left us at a relatively young age. But it perhaps does not matter because as one character in a Hindi movie in the sixties aptly said "Zindagi badi honi chahiye- lambi nahi". That describes Anjleeben. May she rest in peace forever.

(Girish Chokshi is the former member of the Governing Council of VHPA.)

Remembering Anjleeben Pandya

An Inspiration to All

Gokul Kunnath, Atlanta, GA

I first met Anjleeben at a Governing Council Meeting of Vishwa Hindu Parishad of America back in 1981. Since then, I have had the privilege of meeting her countless times. For a period of 4 months, I, along with a couple of other volunteers lived together with Anjleeben in 1993, in preparation for the Global Vision 2000 Conference.

Over the course of the long relationship, she transformed from a colleague to a sister and then Mother. I still can't believe she has left the world. When it comes to Anjleeben, anyone who knows her can write a book. However, I like to share a few thoughts about her so that it may help us all to travel on the right path – the path of Dharma.

At the young age of 24, she became a widow. With a baby in her hand, in a country that was foreign to her, Anjleeben could have led a vastly different life. But when life gave her lemons, she chose to turn them into lemonade. Just like the Rani of Jhansi, despite being a widow at a young age, she proved her prowess in the midst of misfortune and adversity. That is why I started calling her Boston Ki Rani.

A bright star in the Hindu universe

By any account, she was a bright star in the Hindu universe. Travelling to more than 60 countries, meeting hundreds of Hindu leaders from all walks of life across the world, she travelled a path seldom taken by others. What is more beautiful is that she devoted every moment of her life for a greater purpose and mission – the unity of Hindus and the progress of Bharat.



Not all stars in the universe are bright. Some are actually called “dark stars”. But the light from the bright stars always illuminates the world around them. The radiance of Anjleeben brightened up the world around her. The Hindu world is so much richer because of her Tyaga.

A Karmayogini par excellence

The most important aspect of Anjleeben's character was that she was a model Karyakarta. Hence I wish to list

how she inspired many in the Hindu world.

Work without seeking positions: She was assigned to perform various tasks in several Hindu and Indian organizations. Regardless of the group or the task, she executed them like a pro with utmost sincerity. She was qualified to be the President of VHPA for decades. Yet, she chose to serve without the formalities of titles. She was a General who fought from the front and chose to hide during victory celebrations.

Work hard no matter how long it takes: At times, volunteers can get frustrated for various reasons. One such reason could be the duration of the work. It takes years and years to train a volunteer, see any positive results or make an impact. Most people are impatient by nature. She had the tenacity, motivation and the drive to persevere. Only such individuals can work for a cause, day in and day out, every day.

Work without fear of consequences: A lot of people want to do simple tasks or easy work. They hesitate challenging work, especially of a political nature. Hence they shy away even when they know it is the right thing to do. Justice takes a backseat in favor of comfort and convenience. So many examples come to my mind, which can shed light on her courage. But the one that illustrates this aspect of Anjleebeen's personality was her resolve to take an active part in the Ram Janmabhoomi movement. From her participation in the Shilanyas ceremony in 1989 to all major events leading up to the favorable verdict from the Indian Supreme Court, she was certain of her sacred duty regardless of the risks. It was not a project for the timid ones. The day after the Shilanyas, I talked to her over the phone. I still remember the sheer grit that was on grand display.

Work being punctual, every time: During her long association with volunteer organizations, she was known for her self-discipline, especially punctuality. To work among a population that has less regard for punctuality is not an easy task. She would be there before anyone gets to the event venue and leave after every one else had left.

Work with enthusiasm: When volunteers work with enthusiasm, they bring rare energy to an entire group.

One can generate a lot of positivity around and make everyone more productive in the process. I doubt anyone ever got tired while working with Anjleebeen.

Work through delegation: Every activity and event is a project in itself. Unless a leader can delegate responsibility, it would be impossible to achieve success in an organization. Anjleebeen was good at delegating tasks and finding the right candidate to perform those tasks. She had a natural talent to attract a steady stream of new volunteers to the organization.

Work with utmost sincerity: Many a time, there is no one monitoring the work of a volunteer. Even when one falls short of expectation, there is no punishment for mediocre work. When help is limited, it is especially tempting to forego quality. Anjleebeen always delivered in a manner that would inspire others whether she worked in isolation or in a group.

Work by respecting all: Respecting everyone is a critical requirement, especially in voluntary organizations. No matter the differences of age, gender, occupation, language, sampradaya or jati, there is a need to work with all types of people with equal respect. She gave that respect to all and those around her gladly reciprocated it in return. For a person like her, who mingled with Kings and commoners alike, it would have been easy to forget this requirement. But her identification with the deeper reality of all beings allowed her to overcome any sense of partiality or preferential treatment.

Work as a Team: In voluntary organizations, team spirit born out of team consciousness is very essential. Anjleebeen never had an attitude of "I am it". She was always in the team and for the team. Many times, volunteers suffer from an exaggerated sense of self-worth. This is especially true when the group is victorious. Taking personal credit for victories and sharing the results of defeats is a common practice among many. For Anjleebeen, victory belonged to the team and defeat belonged to her. What a noble attitude?

Her Uniqueness

As we all know, she was unique among the 600 plus million Hindu women around the world today. In many

ways, she set herself apart from all other women, and even most men. She was at ease with those in power and those who enjoyed wealth. She was even more at ease with the Mahatmas and Gurus. If there was one person whose words would be given due attention by those in power – From Prime Ministers to Spiritual Giants, it was Anjleeben. One incident prior to Prime Minister Modiji’s historic visit to Madison Square Garden in 2014 says a lot about the personality of Anjleeben.

It was an afternoon meeting of community leaders from around the country at the office of the Indian Consulate in New York. It was a room full of men, perhaps 35, including India’s Ambassador to the US and the current

Foreign Minister of India, Shri S. Jaishankar. When the meeting was over, the then Ambassador came near Anjleeben and told her, “You are the only man in this room”. She responded with her classic laughter.

As we all know, Anjleeben had stated before her death that she would be back to be amongst us again and it would be soon. Those words provide comfort and solace to me and so many others who miss her divine presence. Let us take as many births as needed to realize the twin goals of a glorious Bharat and a harmonious Hindu world.

Vishwa Dharma Ki Jai!

(Gokul Kunnath is the President of USHA, cofounder of the Hindu Students Council and a former member of the Governing Council of VHPA.)

Anjleebahen, Good People Leave Lasting Impact

Hasit and Dr. Taru Parikh, Tavares, FL

It is very difficult to give Shraddhanjali to our loving Anjleebahen. She was a very close friend and a loving sister to us and mother to our children. Good people make their exit from this planet with a lasting impact.

Anjleebahen touched many lives during her lifetime. We were very fortunate to know her since 1980 due to VHPA activities taking place in the CT area under the guidance of Gaurangbhai, Rameshbhai & Jyotishbhai. In 1979 first VHPA camp was held in Rhode Island in the presence of Pujya Swami Tilakji Maharaj. During this event, our interaction started with Anjleebahen. After this event, we were fortunate to participate in the 1984 World Hindu Conference in Madison Square Garden

and later in 1993 at the grand event of Global Vision 2000 to commemorate Centenary the Celebration of Swami Vivekananda’s historic speech at the Parliament of World Religions at Chicago on 9/11/1893. During both conferences, Anjleebahen worked tirelessly as an able organizer and event manager. She was very detail-oriented for every task and expected the same from her peers. With guidance from Maheshbhai in the early years and the support of Raginibahen, Anjleebahen became a valuable asset for all VHPA activities.

I still remember her ability to help in organizing Ekatomata Yajna at Newington, CT in 1989. Her dedication was instrumental in ensuring that event’s success.

Her skill to communicate with leaders from spiritual & political world as well as social arena was immeasurable. A few notable names with whom she interacted that come to my mind are Pujya Swami Tilakji Maharaj, Pujya Swami Dayananda Saraswati ji, Mananiya Shree Ashok Singhalji, and Mananiya Shree Narendrabhai Modi. Of course, there were many more. I was very fortunate to find her notes from Ekatmata Yagna in Bharat which was held in 1990 (She represented VHPA during that event). This padayatra (travel by walking) took place from Kanyakumari to Kashmir (Srinagar) and culminated in raising Indian National Flag on August 15, 1992, in the midst of threats from terrorists.

Due to her commute from Boston to New York for many organizational meetings those of us in CT had the best advantage to meet many dignitaries from both spiritual as well as social & political spectrum. We were fortunate to organize community events to educate our local Hindu community.

After her move from USA to Bharat, she became a liaison for VHPA with VHP- Bharat as well as other related activity centers. During the first few years she stayed at Sanskar Bharti school started by Shri Narendrabhai Modiji. During that time, she introduced us to Narendrabhai who was the media spokesperson for BJP. Later she moved to her own flat in Amdavad and we were fortunate to meet her frequently after my retirement in 2008. During our 2018 and 2019 visits we realized that she had started deteriorating due to cancer. During this time, she always indicated that the suffering was for the physical body and not her Aatma. She was always smiling even during her tough treatment. She would welcome all with a smiling face. My last visit to her was on Jan 1st, 2020. She will always be remembered as one who came into this world and showed us what the true meaning of dedication is. She taught us that living life by example spoke louder than any speech could. We feel blessed to have her in our lives.

(Hasit Parikh is the former President of the Hartford, CT chapter of VHPA and Director of VHPA Emporium.)

Impressive Lady with White Attire

Himanshu Desai, Morrisville, NC

I have been active and participating in most of the events in NJ and became active volunteer since Dharma Prasaar Yatra and also several HMEC events. I had observed this impressive lady in white attire at several events in NJ but hardly had any chance to interact. Several years back I attended an event at the famous Ambaji Temple, Gujarat, India where Anjleen was also present. I had a chance to talk to her. I was very much impressed with her publication on Sixteen Rituals. Although she was not keeping well, she still had the same inspiring attire and look. Her contribution to

the entire Hindu community will be remembered for generations but her contribution to Nagar Community was priceless too.

On behalf of Samasta Nagar Community and Nagars of North America, (NONA) I respectfully pay my tribute to Anjleen and acknowledge her tremendous contribution towards educating and preserving Hindu heritage and traditions and Nagar rituals and samskaras. We as a community are proud of her and her contributions.

President, Nagars of North America (NONA)

(Himanshu Desai is the member of the Governing Council of VHPA and President of Nagars of North America.)

Smt. Anjleeben Pandya, a Divine Shakti



At the Executive Board Meeting in Edison, NJ with Jyotish Parekh (then VHPA President) and Dr. Mahesh Mehta, 2000

Jyotish Parekh, West Hartford, CT

More than 50 years ago, we had started a divine yagya in the USA under the guidance and leadership of Dr. Mahesh Mehta. The vision for this yagya was “a Dynamic Vibrant Hindu Society inspired by values of Dharma and the lofty ideal of Vasudhaiva Kutumbkam, meaning, “The entire creation is one family.” VISHWA HINDU PARISHAD OF AMERICA (VHPA) was the given name for this divine work.

For this mammoth task, we were fortunate to have a number of dedicated and committed workers from across the USA. Smt. Anjleeben Pandya was one of them. She had all the qualifications needed for this divine work. Dedication, commitment, enthusiasm, energy, courage; all of them along with divinity. One of the examples of her great courage- she was a team member, along with Dr. Murli Manohar Joshi and Shri Narendra Modi, now Prime Minister of India, to go and hoist an Indian National flag in Lal Chawk Srinagar, Kashmir in 1992. This was at the time when bullets from the terrorists were showering like monsoon rain in that area.

Smt. Anjleeben Pandya was very comfortable working with everyone in the society at every level. She was

equally comfortable with 8 years old child in VHPA Hindu youth camp, to 80 years volunteer in the same camp; from Swayam Sevak to Sanghchhalak; from the clerk in government office to Prime Minister of India; from a shishya in a religious organization to Swami, Acharya, Dharma guru, and Shankaracharyas; from small shop vendor to big industrialist. She treated everyone with great respect and dignity. She had tremendous energy to take up small and big programs and projects and accomplish them with great success. She had played a very important role in VHPA big programs like the Hindu conference in Madison square garden, New York, in 1984, in Global Vision program in Washington DC in 1993, in Millennium World Peace Summit of religious and spiritual leaders at UNO in 2000. Successfully accomplishing big projects was child’s play to her.

Smt. Anjleeben Pandya was a Shakti- a divine Shakti and was a gift from Param Pita Parmeshwar to Vishwa Hindu Parishad of America in specific, and to Hindu society in general.

Now that her part in this birth is over, and she had departed to the onward journey, we pray to Param Pita Parmeshwar to grant the departed soul Mukti and Jeevan Mukti.

OM SHANTI. SHANTI, SHANTI

(Jyotish Parekh is the former President of VHPA.)

Anjleeben, Sati Savitri

Jayesh Mehta, Voorhees, NJ

I am extremely sorry to know about the sad demise of Anjleeben.

I met her first in NJ youth camp in 1996 or 1997 and since then I have known her to be an extremely dedicated and hardworking volunteer. She always reminded me of SATI SAVITRI.

In many VHPA meetings, I observed her taking active

part in intelligent discussions related to the subject matter. Her physical absence will be immensely felt by all of us.

Let us pray for peace and tranquility for the departed soul.

Om Shanti.

(Jayesh Mehta is a Governing Council Member and the advisor to the National Treasurer of VHPA.)

Anjleebahen - Greatest Example

Kusum Khurana

Om Shanti. She was a very loving and full of energy. May Bhagwan ji bring her back to our VHPA family. Anjleebahen you were the great-

est example for all of us.

Om Shanti.

(Kusumbahen Khurana is the President of the Atlanta Chapter of VHPA.)

My association with Anjleeben

SHOBHNA VORA

I knew Anjleeben since 1977, in Boston during a VHPA conference. We connected right away.

I spent some time with her during VHPA family camp in Boston area.

I still remember her one early advice she gave that one just has to deal with own suffering without lot of talk about it.

I feel she put it in practice in her own life after she received full support from Shri

Maheshbhai and Raginiben, and her bigger goal of SEVA in VHPA throughout her life.

I will always remember her for her impact in my life for



At the Planning Meeting for 1984 International Hindu Conference in New York (Front row, center, sitting next to Dr. Shobhna Vora) with Maharana Mewar (in Black coat), then President, VHP, Bharat

my association with VHPA.

Anjleebahen A True 'Anjali' to Bharatmata

**Kanchan and Haimanti
Banerjee, Milton, MA**

Sister of all. A true 'Anjali' to Bharat Mata. Ever since we met her, we have experienced her dedication to the Hindu cause, energy, and determination to execute plans meticulously, behind-the-scenes power to our leaders from Atalji, Ashokji, and Maheshji.

She has been extremely supportive of all our youth activities – including the formation and growth of the HSC. From cooking food in the kitchen to singing bhav-geet to taking care of the sick - all were part of her daily routine in every event, every occasion.

We remember her story about how she traveled to different countries in Europe despite not having all the necessary papers. That happened because of her sheer power of determination and persuasion.

I remember witnessing her interactions with great leaders such as Atalji, Ashokji, Bhaurao ji, Narendra-ji, and many more stalwarts. I've seen their faith and love they all entrusted in her because they knew Anjleebahen means action, getting things done. The saints from everywhere sought out her Seva.

She would never like to go the stage, take the microphone to speak – something she would vehemently avoid. Unsung heroes have remained in the background to prepare for the forefront leaders to achieve their goals and mission. Her life exemplifies that. I wish that the next generation of Hindu and Indian leaders will imbibe some of her qualities and spirit.

When we came to know about her recent illness, we expressed our sorrow and concern. Her response was – 'I'm not at the feet of cancer, but cancer is.' And she has proven that by fighting the battle silently for a long time. If there is one thing we have learned from her life, it would be her uncompromising faith in Karma Yoga in the real sense. Nothing for self, but work, leaving at the feet



At Boston- Pallavibahen and Madhusudan Jhaveri, Narendrabhai Modi, Anjleebahen, Front sitting Haimanti and Standing Kanchan Banerjee at Boston, 1996

of Bharat Mata.

Every soul comes to the earth with a purpose to fulfill. I don't know her personal fulfillment, but as a community worker, I know that she has inspired and motivated many souls working in the field today. I feel that this was the mission of this life.

Her physical self has returned to the pancha bhutas, but her atman is now free to roam around the entire universe, especially 'asamudra himachal.' No physical barrier can stop her now, including any disease from visiting Kashmir to Kanyakumari at her will. I'm sure she is doing her work silently from the other world, and we all are blessed that a great daughter of Bharat Mata gave almost her entire life for the Aradhana of the great mother we all do puja. Lest we forget our mission in life, let her life be a daily inspiration in our Seva work. I can hear the echo of her bhav-geet – "ye kal kal chal cha, bahati, ye bahati Ganga dhara, ye punya pravaha hamara..." Ashes of her mortal body are immersed, and she is one with Ma Ganga now! A life fulfilled, worth living fully.

(Kanchan Banerjee is a former member of the Governing Council of VHPA, Cofounder of Hindu Students Council- HSC and currently serves as the President of Global Indians for Bharat Vikas, GIBV.)

(Kanchan Banerjee is a former member of the Governing Council of VHPA, Cofounder of Hindu Students Council- HSC and currently serves as the President of Global Indians for Bharat Vikas, GIBV.)

Fond memories of Anjeebahen

Nikhil and Janki Buch, Glastonbury, CT

Over the years Janki and I had the opportunity to meet Anjeebahen many times and work closely with her in Vivekananda Family Camp or at other VHPA functions such as Dharma Prasar Yatra and Hindu Heritage Day. She treated us and everyone else like her own family and helped everyone in any way she could. We remember in one of the VHPA programs she came backstage and helped many children to get ready with their costumes, makeup, etc. We were privileged to host one of the Executive Board meetings at our home. It was then that we came to know Anjeebahen's persona other than that at the camp. She was lively and helpful. (See the group photo.)



Anjeebahen at the Executive Board Meeting in Glastonbury, CT May, 1998; Hosts Janki and Nikhil Buch 5th and 6th from the right

We will always feel and remember her charisma and event-organizing ability. She was a guiding force for all of us, not just in terms of managing and running events, but in how to live a life of seva. She was a true lifelong Sevika, and we will miss her whenever the VHPA family gets together.
OM Shanti.
Hari Aum.

(Nikhil Buch is a member of the Governing Council of VHPA and VHPA's Nomination Officer.)

Anjeeben, Shubhra Jyotsna

Sanjay Mehta, Pittsburgh

Anjeeben was a strong sutra between Hindus of America and Bharat. In this role she used to visit Bharat frequently. Upon her return from Bharat, I used to ask her, "Bharat Mata kaisi hai (How is Bharat Mata?)." Her prompt answer with a smile was always, "Mere jaisi mast hai (joyful like me!)." Anjeeben was Shubhra Jyotsna (radiant white) in her appearance and

role. She has tied many of us in the eternal Raksha Bandhan sutra. She came to Pittsburgh with Ma. Ashok Singhal ji and stayed with us for three days. I saw her ironing Ashokji's clothes, taking care of his medical and food needs and at the same time asking him (with authority) to rest and sleep on time. I was pleased to see her in Ashokji's motherly Sevika role. We will miss her and her numerous roles!

(Sanjay Mehta is the immediate past General Secretary of VHPA.)

Anjlee Ben

A 'Personal' Perspective

Prakash Waghmare, West Orange, NJ

Anjleeben Pandya was everyone's sister. She had the knack to make everyone feel that she was his or her younger or older sister. Always in simple white Gujarati-style sari with a broad smile on her face, she had the ability to disarm the most serious, stiff person with her folksy, friendly, unpretentious disposition and hearty laugh. My wife Neela and I came in contact with her for the first time in early 1980 as volunteers for Vishwa Hindu Parishad of America (VHPA) when 10th International Hindu Conference in New York City was being planned. As the destiny would have it, we became very close lifelong friends, till she took her last breath. She had a lively, spritely personality with effervescent energy. Her cheery exuberance was infectious. The reality of it all was that it was just a facade to hide a very painful past. She had lost her husband, Ambrishji when she was only twenty-three with a son, Haril, to take care of. We were among the small group of VHP people to whom she sent 'Rakhi' and 'Diwali' greetings, year after year, no matter where she was in the world as the 'International Director of Liaison For VHP'. However, one peculiar aspect of Anjleeben was that whosoever she was close to had to get used to her jagged way of expression.

After the 'VHPA International Conference,' we started celebrating various Hindu festivals in New Jersey and soon Subhashbhai Mehta gave me the responsibility of spear-heading those events. Novice as I was, Anjleeben became my mentor and took time to come and stay with us so that she could teach, Neela and I, all aspects of event-management, team-administration and the successful execution of the objectives. This has helped me a lot in molding my own teams wherever I engaged in, thereafter. Noting my flair for writing and communication skills, she encouraged me to oversee

'PR-Exposure-Media' for 'VHPA'. She was my 'guru' in fund-raising techniques too. Years back when VHPA was to start a chapter in Chicago, some of us went there to give a boost to the Chapter. I saw there, how Anjleeben collected pledges to the tune of \$6,000 in no time, even before the event started. There I learned that when we are not asking money for our own benefit, there is no need to be bashful to ask for it.

Anjleeben never went on any stage to make a speech or conducted any seminar but there wasn't a thing that moved without her. At VHPA, with the encouragement of Dr Maheshbhai Mehta (President/Chairman of VHPA), I authored countless articles, publicized VHPA events - however small - and prepared advertisements. When Anjleeben, nominated me to be a 'Governing Council' member in late eighty's, I withdrew my own nomination because I just wanted to work for VHPA without any position/title, etc. She was very upset and wouldn't talk to me till I promised to be a 'G.C.' member, the year after. She felt completely at-home with us, and we felt the same with her. She used to drop by our home whenever she had time, out of her relentless travels for VHPA. Once, for a 'G.C.' meeting in Atlanta, I reached the Hotel late at night and there wasn't a room available. Suddenly, Anjleeben appeared from nowhere and put the key in my hand that she had pre-acquired. We visited her in Ahmedabad too in our India visit and frequently talked to her.

Anjleeben had unusual rapport with lot of Swamijis, big-shot BJP politicians and Hindutva-minded entrepreneurs. It was as if she was the member of their family, and they were her favorite uncle or aunt. The reason for it, I suspect, was that she never took disadvantage of that rapport or took liberty with the power that came with it. I was privy on many

occasions to these wonderful relationships that she had cultivated. Once I witnessed her calling out loud for ‘Ma. Dr Murli Manoharji’ from the upper floor when he was already on the street, “O, mere bhai, vo Ataljiko mera message dena bhoolna nahi” (O my brother, pl don’t forget to give my message to Atalji). Surprisingly, ‘Muraliji’ also replied, “doonga, tum chinta mat karo, aur ab mera pichha chhodo” (yes, I will give, don’t you worry and leave me alone for now).

At the fund-raiser for ‘Veer Savarkar’ movie, where ‘Ma. Atalji’ was the chief guest Neela wanted to get introduced to him, but he was, at last having a dinner. Anjleebeen immediately came to her rescue and said to Atalji, “Atalji, utho! Prakashjiki dharampatni ke saath apako photo khichvana hai (Atalji get up, you have to take a picture with Prakashji’s wife). Surprisingly, Atalji got up with a smile and Neela got her picture. It seemed that Atalji was used to Anjleebeen’s abrupt manners.

For “Millennium World Peace Summit of Religious and Spiritual Leaders” (August 2000), I was the spokesperson for the entire ‘Indian Delegation’ of 100+ Swamijis, a few politicians and some global tycoons. Ma. Ashokji Singhal (Chairman of VHP) wanted an Indian style press conference each day of the Conference but that wasn’t feasible, according to me. I knew the Indian Media in U.S., more than anybody else and so DR. Mahesh Mehta and Dr B.K. Modi (External President of VHP) suggested that I should take Anjleebeen’s help to pursue Ashokji. I proposed to Ashokji that it was in our best interest to have a press-briefing with Q/A limited to few select top-notch VHPA people, just on the concluding day only. Accordingly, the briefing took place in Steel-magnet Ma. L. Mittal’s suite at the majestic ‘Waldorf-Astoria’ Hotel. Although ‘Waldorf’ did not allow any outside food, I learned from Anjleebeen that the rules don’t necessarily apply to global business tycoons like ‘Mr. Mittal’ and so, on her suggestion, I prepared a

list of all the snacks that I wanted to eat. Everyone, especially Ashokji, was very happy with the outcome.

After the ‘briefing,’ while Ashokji, Anjleebeen, a young Swamiji and I were returning to New Jersey in Anjleebeen’s car, Ashokji regaled me with a very funny incidence about Anjleebeen’s unpredictable abruptness of handling things. It so happened that when Anjleebeen went to the Airport to pick up the young Swamiji (our car companion), before the ‘Millennium Conference,’ she was also supposed to take another Swamiji for a radio interview who, for some reason, wasn’t available. So, what did Anjleebeen do? She informed this newly arrived young Swamiji, “I need one Swamiji for an interview...you are a swami, right? So, you are a going to do the radio interview for me...you have no choice.” When the Swamiji asked for the details, she said, “You are wearing saffron-colored clothes and that’s enough for me and for them. Maaraa baapaa, please don’t ask me anything further” ... We were laughing all the way to New Jersey. It is very interesting to note that no one ever objected or felt insulted with all the gaffs that Anjleebeen showered on people from time to time. There was something about her personality which was very endearing.

In 2004, it was nice of Anjleebeen to bring Ma. Ashokji to our home for a lunch and to spend a day with us. She had great connections all over India. In 2014, when a group of Indian Americans went on a ‘Spiritual Yaatra’ visiting holy Hindu sites, Anjleebeen’s presence among them ensured immediate access and VIP treatment, wherever they went. We always felt close connection to her. During her last passage of life, when she wasn’t accessible to anyone, we were delighted when she made an exception in our case. Even the lady who was attending her was surprised with affirmative nod. Anjleebeen listened to what we had to say and at the end, she made just an audible sound to confirm that she had heard us. We felt truly blessed. She passed away in mid-May 2021.

(Prakash Waghmare is the former member of the Governing Council of VHPA and Media Coordinator.)

Anjeebahen Pandya, Unsung Pracharika

Shridhar Damle, Villa Park, IL

Most of VHPA and Parivar karyakartas know Anjeebahen Pandya as a silent, smiling and dedicated Pracharika like Karyakarta. Few may remember her tragic past, loss of a young husband, when she was in twenty's and had a baby. She had two options, traditional- taking care of baby with a relative or the modern one- remarriage. But Anjeebahen made a third choice, i.e., to serve the Hindu society, while taking care of boy under the loving support and guidance of Dr. Maheshbhai and Raginibahen Mehta.

Anjeebahen was silent and active worker of Vishwa Hindu Parishad in USA. She was an active team member of VHPA core team since its early days in 1970s. One could easily notice her hard work in every Annual conference, events or meetings of VHPA. With her dedication and her smiling personality, humble nature, team member's attitude, in short qualities of a 'Sevika', Anjeebahen became a role model for newcomers.

Even Famous Hindu thinker and RSS 'man of vision and action' Dattopant Thengadi Ji praised Anjeebahen in his book with affection and admiration about her silent contribution during the Emergency Era . As an International Liaison from USA side, she was a member of core groups at many International conferences of VHP in Europe, Nepal, Bharat, Africa and Southeast Asia . She participated in Karseva for Ram Janmabhoomi temple at Ayodhya. She worked hard to make the ambitious event of "Global Vision 2000" held

at Washington, DC, to celebrate centenary of Swami Vivekananda's historical speech at the Parliament of the World's Religions in 1993 at Chicago, successful.

She was given a major task to look after 108 Hindu Dharma gurus and their associates from various sects who participated in the Millennium World Peace Summit of Religious and Spiritual Leaders hosted by the United Nations in New York and successfully arranged their crisscross visits to many cities in USA . In Kumbh Mela at Prayagraj in 2007, she managed responsibility to take care of 1500 foreign delegates at the third World congress of VHO. At all times smiling and enthusiastic personality of Anjeebahen was an inspiration for VHPA workers. She had such cordial relations with prominent leaders like Atal Bihari Vajpayee, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Governor Jag Mohan, Ashok Singhal, L K Advani, VHP's prominent founder member and first General Secretary Dadasaheb Apte, to new VHPA workers. Ashok Singhal Ji made a point to attend the wedding ceremony of her son, Haril Pandya. I remember that to get cooperation from late Pandurang Shastri Ji of Swadhyay Movement, she came from Boston to Chicago. She waited for an hour in the windy weather of Chicago to meet him. I was lucky to meet her whenever she visited Chicago at the homes of Pralhad Patil or Vemuri Subramaniam or at VHPA events in Chicago. Anjeebahen had good qualities of dedication, humbleness, and was an efficient organizer. Anjeebahen was an ideal, but unofficial Pracharika.

(Shridhar Damle is an avid student of History and has researched the history of Bharat. He is an author of books on the subject.)

Anjleebahen, A Comforting Presence



At Youth Camp in Medford, NJ 1986 with the camp volunteers, Last row 4th from left

Sushim Mukerji, Newark, DE

I first met Anjleebahen in 1983 during VHPA youth camp in South Jersey. I was the education coordinator, and she was everywhere. Aside from the daily activities with the youth we had several meetings for the adult volunteers in late afternoon and evening, and no matter whether it was about sports or education or kitchen cleanliness or night securities, Anjleebahen played an active role in them and offered valuable suggestions to newcomers like me. In cultural functions every evening she participated in a variety of popular songs and recitations and warmed our hearts. Her role was always to guide us in maintaining Hindu themes and ideals in a celebratory atmosphere. In this role

she made no distinction between the young, youth and adults. There were always delicate moments particularly in taking care of aging swamis who may have just arrived from Bharat after enduring a sleepless journey. Guess who took care of all their needs from creature comforts to passport/visa situation? Anjleebahen, of course. I saw so many swamijis, relieved of their earthly anxieties by Anjleebahen's natural skills, able to concentrate on the spiritual realm.

I saw her last in 2005 when I was staying at VHP-Bharat's headquarters at Sankat Mochan Ashram, R K Puram, New Delhi. She spent a couple of days there with Maheshbhai and conferred with Mananiya Ashok Singhalji and other VHP karyakartas. While she was there, I

was away one day on VHP business and came back late at night. By that time the dinner was over, and there was hardly anything left for me. I was distressed. Anjleebahen came to greet me and found that I had hardly anything to eat. A few minutes later she brought me a plateful of dinner and said she did not touch her dinner because it was a certain Vrat day for her. I did not believe her, but she insisted. Well, I had my dinner. To date I really do not know if she made up an excuse for a Vrat for the benefit of her brother. One thing was for sure, her brother did not go hungry that night.

I will miss her. My humble Shrad-dhanjali to her.

(Sushim Mukerji is a former member of the Governing Council of VHPA and founder of Support A Child project.)

Anjleeben, a Sister and a Mother

Vijay Ruikar, Danville, CA

From Draupadi, the sister of Bhagwan Shri. Krishna to Sister Bhagini Nivedita of Swami Vivekananda, sisters over millennia have an integral, manifestations of love in a Hindu's life. With her deep interest in my performance as a student, in my health and well-being, in working to find my future spouse, and after my marriage, her taking Sou. Vaiju (my wife) under her affectionate wings, Anjleeben indeed belongs to the same great Hindu sisters' tradition in my life. After the passing away of my mother, she became my mom here in the US.

When I see my life in retrospect, I have received way too much; what I have given, I don't know. Pujya Anjleeben was forever a giver, a person whom everyone loved. Once, when I was arguing with her on some trivial things, Man Shri. Mahesh ji walked in, (this was at his Needham, MA home) and said: "Vijay, thank your lucky stars that Anjleeben is your elder sister. After certain age, an elder sister in no different from a mother. You can do all kinds of mischief and she will still forgive you, because of motherly love. I am not so lucky; I am older than her; so now I have become the elder brother. I have to walk on fire to live up to her expectations!"



Anjleebahen tying Rakhi to Vijay Ruikar, CA, 1988

Our last personal contact with her was when Sou. Vaiju and my mother-in-law were in Ahmedabad at Shri. Subhash Bhai's home, the day after Man. Shri. Mahesh Ji returned home from hospital after his first stroke treatment. Sou. Vaiju and Anjleeben spoke and agreed to meet the next day, but due to some urgent reasons the meeting didn't occur.

I cherish these photos of my Raksha Bandhan with my elder sister Kailaswasi Pujya Anjleeben. This is about 1988 or 1989.

We all have lost a big part of our lives and our hearts!
With Pranams to her eternal Aatman.

Anjleebahen tying Rakhi to Vijay Ruikar, CA, 1988

Anjleebahen, a Devoted Karyakarta

Vimal Sodhani, Somerset, NJ

Ido not know where to start. You all have expressed heartfelt condolences for Anjlee Bahen.

We have known her for the past 50 years as a great friend and a devoted Karyakarta. Lately, we became relatives.

She was completely devoted to VHPA work. It will be almost impossible to compensate for this irreparable loss. A great Mom and a concerned friend. She will be missed immensely.

May almighty God rest her soul in Peace.

Om Shanti, Shanti Shantih!

(Vimal Sodhani is a member of the Governing Council of VHPA and a former Vice President.)

Memories of Sw. Anjeeben Pandya

Sharad Amin, Sugar Land, TX

I came to know Anjee ben in 1985 as we were preparing for the first VHPA youth camp in Houston.

We had our very first meeting at Shri Dilip ji Mehta's house. Anjee ben explained the whole procedure step by step in detail. In our team, we had only one person, Suresh bhai Patel (Darbar) who had experience of a camp from Bharat. Anjee ben with the help of chalk and blackboard went through every detail of the camp in the first meeting. She travelled from Boston to Houston to train us. She answered all our questions with patience but firmness. I remember words like "Bhaila", meaning 'Brother' in a loving tone and 'Bhala Manas' meaning 'kind person'. This tells about her personality to bring volunteers closer to the cause and encourage them to do the things with encouragement. During the 1986 camp, Anjee Ben was in Houston along with Vijay ji Ruikar. Both of them gave us hands-on training to run the camp. Since the training

of the first camp was on high standard, after 36 years, very minimal changes have taken place. This may be the only longest running Youth camp in USA continuously, which was started by VHPA and credit for initial planning, training and execution goes to Anjee ben Pandya.

I also worked with Anjee Ben as a member of the Governing council, Dharma Prasar Yatra, Vishwa Sangh Shibir and several other occasions during Ram Janma Bhoomi, Sheela Pujan / Hindu Unity Year Havan program at Connecticut (1989) and Global Vision 2000 at Washington DC in 1993.

The main thing which touched me was her firmness with affection. She had a neck to get things done. She singlehandedly took care of dignitaries from their diet requirements to complete schedules.

I have learned a lot about how to manage from a camp to a big program, which was very useful in celebrating communitywide Janmashtami in Houston.

We all karyakartas in Houston will miss Anjee ben forever.

(Sharad Amin is former Organizing Secretary of VHPA.)

Anjeebahen, The Conduit

Vinod Kumar, New Zealand

Jai Shri Krishna

We have known Anjeebahen since 2003 when she came before and during the Viswa Dharma Prasar Yatra (VDPY). She did an excellent job in coordinating the whole trip and since then we have been in touch with her. We used to get almost daily updates of events and activities around the world. She was that conduit amongst all other groups. We indeed will miss that, and our deepest condolences is with her and family.



Anjeebahen at Vishwa Dharma Prasar Yatra-2003
Auckland, NZ sitting behind Sadhwi Ritambharaji

Vinod Kumar, President of Hindu Council of New Zealand (VHP)

Anjaliben's Life journey



Young Anjleebahen, 1967



Anjleebahen and Ambarishbhai, 1969



Raginibahen Mehta, Meenal Pandya, Anjleebahen, Haril and Subhashbhai Mehta 1977



Anjleebahen at the Youth Camp, Tolland, MA 1983



At the Planning Meeting for 1984 International Hindu Conference in New York (Front row, center, sitting next to Dr. Shobhna Vora) with Maharana Mewar (in Black coat), then President, VHP, Bharat



Anjleebahen singing a Bhav geet at Second Southeastern Hindu Conference, 1985



At Youth Camp in Medford, NJ 1986 with the camp volunteers, Last row 4th from left

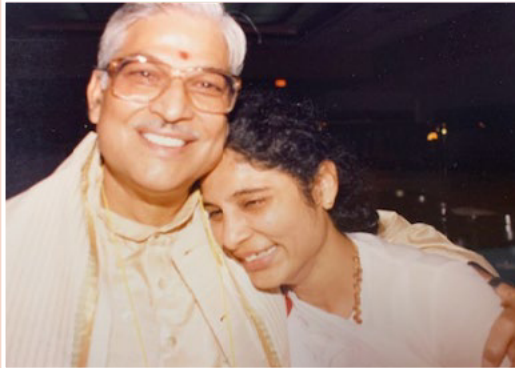


Anjleebahen and Ma. Ashok Ji, 1990

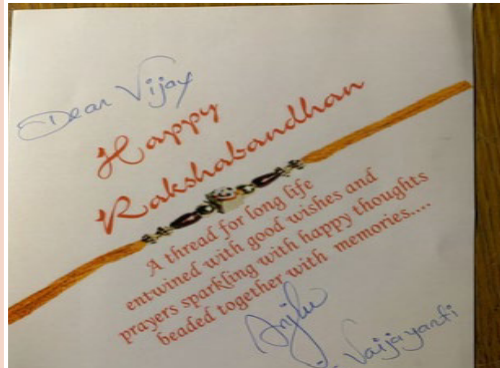


Anjleebahen (Back row, third from the left) at the House at 166 North Street, Salem, MA where Swami Vivekananda lived in 1893, 100 years later.

Anjaliben's Life journey



Fatherly affection by Dr. Murli Manohar Joshi, 1993



Rakshabandhan Card and Rakhi went to 500 karyakartas around the globe every year



Anjleebahen at Sadak Pe Samsad with Subramaniam Swamy speaking, Karnavati 2014



At Dharma Prasar Yatra Finale in NJ, 1999



At the United Nations for Millennium World Peace Summit, 2000, sitting behind Narendrabhai Modi



Anjleebahen at Hanuman Yatra, Karnavati (Amdavad), 2019



Anjleebahen Meeting Prime Minister Narendrabhai Modi, September, 2014



Anjleebahen with Ragini Mehta and Taru Parikh at Maheshbhai Mehta's home, Bopal, Gujarat, 2019



ANJLEE AMBARISH PANDYA
IN LOVING MEMORY
1949-2021
OM SHANTI, SHANTI, SHANTI



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Jayesh Mehta	Treasurer VHPA	jayesh17@hotmail.com
Sneha Mehta		snehajimehta@gmail.com
Sanjay Shah	Director of Financial Planning	shahsanjay@hotmail.com
Jayant Daftardar	Director, Seva / Fundraiser	daftardarj@yahoo.com
Makarand Abhyankar	Org. Sec. Organizational Growth (Chapter Relations)	makuabhyankar@gmail.com
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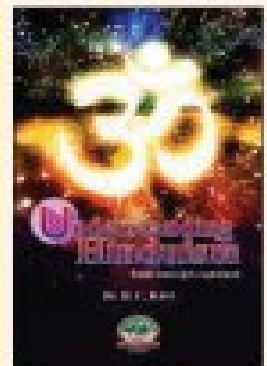
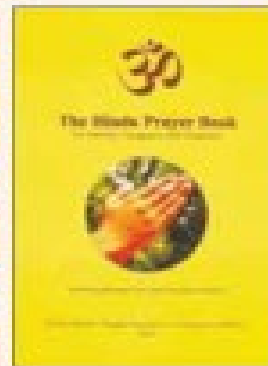
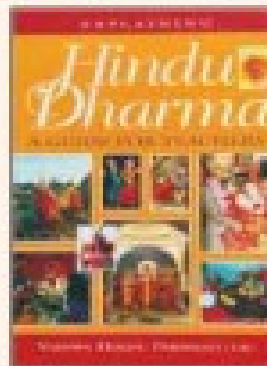
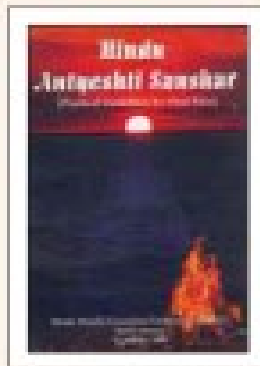
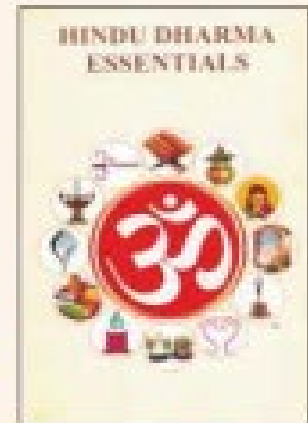
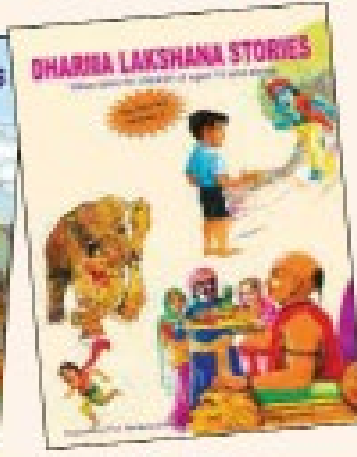
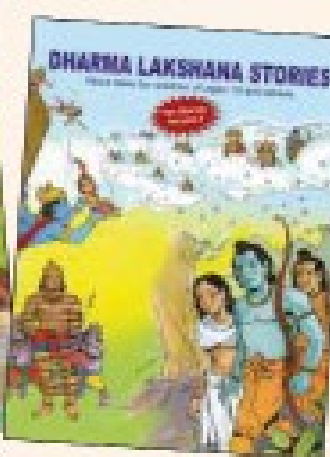
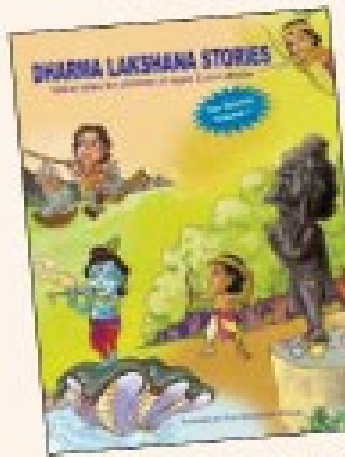
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Om, Asato Maa Sad Gamaya; Tamaso Maa Jyotir Gamaya Mrityor Maa Amritam Gamaya

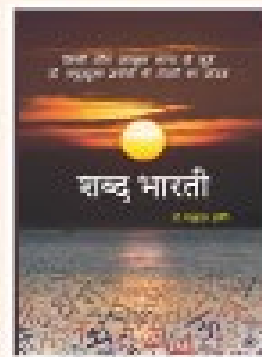
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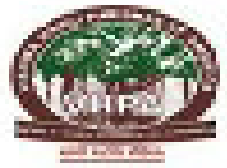
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