

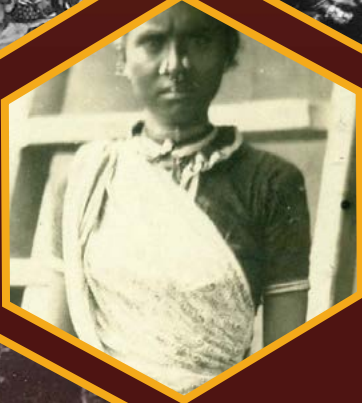
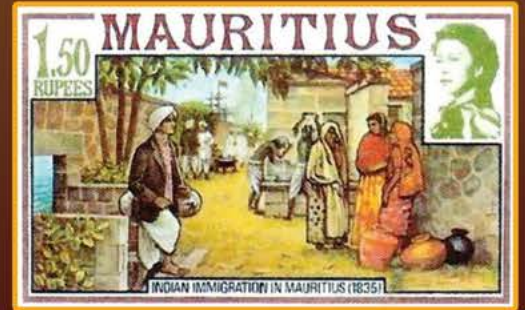
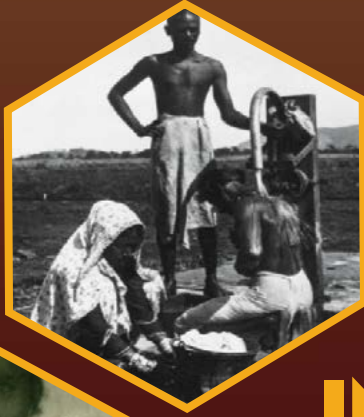


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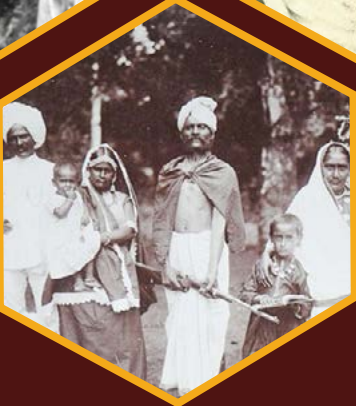
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No: 4

October - December 2022
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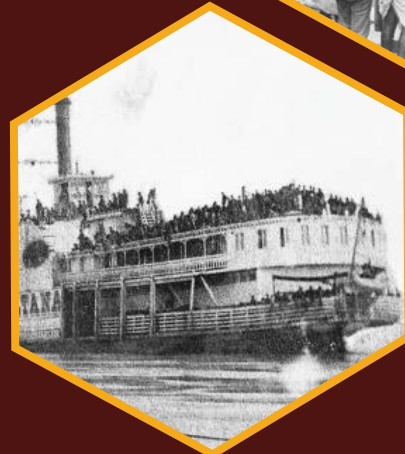
INDIA and GIRMITIYA COUNTRIES also Deserve Apology/ Reparations



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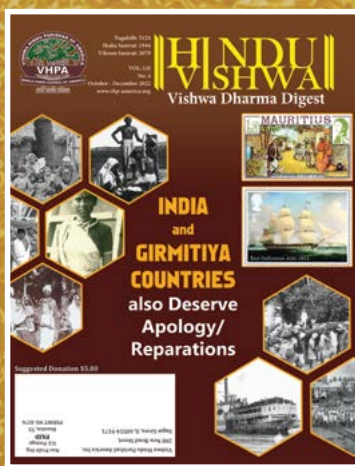
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Volume: LII

No.: 4

OCTOBER - DECEMBER 2022



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यद्यद्विभूतिमत्सत्त्वं श्रीमदूर्जितमेव वा ।
तत्देवावगच्छ त्वं मम तेजोऽशसम्भवम् ॥

-श्रीमद्भगवद्गीता, 10.41

Whatever you see as beautiful, glorious, or powerful, know it to spring from but a spark of My splendor.

yad yad vibhūtimat sattvaṁ śhrīmad ūrjitam eva vā
tat tad evāvagachchha tvaṁ mama tejo 'nśha-sambhavam

Bhagvad Gita, 10.41

ABOUT THE HINDU VISHWA

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

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

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Second Hindu Heritage Month Celebrated Across the Globe





Sports War ANALOGY

There was a sly, greedy, and ambitious Jackal in the animal kingdom. He had inherited a great fortune and had begun to fancy himself as the king of the jungle. All the animals in the jungle came to visit the Jackal and were impressed with his wealth. The jungle King Lion also visited the Jackal and was dazzled by the wealth of the Jackal. The Jackal was clever and continued to expand his power and influence by hook or by crook. The Lion was smug and didn't bother because the Jackal continued to feed meat loaves to him. The Jackal's ambitions soared further, and he rode the Lion and gathered the animal forces to challenge the humans. The humans were scared and had not encountered such attacks from wild animals. The king of humans did not know how to neutralize the threat so he went to his raj guru for advice. The sage reassured the king and was calm because he knew, "an animal's intelligence is no match for a human's wisdom." The sage approached King Jackal and told him that Jackal's army had diverse animals, some of whom were stronger than Jackal. He further sowed the seeds of doubt by questioning if the big animals like elephants and lions would fight for the Jackal. This angered the Jackal and he ordered the Lion to roar to prove loyalty. The Lion roared so loudly that the elephants started to run and trample other animals, the Jackal himself fell from the lion he was riding, and other animals started to run helter-skelter in a melee. Thus came the end of the animal kingdom led by Jackal.

Abridged version of the above Jataka tale from India has a modern geopolitical term, and is called punching way above its weight. The Soccer World Cup in Qatar ("gutter") (no pun intended) has become famous not for the sporting prowess of athletes but for the sordid saga of corruption, exploitation, misogyny,

homophobic tyranny, and religious obscurantism. One cannot predict the future but the story described in the fable is a cautionary tale for the country and the people involved in this sad spectacle.

Hindu traditions have a concept of Dharma, where even a war had a strict code of conduct and duty-bound rules defining the rules of engagement for warriors, while risking their own lives. It is a sign of wretchedness that the sports that seek to provide an alternative to the real wars in modern times have descended into power play by Jackals to the detriment of all.

As an originator of many of the ancient and modern games, India has a tradition of sporting principles. While our sports have a strict code of honor and conduct, they are devoid of the gore associated with Roman gladiators. While the wars were fought with sports like code of conduct but sports were not played with war-like violence and deceptions. Some find it hard to believe that Swami Vivekananda once said, "You will be nearer to heaven playing football than studying the Bhagavad Gita."

A dialogue between Karna and a vengeful snake that offered to kill Arjuna by deceit during the Mahabharata war is more relevant than ever.

तेरी सहायता से जय तो मैं अनायास पा जाऊंगा,
आनेवाली मानवता को, लेकिन, क्या मुख दिखलाऊंगा?
संसार कहेगा, जीवन का सब सुकृत कर्ण ने क्षार किया;
प्रतिभट के वध के लिए सर्प का पापी ने साहाय्य लिया।

(Source : Rashmirathi by Ramdhari Singh Dinkar)

Karna says that with the snake's help, he would easily be a victor. But to the future generations of humanity, what face would he show? The world would say that Karna undid all good deeds of his life, the sinner took help from a snake to kill his opponent.

GIRMITIYA MIGRATION ARRIVAL HISTORY

Definition:

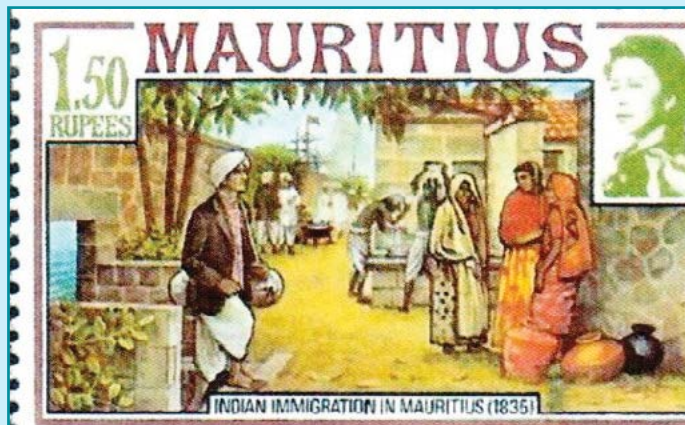
While it is generally known that a Girmitiya is a descendant of Indian Indentured labourers to Fiji, the Indian Diaspora Council International has defined a Girmitiya as a descendant of **all** Indian Indentured labourers who were taken from India to several British, Dutch and French colonies during the periods 1826-1920 under the system of indenture labour.

Arrival History by Country & Territory:

Country	Date of First Arrival & Ship Name	Number of Arrivals
Guyana (formerly British Guiana)	May 5, 1838 - <i>Hesperus</i>	238,909
Trinidad & Tobago	May 31, 1845 - <i>Fatal Razak</i>	143,939
Guadeloupe	December 24, 1854 - <i>Aurélie</i>	42,326
Jamaica	May 7, 1845 - <i>Maidstone</i>	36,412
Suriname (formerly Dutch Guiana)	June 5, 1873 - <i>Lalla Rookh</i>	34,000
Martinique	May 6, 1853 - <i>Aurelie</i>	25,509
French Guiana(South America)	1854	19,276
St. Lucia	May 6, 1859 - <i>Palmyra</i>	4,354
Grenada	January 27, 1857 - <i>Maidstone</i>	3,200
St. Vincent	June 1, 1861 - <i>Travancore</i>	2,472
Belize (formerly British Honduras) located in Central America	1858 – Sepoy Indians 1882	1,000 from 1857 revolt 3,000 from Jamaica
St. Kitts	June 3, 1861 - <i>Dartmouth</i>	361
Nevis	1874	315
St. Croix	1863	321
Reunion Island	April 13, 1828 - <i>Yangon</i>	120 000
Seychelles	1898	6,315
South Africa	November 16, 1860 - <i>Truro</i>	150,000
Fiji	May 15, 1879 - <i>Leonidas</i>	60,965
Mauritius	November 2, 1834 - <i>Atlas</i>	451,796

Note: The information above is compiled from various sources and its accuracy is based on information reviewed. Credit to the many historians, researchers and authors whose information have been used to compile the listing above.

Compiled from various sources by Ashook Ramsaran – Indian Diaspora Council International (IDC)



In some countries like the Caribbean and South America most have lost their ancestral language, and a few their entire culture very much like the Canadian indigenous peoples.

If anyone can trace their ancestry to the names

of those who first landed in the West on May 5, 1838 and compare the loss of language and culture over the years a vague picture of the harm will emerge. National Censuses every decade will verify the rapid rate of religious conversion.



THE ROLE OF THE TEMPLES

Practitioners of Sanatan Dharma do not subscribe to one central spiritual authority but their influence across the globe can be powerful considering the numerous temples that have existed for thousands of years. In addition many more are being erected and functioning in scores of countries to serve their devotees who sustain and promote dharmic values.

If however they can be united as the Canadian victims, it is possible to get the Pope to apologize for the excesses of the Church on a future visit to India. The Colonial governments in cahoots with religious

organizations and business interests that believed and enforced the "superior white European culture" on the countries they explored and exploited destroyed many native cultures in the process.

This however will not be a short simple process. It may call for many satyagrahis in the tradition of those who struggled for about 90 years to be free from the yoke of the British.

It should be noted that the Indigenous People started along this path for Truth and Reconciliation long before the discovery of hundreds of unmarked graves of children who were forced to attend Christian residential schools. They were separated

The lengthy struggle took them through the legal channels; the establishment of a Truth and Reconciliation Commission following the precedent of South Africa; effective and constant use of the media; online petitions supported by thousands across the world; campaigned in Vatican City in Rome, and insisted that the Pope apologize on Canadian soil. Their pleas won the support of Canadian politicians and even the Prime Minister. The Federal Government was the first to apologize for their part in financing the residential schools.

from their families, alienated from culture and language by a system supported by the Canadian Government.

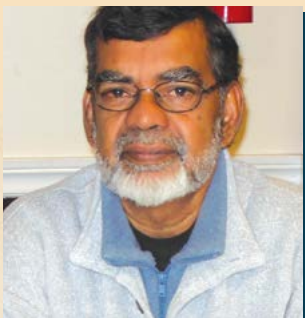
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Still to come is a repudiation of the DOCTRINE OF DISCOVERY which permitted the explorers to claim lands they discovered as their own even though natives were living on it for centuries.

The temples and other social and community groups have all the tools to duplicate this path. Educated youths who can lead and connect the world with their IT skills, organize widespread media support, initiate extensive research and scholarship to accurately record the history and while laying the groundwork for compensation and mutual respect.

If all these can be coordinated no head of any other state or religious leader would have the courage to repeat the words of Pope John Paul II who as a visitor stated "India is ripe for conversion".

Instead they would be asking for forgiveness on the soil of Bharat Mata, the land that is now celebrating 75 years since the British departed. Thereafter they would be making reparations to the extent calculable for the actions of those who thought they had a divine right to exploit the rest of the world that did not share their values.



About the Author

Ramnarine Sahadeo, born in Guyana, now a retired lawyer in Canada, has authored Mohandas K. Gandhi, thoughts, words, deeds and his inspiration the Bhagavad-Gita; he also edited and distributes the Gita with quotes, comments as translated by Gandhi. The pdf can be shared free of cost to any organization interested in seeing A GITA FOR EVERY HOME.

How Hindu Dharma is Slowly Transforming the West

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

Kalyan Viswanathan, President - Hindu University of America

Cosmic Dance of the "Sanatana" versus "Modernity"

As Hindus living in the United States of America, we have the unique privilege of living simultaneously in two different paradigms, consciously or not. The American or Western paradigm more generally can be called 'progressivism', where every generation is continually standing on the shoulders of the previous one, where science and technology are marching relentlessly towards the future, leaving the past behind. Modernity is a moving target, and the relentless flow of time, rendering everything that is new and exciting today, into the inexorable obsolescence of yesterday. When viewed from the lens of modernity, Hindu thought belongs to the world of the ancients, old, archaic, and clearly superseded long ago. There is an unyielding force that time exerts upon our consciousness. If we stand still even for a moment, we will be run over by the current of time. This inexorable movement of time may suggest that Hindu thought has once and for all been decisively superseded.

On the other hand, Hindu thought, in its own conception, is beyond time, situated in the realm of the timeless, i.e., Sanatana. The Veda may speak in a language that we do not fully comprehend today, but its message is not bound by time. Its timelessness bursts forth and re-emerges again and again, in era after era, yuga after yuga, as the Veda might itself say. The central revelation of the Veda is that as a human being,

we have one foot in time, and another in the timeless, one part of our lives submerged in the frenetic activity of our everyday lives, while there is another part of our self, that abides in the timeless, witnessing, watching, observing the drama of existence, untouched by all this ephemeral and transient play.

Modernity defines itself in opposition to the old, consigning the ancient to the museum and by denying the traditional. The argument of progressivism is within time and stands on the ground of its repudiation of that which it dismisses as old and obsolete. The timeless on the other hand, does not stand in opposition to that which is timebound and finds new expression time after time. Just when we think that it has been submerged once and for all, it emerges once more, in a new form, in a new language, and with renewed relevance. In the Bhagavad Gita, Krishna tells Arjuna, 'This Yoga was lost due to the eons of passage of time – so I am restoring it by instructing you in it (B.G. IV.2).' That was already a few thousand years ago. Adi Shankara says in his introduction to his commentary on the Gita, that he is restating its import, because time has clouded its message, and he sees his task of being primarily one of clarification of an ancient teaching for a new age. It seems that the timeless and the timebound are caught up in some kind of cosmic hide and seek game, where for a time, the timeless seems to be lost, obscured by the modernity of its age, once and for all, never to return. And then, the timeless returns, once again to our wonderment.

Contemporary Re-Emergence of the "Timeless"

We are witnessing one such epoch right now. A fascinating reemergence of the Hindu thought is taking place in front of our own eyes, in an alien land and culture - the contemporary West in general, and America in particular. Without any central organizing agency, without any grand overarching vision or plan, without any initiating authority or power, without any semblance of violence or force, Hindu thought has emerged, slowly but inexorably, and seeped into the consciousness of the Western society. Like a spark, it has rekindled all over again, the fire of knowledge and transformation reignited once more, unbeknownst to us Hindus ourselves, unaided by our will or desire. Where this will go, and how it will live and what may yet come of it, remains unknown.

What makes us so sure?

"We are all Hindus Now" was the title of an article that appeared in August 2009 issue of Newsweek magazine. Following excerpts from this article should give us a good read on the spiritual heartbeat of today's America:

"America is not a Christian nation. We are, it is true, a nation founded by Christians, and according to a 2008 survey, 76 percent of us continue to identify as Christian... But recent poll data show that conceptually, at least, we are slowly becoming more like Hindus and less like traditional Christians in the ways we think about God, our selves, each other, and eternity.



We Are All Hindus Now

By [Lisa Miller](#) | NEWSWEEK

Published Aug 15, 2009

From the magazine issue dated Aug 31, 2009



Lisa Miller

America is not a Christian nation. We are, it is true, a nation founded by Christians, and according to a 2008 survey, 76 percent of us continue to identify as Christian (still, that's the lowest percentage in American history). Of course, we are not a Hindu—or Muslim, or Jewish, or Wiccan—nation, either. A million-plus Hindus live in the United States, a fraction of the billion who live on Earth. But recent poll data show that conceptually, at least, we are slowly becoming more like Hindus and less like traditional Christians in the ways we think about God, our selves, each other, and eternity.

The [Rig Veda](#), the most ancient Hindu scripture, says this: "Truth is One, but the sages speak of it by many names." A Hindu believes there are many paths to God. Jesus is one way, the Qur'an is another, yoga practice is a third. None is better than any other; all are equal. The most traditional, conservative Christians have not been taught to think like this. They learn in Sunday school that their religion is true, and others are false. Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the father except through me."



"The Rig Veda, the most ancient Hindu scripture, says this: 'Truth is One, but the sages speak of it by many names.' A Hindu believes there are many paths to God...all are equal. The most traditional, conservative Christians have not been taught to think like this. They learn in Sunday school that their religion is true, and others are false... Americans are no longer buying it. According to a 2008 Pew Forum survey, 65 percent of us believe that 'many religions can lead to eternal life'—including 37 percent of white evangelicals, the group most likely to believe that salvation is theirs alone...

"Then there's the question of what happens when you die. Christians traditionally believe that bodies and souls are sacred, that together they comprise the 'self,' and that at the end of time they will be reunited in the Resurrection... Hindus believe no such thing. At death, the body burns on a pyre, while the spirit—where identity resides—escapes... So here is another way in which Americans are becoming more Hindu: 24 percent of Americans say they believe in reincarnation,

according to a 2008 Harris poll. So agnostic are we about the ultimate fates of our bodies that we're burning them—like Hindus—after death. More than a third of Americans now choose cremation, according to the Cremation Association of North America, up from 6 percent in 1975”.

On a more visible plain, the advent of thousands of Yoga studios, meditation centers, ayurvedic health centers, vegetarian/vegan restaurants and the rising popularity of sans meat products, all attest to a massive social movement that has its roots firmly planted in Hindu thought.

There is no denying the fact that a gradual transformation of the American value system is taking place in front of our own eyes. What emerges at the other end may not look anything like traditional Hinduism, but Hindu threads will undoubtedly be shining bright in its cultural tapestry.

How did it happen?

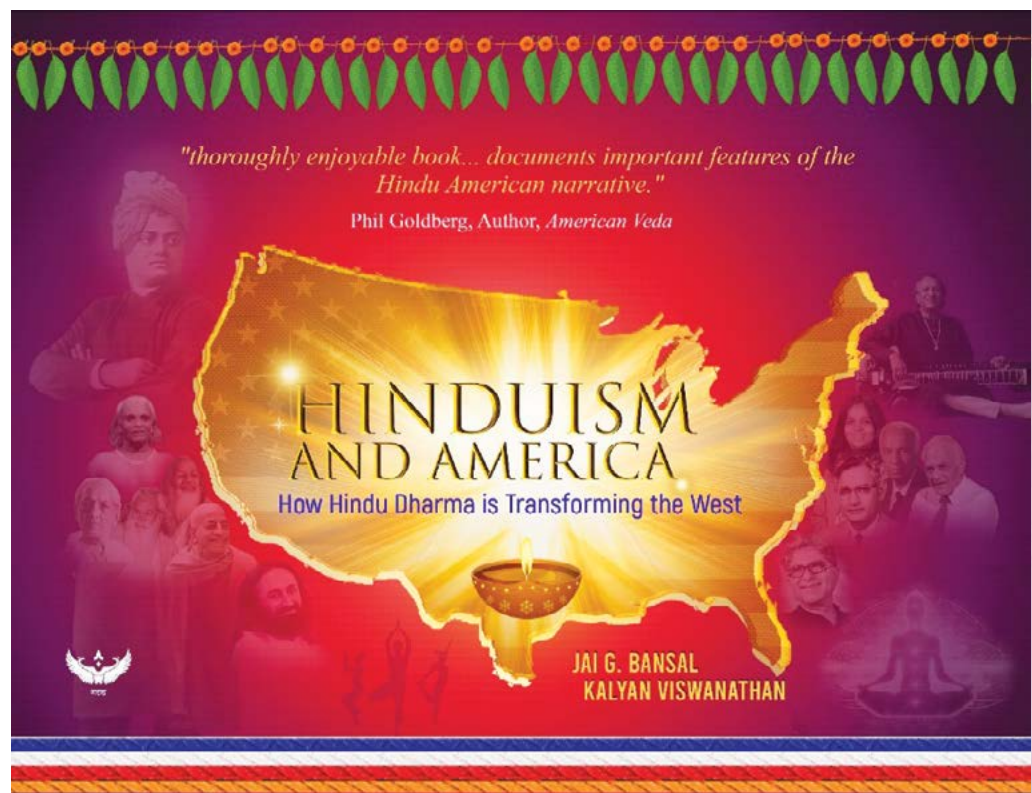
This transformative change in American attitudes did not happen overnight. It is the result of an organic movement that spans a period of almost 250 years. It was a movement without any master plan or directive force and can be divided into three partially overlapping phases. The first phase saw an influx of the Hindu thought into the West, transmitted by early translations of Sanskrit texts, e.g., The Bhagavad Gita in 1784 CE, and attempts by Europeans to decipher those texts on their own, with a minimal degree of help from traditional Hindu scholars or Gurus. The second phase involved visiting Hindu Gurus, Swamis, and Yogis from India, who presented Hindu

thought as an integrated system of spiritual self-discovery, that caught the imagination of many in the West. The third phase, which is ongoing, encapsulates the immigration of Hindus in large numbers to the West, and the gradual Westernization and Americanization of Hindu thought, and its slow but sure diffusion into the Western consciousness.

“Hinduism and America” – The Book

“Hinduism and America: How Hindu Dharma is Transforming the West” is a recently released coffee table book that attempts to narrate the story of this transformative movement. Written jointly by Dr. Jai Bansal, VP of Education of Vishwa Hindu Parishad of America (VHPA), and Kalyan Viswanathan, President of Hindu University of America (HUA), this book is the result of two-and-half-year long collaboration project of VHPA and HUA.

The book documents the story of the legions of Swamis and Gurus who brought Hindu thought to the West. It also gives voice to ordinary Hindus who migrated to the West in search of better lives for





themselves. As they slowly integrated themselves into the professional and social fabric of their adopted land, they imparted their own special textures and colors to it, thereby transforming it in ways that could not have been imagined even 50 years ago!

Order your copy here:

tinyurl.com/3svef6mm

“The authors vividly capture the 250-year long progression of Hindu thought in America, all unplanned and unorchestrated. They admirably perform this Herculean task and accomplish their goal of introducing to the reader the tenets of the Hindu tradition and the main actors and salient events that have left such an indelible imprint and lasting impact on America. The story they tell is intriguing, enchanting, and indeed profound, and the tapestry they weave is rich in its splendor. This book should adorn every Hindu American's coffee table.”: Padma Bhushan Prof. Ved Nanda, Director, The Ved Nanda Center for International & Comparative Law

About the Author



Dr. Jai Bansal is a scientist, author, and community leader with a keen interest in Indian history and in exploring the contributions of the Hindu civilization to the world. He currently serves as the Vice President of Education for the World Hindu Council of America (VHPA), as well as a member of its executive board and the governing council. After a distinguished career spanning 38 years, Dr. Bansal retired in 2014 as the Chief Scientific Officer and the Global Technology Development Advisor of a global petrochemical company. From 2014 to 2018, he served as an advisor to the Argonne National Laboratory, Chicago, and the US Department of Energy. He holds a Ph.D. in Chemical Engineering from the University of Waterloo, Canada, and a B.Sc. (Distinction) from Panjab University. He has published widely and holds over two dozen scientific patents.



Mr. Kalyan Viswanathan is currently serving as the President of Hindu University of America and guiding its renewal and revitalization. He was a longtime student of Pujya Swami Dayananda Saraswati of Arsha Vidya Gurukulam, established in the Advaita Vedanta Sampradaya and was associated with his work for over 20 plus years. Prior to his involvement with Hindu University of America, Kalyan was a Global Practice Head for one of India's largest IT Services Company, with a 20-plus year track record. He holds a Master's Degree in Computer Science and a Bachelor's Degree in Electrical and Electronics Engineering from BITS, Pilani. He is also working on his Doctoral degree in Hindu Studies, currently, with a scholarly focus on the intersection of Hindu and Western thought, the recovery of Hindu epistemology and its relevance and value for humanity.

CHATURANGA : The Pathway to Chess

By Aishwarya Srikanth

*sukha-duḥkhe same kṛtvā lābhālābhau jayājayau
tato yuddhāya yujyasva naivam pāpam avāpsyasi*

Fight for the sake of duty, treating happiness and distress, loss and gain, victory and defeat. Fulfilling your responsibility in this way, you will never incur sin.

Introduction

Chaturanga is a game that was used to plan out battle strategies. These were then implemented in war during the time of Ancient India. This game was made in the 6th century CE and is the root of the game that we play today, chess.

Who created Chaturanga?

This question is commonly asked by everyone.



Figure 1 : Banabhatta

Courtesy: Simplicity.in

The creator of Chaturanga is not known. What is known however, is that whoever created this game belonged to the Gupta Empire, in Tamil Nadu. The earliest reference to the game was in a poem by Bana. This poem is called Harsacaritra and was made in the seventh century CE. Soon,

Chaturanga flew to Sassanid, Persia who adopted the game as Chatrang (Shatranj). After the Arab Invasion and the conquest of Persia, it spread to the Muslim world and carried to Spain and Southern Europe.

China also claims that chess originated from their country, however it is believed that they only made modifications to the game. The names of the pieces modified into what we know today in Europe. Elephants became Rooks and so on.

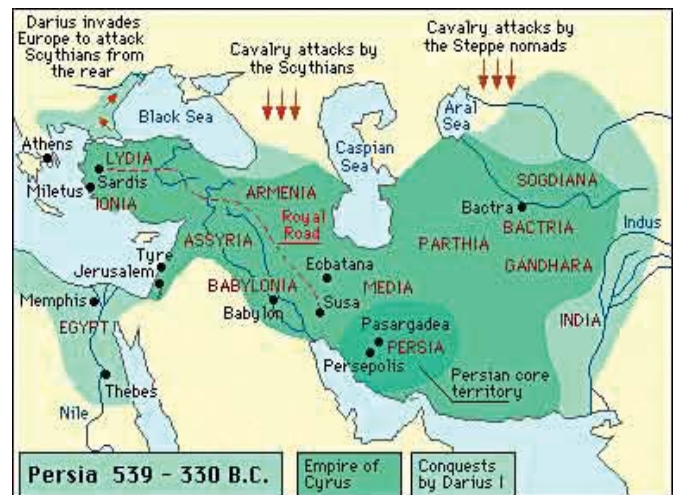


Figure 2 : Persia

Courtesy: Uhistory.org



Figure 4 : Krishna in War

Courtesy: Indiandiplomacy.org

What is the purpose of Chaturanga?

The purpose of Chaturanga is for rulers of India to prepare battle strategies for wars. Everything on the board represents the army that the kings and queens had. The pawns are soldiers that go in front of the battle to fight and destroy the other soldiers in the opposition. The other members of the army follow suit to take down their enemy. Each piece is a part of an army seen at the time. The King is the Supreme Ruler of everyone within their kingdom and land. The Vizier is the King's personal minister that looks after everything regarding the King. They are also a more trusted minister than the others in a King's court.

Chaturanga has been used to plan out battles, however the first game played was between a Persian King and his wisest minister. After their magnificent game with each other, the King applied the strategies that he discussed with the minister. The result of the war is unknown. Soon later, Chaturanga moved to Persia and was slowly starting to be played as a game, rather than a board to study battle strategies on.

Persians then decided to bring new words into the game, such as Shah and Shah mat. Shah means King and Shah mat means checkmate, which literally means 'the king is frozen'.

Many battle strategies were planned by using this game. In Chaturanga or modern-day chess, you always activate your king in the endgame; in India, kings used to participate in battles as well. This is a common similarity between the game and reality, which is vital.

How to Play

Chaturanga is a game which involves 16 pieces per player. The pieces are as follows:

- 1 Raja (King)
- 1 Vizier (Minister)
- 2 Chariots
- 2 Elephants (Rooks)
- 2 Horses (Knights)
- 8 Pawns

The pieces came in Red or Black and were made from clay. The pieces were then burnt in a kiln. The pieces also had flat bottoms, so that it was easy to move on the board. The players had to move their pieces in accordance with a dice. The players had to roll a dice and whatever it landed on, they had to move. This made the game more interesting and added a cool twist.

There are two sides: red/white and black. The player with the white pieces always moves first. The exact rules to Chaturanga are unknown, but there are some rules that are very similar.

Raja: Moves 1 square in any direction.

Vizier: Moves 1 square diagonally

Elephants: Moves 2 squares diagonally. This piece can also jump over other pieces.

Horse: Moves in an L-shape (2 up/down, 1 left/right)

Chariots: Moves any number of squares both horizontally and vertically.

Pawns: Moves 1 square in the beginning and throughout the game. This unlike modern chess that we play today. Because of the pawn moving one square

in the beginning, the rule en passant is not liable. (Viewed on Chess.com 2022)

En passant is when a pawn moves two squares and if there is a pawn adjacent to it can capture it, as if the pawn only moved one square. This rule came to

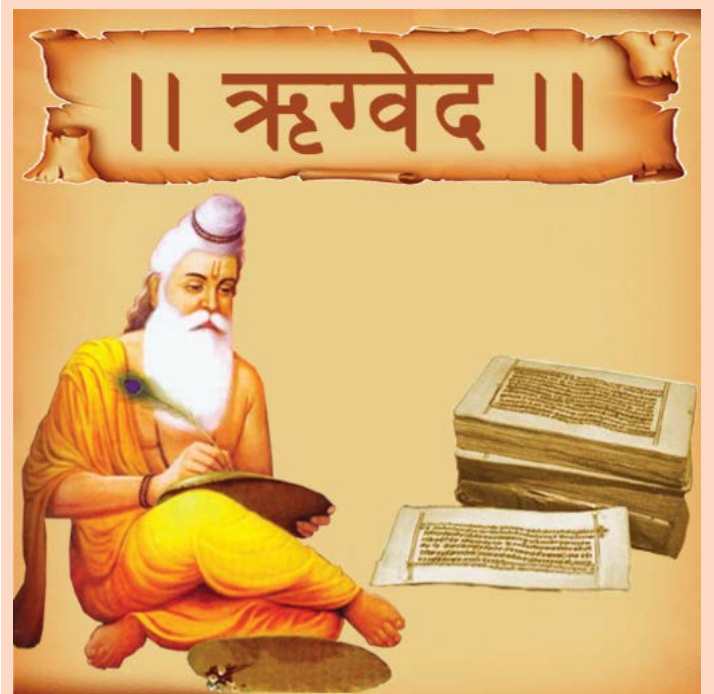


Figure 6 : Rig Veda

Courtesy: dnaofhinduism.com



Figure 7 : Mahabharata

Courtesy: Worldhistory.org

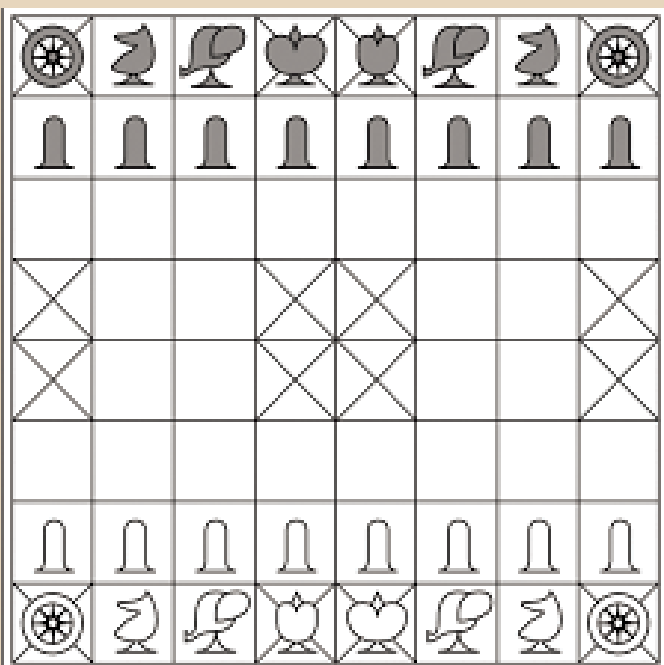


Figure 3 : Chaturanga Board

Courtesy: Cyningstan.com

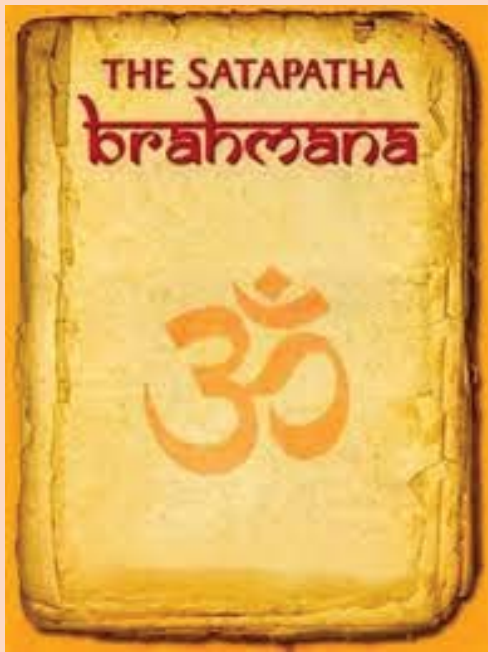


Figure 5 : Satapata-Brahmana
 Courtesy: Goodreads.com

be because in Chaturanga the pawns moved only one square. Now, in modern chess, they move two squares.

The objective of this game is to checkmate your opponent's king. The stalemated king also gets the victory, unlike modern chess, where a stalemate is a draw.

Chaturanga's link with the Mahabharata

Chaturanga, believe it or not, links with the famous epic, Mahabharata. The Mahabharata is one of the two epics: the other being the Ramayana. As we have learnt, Chaturanga was used for battle strategies and formations. The name Chaturanga derived from

the Mahabharata. Chaturanga means 'four limbs or arms.' In the Mahabharata there were four divisions, namely elephantry, chariotry, calvary and infantry. This is how Chaturanga is linked to the Mahabharata. The name, 'Chaturanga' was listed in the Rig Veda and the Satapata Brahmana, but not in the style of a game.

Conclusion

Chaturanga is a game that has been used to plan battle strategies, as well as being played as a game. It is also linked to the amazing Mahabharata and has travelled around the world from India to Persia and Europe. Chaturanga was also played by women as well, which showed the dedication that women had in the game, just like what we see today. From Chaturanga to Chess, this game is appreciated worldwide and is known as the root of our modern-day chess that we play today.

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About the Author

Aishwarya Srikanth has many hobbies and some of which include, Carnatic Singing, playing the violin, playing cricket and swimming. Aishwarya has been doing Carnatic Singing for 8 years, playing the violin for 3 years, playing cricket for 2 years and have been swimming for 12 years.

as a temple dedicated to Radha Krishna. The holy river Ganges kisses the temple's outer premises and there are two exclusive bathing ghats where most pilgrims and devotees take the holy dip before offering their obeisance to mother goddess Kali or "Bhabatarini" and Lord Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa, who spent a considerable amount of his time as a priest of this magnificent temple.

The temple has quite a bit of history attached to it. Legend has it that in the year 1847, a wealthy widow of a Bengali Zaminder – Rani Rasmoni made up her mind to go on a pilgrimage to the holy city of Banaras, which is quite a distance from Calcutta, given the fact that in those days Rani Rasmoni choose to travel by boat, 24 in all, accompanied by her friends and relatives to Banaras. However, on the penultimate night of her departure to Banaras, Rani was blessed with a dream in which mother goddess Kali (Bhabatarini) appeared before her and advised her not to proceed to Banaras. Instead, the goddess directed her to build a temple dedicated to her and install an image in which she would manifest herself and accept the prayers of the suffering humanity. And the rest as we all know is history.

Once the temple was built and it took almost 8 years (1847–1855), Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa was given the task of the head priest of the temple after the demise of his elder brother Ramkumar. For the next 30 years of his life, Sri Ramakrishna not only performed the task of a head priest but also immersed in deep spiritual practices at this temple. It is here that Sri Ramakrishna's spiritual zest began to bloom and some of the most epoch-making events of modern India's spiritual regeneration found its expression at this stupendous temple. From the arrival of Narendranath to his ultimate transformation as Swami Vivekananda on the world stage, the doctrine of harmony of religions and the subsequent flowering of the Ramakrishna Math & Mission into the forefront of the world's spiritual and philanthropic landscape are all rooted in the Dakshineswar Kali Temple.

Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa is considered as an incarnation of God and he practiced the different religious beliefs like Vaishnavism, Shaktism, Vedantism and Tantrikism. He happens to be the only Indian sage, from ancient to the present, who achieved the ultimate spiritual enlightenment - "Nirvana" through the Devi Sutra in Hindu, the Allah of the Mohammedans and Jesus Christ of the Christians. The culmination of an uneducated and poor Gadadhar Chattopadhyay from a remote village of Bengal's Kamarpukur to the highest order of spiritual wisdom have all occurred in the backdrop of the holy Dakshineswar temple.

Apart from the main Kali temple, visitors to the temple also make it a point to visit the hallowed dwelling chamber of Sri Ramakrishna located to the northwestern side of the temple premises in close proximity to the last of the Shiva temples. In this chamber there are two beds used by Sri Ramakrishna where his photographic images are installed and ritual pujas are performed everyday by the temple priest. A glass enclosure separates Sri Ramakrishna's beds from the visitors. In the evening, in time for the all-important Aarati, a Hookah pipe is attached to Sri Ramakrishna's image and doesn't he seem to be in a trance piping that Hookah?

Such is the fervor of the devotees that they believe, the 'Master' is very much present in not only his chamber but everywhere else around the temple. There are authentic reports of numerous devotees who have been blessed with his divine presence at the Dakshineswar Kali Temple. There is a popular belief that every month during "Amabaishya" evening if one sits on the steps of the bathing ghat opposite to the main temple, one is likely to hear the footsteps of the 'Master' as he rises from the holy river Ganges and walks all the way to the main temple wearing only his loin cloth and "Kharam" or wooden slippers.

The main temple is conspicuous by a magnificent "Natmandir", or music hall, which is well supported by regally done up pillars. To the northwest and southwest

parts of the temple premises there are two “Nahabats” or music towers. The elaborate planning of the temple premises with its paved courtyard has a number of rooms exclusively meant for use by the staff and guests of the temple.

Of special importance is the orchard to the north of the temple premises where the “Panchavati” consisting of the Banyan tree and the Bel tree, associated integrally with Sri Ramakrishna's spiritual practices where he would sit in meditation for hours together. Presently the entire Panchavati area and its surroundings have been remodeled with an ethnically designed hut, the kind found mostly in the villages of Kamarpukur and Jayrambati where Sri Ramakrishna and his holy consort Sri Sarada Devi belonged.

Apart from the Panchavati, the dwelling place of Sri Sarada Devi – “Nahabat” which is a double storied edifice has been remodeled by architects and restored to its former glory. On the ground floor, the image of Holy Mother is ritually worshipped everyday by the temple's priest.

The piece de resistance is of course the sanctum sanatorium of the Divine Mother – “Bhavatarini”, the dispeller of darkness. The basalt image of the mother goddess Kali is conspicuous by her dazzling gold brocade, and she is seen standing upright over the

white marbled image of her holy consort Shiva who lies prostrate below her.

The Divine Mother is adorned with the choicest of ornaments like anklets, necklaces made of gold and pearls, a garland of human heads made out of gold and a golden nose ring with a pearl-drop.

It is here at this world-famous Kali Temple of Dakshineswar that Sri Ramakrishna observed some of the most difficult and path breaking “Sadhanas” or spiritual austerities. His bitter lamentations to the divine mother to reveal herself, his daredevil decision to end his life unless blessed with her vision, his constant lingering for religious truth and the remarkable ease with which he attained the pinnacle of spirituality glory or “Moksha” is today a part and parcel of Bengal's popular folklore.

Today as the world progresses at a phenomenal pace, the key concepts of Sri Ramakrishna's teachings like the oneness of existence, the inherent divinity in all living beings and the harmony of religions is being felt eagerly with each passing day. After his passing away, Sri Ramakrishna's message of universal harmony of religions was spread all over the world, particularly in the affluent western countries like USA and UK by his foremost disciple Swami Vivekananda. His soul stirring lectures were rousing calls to a sleeping giant,



Dakshineswar Temple
Courtesy: double-dolphin.blogspot.com

in the West they were bombshells, not meant to awaken an ancient culture, but to turn a relatively young one upside down. He stirred those countries to the very bottom of their and galvanized the entire world with his historic and epoch-making speech at the World Parliament of Religions at Chicago in the year 1893.

The spiritual saga of the Dakshineswar Temple is such that even today devotees from affluent western countries come here in ever increasing numbers just to feel the surcharged spiritual energy that oozes here. There are some who pay a visit every year during auspicious occasions like the birthday of Sri Ramakrishna, Holy Mother Sarada Devi and Swami Vivekananda and his brother disciples.

I meet one ardent devotee of Sri Ramakrishna – Anne Gower from U.K. who visits the Dakshineswar Temple every year for spiritual solace and according to her - “the vision of the Mother is exciting attention today when for the first time in history we have so many single parents battling for survival in their profession, battling traffic to get home at the end of the day, battling to feed their kids and keep their houses reasonably sane and to them the concept of an all-powerful Mother deity who all alone creates and sustains this universe begins to feel right”.

If Dakshineswar Kali Temple was the playground of Sri Ramakrishna’s “Leela”, Belur Math – the worldwide headquarters of the Ramakrishna Math & Mission located on the opposite bank of the river Ganges is the place where the Master’s teachings and doctrines have been put into practice. It goes without saying that most visitors to Dakshineswar Kali temple compliment their visit to the Kali temple with a visit to Belur Math. There are regular ferryboat services linking the Dakshineswar Kali temple with Belur Math and vice versa.

Offering puja at Dakshineswar is a lot saner than the sheer chaotic situation of Kalighat, another of Calcutta’s renowned Kali temples. The best part is that however big the crowd, one and all have to advance through the queue, however serpentine it

TRIVIA BOX – I

In one of Narendranath’s (Swami Vivekananda’s) visit to Sri Ramakrishna at the temple of Dakshineswar, the ‘Master’ ushered Narendra to his bedside at his hallowed chamber. Sri Ramakrishna was lost in his Divine mood and as he gradually approached Narendra, he touched him with his right foot and the corresponding spiritual fervor experienced by Narendra was summarily described by Swami Vivekananda thus - “I saw with my eyes open that all the things of the room together with the walls were rapidly whirling and receding into an unknown region, and my I-ness together with the whole universe was, as it were, going to vanish in an all devouring great void. I was then overwhelmed with terrible fear. I knew that the destruction of I-ness was death, so I thought that death was before me, very near at hand. Unable to control myself, I cried out loudly, saying, ‘Ah! What is it you have done to me? I have my parents, you know.’”

might be. During festive occasions and on weekdays like Tuesdays and Saturdays along with “Amabaishyas” the crowds descend from all over Calcutta and beyond and even then there is order in place. Here the “Pandanusance” (Touts) that are customary in other pilgrim places are never an issue.

On prior information, the temple’s Management also provides exclusive services to outstation pilgrims by attaching a registered “Purohit” or priest who performs the all-important puja with the necessary offerings to the mother goddess like sweets, flowers, incense sticks and other associated worshipping accessories that can be bought from the adjacent “Dala Arcade” flower market.

There is also the popular belief among the rich and the wealthy of Calcutta and elsewhere that providing “Kangali Bhojons” or feeding the poor at Dakshineswar brings divine blessings from the goddess and the

TRIVIA BOX – II

During the time when Sri Ramakrishna was at the height of his spiritual austerities at the Dakshineswar Kali temple, many people from his ancestral village of Kamarpukur were of the opinion that Sri Ramakrishna had gone mad due to the rigors of his spiritual austerities. Even after being married to Sri Sarada Devi, whom he left behind at his ancestral village, he carried on with his “Sadhana” at Dakshineswar and people of the village began taunting Sri Sarada Devi that her husband was indeed mad.

Alarmed, by the fact that her husband might have gone mad, Sri Sarada Devi decided to pay a visit to Dakshineswar herself to find out the true story. To her utter delight she found out that her holy consort – Sri Ramakrishna was every bit a normal individual. After her first visit to Dakshineswar, she once again returned to her ancestral village only to come back and stay permanently with Sri Ramakrishna at Dakshineswar’s Nahabat.

temple’s management does make arrangements for such philanthropic gestures of generosity towards the poor.

Here at the Dakshineswar Kali Temple Sri Ramakrishna’s mystical experiences assure us that the Mother goddess indeed functions in the lives of her devotees as protector and companion. What is important for us, the lay devotees is that the ability to “catch” the all-powerful Goddess for ourselves in our own vision is open to us if we actually want to reach out for it.

TRIVIA BOX – III

Holy Mother in the most unique way fulfilled the duties of a wife, mother and nun. There have been before in the world the ideal wife, the ideal mother and the ideal nun, but a combination of the three in one person is rare indeed. She was his companion in spiritual life. In spite of her marriage she remained a nun, pure in body and mind and in uninterrupted communion with god. Though she had no children of the flesh, she had many of the spirit.

There was an instance when Sri Sarada Devi was massaging Sri Ramakrishna’s feet and she suddenly asked him – How do you look upon me? Sri Ramakrishna’s reply was – “The Mother who is in the temple, the Mother who has given birth to this body and is now living in the Nahabat, the same Mother is now massaging my feet. Truly, I always look upon you as a form of the blissful Divine Mother”.

Traveler’s Fact File:

Dakshineswar Kali temple is located to the left of Dunlop Junction, and further ahead is the P.W.D Road that extends all the way to the Dakshineswar Railway Station. You need to take a left turn after crossing the railway station that leads you to the Temple. A new flyover has been built that conveniently links the Dakshineswar temple to Calcutta proper. Hired taxis ply regularly from the NSCB airport, Sealdah Railway Station and Howrah Railway Station making Dakshineswar Temple within easy reach of visitors.



About the Author

Subhasish Chakraborty is a travel writer and has been working as a Travel Journalist for the past two decades and has also been editorially involved with numerous international In-Flight magazines of renowned airlines like Cathy Pacific, Dragon Air, Bhutan Airlines, Air Asia, Airport Authority of India etc. He was also involved with the UNWTO (World Tourism Organization) as a consultant.

GUYANA : Witnessing Coercive Conversion



By **Fred Stella,**

Member, National Leadership Council, Hindu American Foundation

Like most Americans the only thing I knew about Guyana is that a very tragic event transpired some 40 years ago in the jungle that featured a megalomaniac Christian preacher. There is a saying that we in the US can't locate a country on a map until our military bombs it.

Among all the things I learned over the past few years was that Guyana had a sizable Hindu population. Thankfully, attending the annual Hindu Mandir Executive Conference in Trinidad some years ago resulted in a serious offer to visit. The trip would be sponsored by a few Guyanese groups, along with my advocacy organization, The Hindu American Foundation (HAF), where I sit on its National Leadership Council. (HAFSITE.ORG) Though the A in HAF specifically indicates "America," the board and staff agreed that we must not dismiss such sizable populations in close proximity.

The scenery in Guyana is awesome but it is the people that really make the lasting impressions. I was immediately overwhelmed with great kindness and hospitality.

The 1st few of my 9 days were spent at The Social Services Center of Excellence in Woodley Park, WCB. This was founded by pandit and educator, Ram Rattan who currently spends most of his time in Florida, but continues to maintain a presence in Guyana. This is truly a jewel of a place, offering classes for social and individual improvement. Sri Ramji was kind enough to

provide me with a room and all meals when he learnt the purpose of my trip. He even joined me for several of the lectures I gave in that general area.

Since so many Indians who became indentured in Guyana were from Uttar Pradesh, my experience allowed me to sample new tastes—served on lotus leaves.

One breathtaking trip was the ferry from Parika to Essequibo. Everything about it—the water, passing the beautiful islands, and the wonderful breeze all contributed to feeling of great content.

Guyana has absolutely stunning homes. What impresses most is the originality of the designs and architecture. All the houses are unique, unlike our dull subdivisions. I know that Guyana is not a "rich" country, but everyone in US with whom I shared my photos would like to visit. I saw many inspiring temples outstanding among which was the one at Gay Park, overseen by female Pandita Srimati Maraj. Our guide for the day, generous and always willing to help, Rudy Ram Persaud (who has since passed away) made sure that we visited the site where indentured servants first landed in 1838.

I would encourage Hindus from the US and India alike to take a lesson from the way pujas and yagnas are conducted in Guyana. We spend too much time in rituals that few can understand, but in the land of endless summer the rituals are briefer. There is always an accomplished harmoniumist



Courtesy : britannica.com

and percussionist. The power of bhajans creates an atmosphere of true bhakti. The Katha delivered by the pundits is the center of attention. Drawing from the stories of the Ramayana (mostly) they engage the devotees in a way that I don't often see in standard American Hindu temples. There are exceptions here, but they are rare.

At US temples people overindulge in socializing. In my home temple, it is sad that devotees have to be constantly told to stop talking. However, at a yagna with over 500 in attendance at Hampton Court on the Essequibo Coast all eyes and ears were on presiding pandit Lalaram from the Bath Settlement, Berbice. They were also very kind to me when I was asked speak.

Visiting and staying with Swami Aksharananda allowed me to speak for an entire day to the students at Saraswati Vidya Niketan, a private Hindu School at Cornelia Ida. The behavior of the children, their rigorous schedule and the quality of the teachers all contributed to its status of one of the best in the country. If we could import that level of academic professionalism to the US we would have a greater nation. Fixed in memory is a trip to the Stabroek Market, where I was able to purchase a beautiful gold necklace from the most venerable jewelry merchants in Guyana. I was warned that this was not the safest place for a white foreigner; but I was fortunate to have Swami with me.

The purpose of my trip was to investigate the challenge that the Hindu community is dealing with what we call predatory conversion. While acknowledging the sanctity of a person's decision to move from one religion to another, we know that some religious groups use methods on individuals and communities to persuade them to adopt a religion they wouldn't normally join if not for pressure. This coercion can come in the form of bribery, medical aid, professional gains, denigrating Hindu deities and traditions, etc. I saw with my own eyes a Christian woman tell a child no older than 10 that her Hindu deities were demons. It was thought that a white American who did in fact leave his birth religion of his own accord to embrace Dharma might have a positive impact on the devotees who have to deal with ideas of superiority that the European explorers took with them to their colonies. In my conversations with retired lawyer and Guyanese-Canadian writer, Ram Sahadeo we discussed a lecture tour I completed back in 2005 when I crisscrossed much of India's northeast states, speaking at local temples, schools and public venues in an attempt to resist the rampant predatory conversion practices there. There seemed to be much interest in our mission in Guyana. Several good connections were made and many ideas were discussed but much more coordination is needed to combat this problem using the Gandhian principle of Ahimsa.

Summary

There really is a serious problem of predatory proselytism in Guyana. No one is able to give a definite count, but everyone seems to be able to agree with the assessment.

While Hindus are challenged there by missionaries, it appears that the Hindu Dharma is still quite vital. The young pandits conduct services are doing wonderful work. The pujas are performed in a traditional way that is much more engaging. US mandirs that are run by mostly 1st gen Indian-Americans can learn some things from them.

Anyone interested in a more detailed report can contact me.

Hindu Dharma Advocacy Through HINDU TEMPLES

By Utsav Chakrabarti, Renu Gupta, Adelle Nazarian, Amulya Tyagi

What is Hindu advocacy?

Hindu advocacy is an important tool for justice that seeks to ensure that our voices are heard on issues that are important to us, to protect and promote our rights, and to have our views and wishes genuinely considered when decisions are being made which affect our lives.

Advocacy involves interaction and dialogue with legislators (at the local, state and federal levels), policy makers, business leaders, other faith leaders, and social leaders to help them correctly understand our beliefs, values, culture, way of worship, festivals, concerns and contributions to the nation in which we live. Countering false, malicious and hateful propaganda against us by presenting the truth and without denigrating the adversary is integral to Hindu advocacy and to our core values. Advocacy is not partisan politics. In fact, dialogue with politicians on a bipartisan basis is an integral part of advocacy. There is an American saying, “the squeaky wheel gets the grease.” Advocacy is that “squeak”. It is an effective tool for correcting social injustices and making systems better for all.

Two examples of massive and systemic injustices that have historically existed in American civil society are the legally sanctioned denial of right to vote for women and brutal racial discrimination. Through passionate advocacy, albeit a long and arduous journey, both injustices were corrected.

It is incumbent upon everyone to look beyond self-interest and understand that unless there is a

just environment for the entire Hindu community, individual interests will not be protected no matter how wealthy and well connected the individual may be. Also, without widespread community support and continuous effort, no advocacy will be effective. This is something we should learn from the Jewish and Muslim communities.

Why is Hindu advocacy needed?

In an environment of increasing hate against Hindus in academia and in the public square, advocacy is the core to the future of Hindu destiny in America.

Over the past decade, there have been growing efforts to target American Hindus through the use of colonial tropes and current hate narratives that emerge from American socio-political fault lines. As colonial Hindu phobic tropes and “caste” are being institutionalized into the educational discourse and workplace ethics, Hindu Americans are being singled out for discrimination and cancellation. Well organized and well-funded groups like Council for American Islamic Relations (CAIR), Indian American Muslim Council (IAMC), Equality Labs, Hindus for Human Rights (H4HR) and Islamic Circle of North America (ICNA), with allegiances to geopolitical actors in Qatar, Turkey and Pakistan are playing a key role in amplifying these hate campaigns. They not only find intersectional allies in the American neo-Left, but also amongst powerful

right wing Church groups. Overall, a perfect storm of targeted hate, spanning the entire spectrum of ideologies. The combined effect of these anti-Hindu hate campaigns is causing dehumanization of Hindus in the American public square and the campus environment, both of which are spaces that attract Hindu diaspora communities to the US, in the first place.

What is even more alarming is that there is a growing perception that the Hindu temples and religious institutions are unable or unwilling to take on this problem head-on. If this perception continues to grow, the future generations will lose confidence in their temples and institutions as avenues of redressal of the socio-political threats they face. From there onwards, the temples will slowly fade away into irrelevance, as mere symbols of ceremonial mores.

Role of Hindu temples in Hindu advocacy

Historically, Hindu temples were the center for community activities, not just religious rituals.

One example of the temple's role in the Hindu community is the establishment of the successful Vijayanagar Empire in the 14th century. Harihara Raya I and Bukka Raya I were two brothers in the service of the Kampili chief. After Kampili fell to Muslim invaders, they were taken to Delhi and converted to Islam. They were then sent back to Kampili as the Delhi sultanate's vassals. After gaining power in the region, they contacted Vidyaranya, the 12th Jagadguru of the Sringeru Sharada Peetham, and did a homecoming to the Hindu dharma.

After a massive defeat of the Hindu kings in the South by Delhi sultanate, Shri Jagadguru ji inspired the Raya brothers to establish the Vijayanagar Empire around 1336 to protect and preserve Hindu dharma. He worked as the patron saint, political, social, and spiritual guide to Raya brothers and the first three kings of the empire. The Vijayanagar Empire stood strong for the next 350 years and defended Hindu society and dharma in that region.

Hindu temples or ashrams are natural draws for the devotees. Any newcomer Hindu feels at home in the temples. Devotees share their joy and good news – a new home, job, marriage, new baby, new car etc. – by doing pooja in the temple. Also, during sad times like death in the family, devotees look to the temple for support and guidance. The temple's role should not be limited to being a place just for pooja and food. We should learn from our history and make the temple the center for all activities whether it be learning Hindu dharma, doing sewa such as helping not only our community members but the whole society in times of need, and conducting Hindu advocacy.

The temple is an icon of dharma. When dharma is in crisis or is being attacked, the temple has the responsibility to stand as a shield of armor to save it and its devotees. Dharma has four pillars: sewa, spirituality, rituals/pooja and social awareness. The temple must fulfill them all. To quote from our revered

Mahābhārata, “Dharmo rakshati rakshitah; Dharma protects those who protect it.”

About the Author

Utsav Chakrabarti - An architect by profession, Utsav Chakrabarti is the Executive Director of HinduPACT.

Renu Gupta - A successful business owner, Renu Gupta is the Chapter Coordinator for HinduPACT.

Adelle Nazarian - A successful blockchain executive who led a fruitful career as a journalist, Adelle Nazarian is the director of communications and legislative outreach for HinduPACT.

Amulya Tyagi - A Chemical Engineer with more than 40 years of experience in Engineering Design and Project Management, Amulya Tyagi is the political liaison for HinduPACT.

Second Hindu Heritage Month Celebrated Across the Globe

Following the month-long celebration of our shared heritage, the global Hindu community bade a fond farewell to October 2022 as the second Hindu Heritage Month.

This year's HHM will go down in Hindu diaspora's history as the year when Hindu Heritage Month became a truly international phenomenon. This was the year when 180 Hindu organizations from different parts of the globe – from New Zealand to Norway – joined hands in celebrating their cultural and spiritual heritage as one people. Between them, they organized more than 200 events, showcasing a diverse, rich, and proud culture with multitudes of seminal contributions to the world.

There were number of things that set this year's HHM apart from last year's. We will only highlight a few here:

- 1. Theme music video:** World-class music video, “Lead me to Light”, released as the brand representative of Hindu Heritage Month:
- 2. Inaugural program:** This year’s theme, “Relevance and Importance of Hindu Values in Today’s World”, took the center stage in the inaugural program that took place on October 1, 2022.
- 3. Hindu Vishwa:** HHM2022 edition of VHPA’s (Vishwa Hindu Parishad of America) quarterly magazine, Hindu Vishwa, was released in October 2022.
- 4. International networking:** Hindus from 15 countries around the world participated



- 5. Focus on Next Generation:** “Next generation is our future” was not just a cliché, it was a key focus this year.
- Multi-day conference, “Enlivening Hindu Heritage: Voices of Diaspora Raised Hindus,” showcased the ongoing contributions of our next generation in their public and professional lives.
 - Closing ceremonies – All organized and executed by collaboration of Hindu youth leader worldwide
- 6. Diversity of Events:** The event themes were as diverse as the Hindu society itself. The events ranged from the traditional Navaratri, Durga Puja, Vijaya Dashami, Deepawali celebrations to blood drive, 5K fund-raising walk, a megaton food collection drive for the needy, educational seminars,



Sanskrita and Sanskriti promotional talks, reading of Hindu value statements at various city councils, and many more.

7. **Political recognitions:** Letters of congratulations from many political leaders, include one from Sh. Narendra Modi, were gratefully received. Nearly 25 states and 50 city governments in the United States rose to acknowledge the many contributions of the Hindu diaspora and issued formal proclamations to declare October as Hindu Heritage Month.

What is next for HHM?

Hindu Heritage Month is a movement with great momentum. We must capture this moment and build it into something much more tangible. To that end, the HHM organizing team would like to offer the following vision for the foreseeable future:

- Active participation from at least 30 countries by 2025
- Active participation by student/youth groups from at least 30 countries by 2025
- Formal declaration of October as Hindu Heritage Month in 5 countries by 2025
- Formal declaration by the United Nations by 2030.

These are not easy goals. But with dedication and perseverance, they are eminently achievable.

SVASTHA: Wellbeing in Ayurveda

By **Vamadeva Shastri** (Dr. David Frawley)

Ayurveda, the Vedic science of life for all living beings, defines health and wellbeing in terms of Svastha. Svastha means abiding (stha) in one's own Self (Sva). Yet to understand it, we must recognize that this Vedic abiding in our own nature reflects the Vedic view of the universe, which is very different than the outer worldview most of us follow today.

Svastha implies living in harmony with the world of nature (Prakriti), but also in harmony with our own inner nature. This means aligning our body, prana, senses and mind with the Self or Atman within. Such a definition includes physical, psychological and spiritual wellbeing, not just health in the modern medical sense. This Self is the very core of who we are and constitutes the underlying energy and consciousness behind the entire cosmos.

As Ayurveda is a branch of the Vedas, an Upaveda, this definition of wellbeing applies to all the Vedic Sciences including Yoga and Vedanta, and the principles of Vedic living overall, as discussed in the Yamas and Niyamas of the Yoga Sutras. The pursuit of Self-realization is the ultimate goal of life for all living beings and the source of the highest wellbeing and happiness for all. It is called Moksha or the ultimate freedom from sorrow. This inner wellbeing is what Vedic Counseling teaches us to manifest.

Wellbeing and Self-realization

This Ayurvedic definition of wellbeing doesn't mean merely being free of external pathogens or physical diseases, but the optimal use of our bodies as expressions of a deeper awareness. It includes psychological wellbeing but as rooted in an inner

peace, not the assertion of the separate self or ego. It is not the fulfillment of our personal desires, which are ultimately endless. It is not an outer prosperity, achievement or recognition, though it does not necessarily exclude these. It is not an external definition of wellbeing at all, but puts emphasis on an unqualified internal wellbeing as the basis of outer wellbeing.

Svastha means that wellbeing is inherent within us and is the very consciousness behind all of life. Such wellbeing is not a state to be achieved, but a state to be recognized within ourselves and in nature as a whole. Ultimate wellbeing is the wellness of Being, the bliss or Ananda inherent in Being (Sat) and Consciousness (Chit) that is all-pervasive and the very basis of our own Self-awareness, knowing which constitutes Self-realization.

What is the Root of Suffering?

One may then ask, if wellbeing is so central and all-pervasive, why is it that most people don't have or can't sustain it? If everything is rooted in an inner wellbeing, why do we suffer so much from pain and so many diseases of the body, and from sorrow, fear, grief, anger, and many other afflictions of the mind? The answer to this question can be found in understanding the different aspects of our nature as embodied creatures and their limitations.

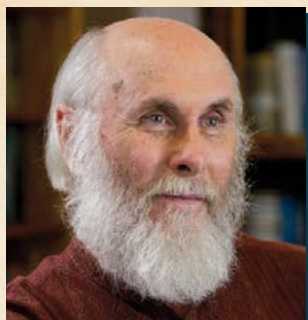
At a physical level, we can create and sustain wellbeing to some degree, but mere physical wellbeing is limited by disease and death inherent in our mortal existence. At a psychological level, we can similarly create and sustain wellbeing to some degree, but the mind is inherently susceptible to restless thoughts and disturbed emotions of the ego.

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Wellbeing is your true nature extending to the highest Ananda. Outer wellness, enjoyment and happiness is but a reflection of this. Go directly to the source of wellbeing or Svastha within yourself. Then you can experience happiness and contentment in all that you do or express through body and mind.

OCTOBER - DECEMBER 2022

About the Author



Dr. David Frawley (Pandit Vamadeva Shastri) D. Litt., author of several books, is a western born teacher or guru in the Vedic tradition. In India, Vamadeva is recognized as a Vedacharya (Vedic teacher), and includes in his scope of studies Ayurveda, Yoga, Vedanta and Vedic astrology, as well as the ancient Vedic teachings going back to the oldest Rigveda. Vamadeva is a recipient of the prestigious Padma Bhushan award, one of the highest civilian awards by the government of India, “for distinguished service of a higher order to the nation,” honoring his work and writings as a Vedic teacher, which he received in March 2015.



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Buddhism in the US

Looking Through the Land of Buddha

By Kishore Sherchand, Ph.D.

My humble perception is that there exist limited publications or discourses in the current media about the Western Buddhism explained by Nepalese scholars. I am prompted to write something from what I have observed and learned in the United States of America hoping to offer some insights why Buddhism is so fascinating to the Western World. Lord Buddha never taught any dogmatism, rather taught the core values of one's life as: the Four Noble Truths and the Eightfold Paths. Lord Buddha taught that any human being can attain Buddhahood provided he or she follows those relevant paths. That is why we also believe that Lord Buddha, apart from the contemporary Shakyamuni Buddha, existed before (Dipamkar) and the Buddha will again come in the foreseeable future (Maitriya).

My Journey

When I came to the U.S.A., my deep desire was to find a place where I and my family could go and sit for peace and mindfulness. My first visit to such a place in the U.S.A. was Tse Chen Ling Buddhist Center near San Francisco downtown. It was run by a group of residential native-born American monks and nuns. The center's teaching was headed by a Tibetan Lama Gheshe Knawang Dakpa. The center is affiliated with the Foundation for the Preservation on Mahayana Tradition (FPMT) and their students often visit

Nepal. After about a year and half, I started visiting Shambhala Buddhist Center in Sunset district. We did not see any monks or nuns as we did in Tse Chen Ling Buddhist Center. It was more like teachers adopting the Shambhala way of teaching, meditating and studying philosophy. Later, when I moved to Sacramento, I was associated with a Thai Buddhist Temple *Wat Sacramento Buddhavanaram* run by 5 Thai monks. Again in about a year, I also started visiting another Buddhist Center by the name Lion's Roar Buddhist Center in Sacramento run by a native-born Lama Yeshe Jinpa. I also came to know another Buddhist Center by the name "One Bodhi Tree." My first visit was to see a documentary "Dalai Lama Renaissance." The Center's teaching is run by Mr. Ravi Verma, a computer scientist, a Buddhist practitioner and a teacher. In one of the meetings, he taught about "Tongle" (taking and giving) meditation and led meditation in the memory of recent tragedy in Japan.

Buddhism in the U.S.A.

According to several studies, Buddhism was almost unknown to the U.S.A. 150 years ago. One major event that helped Buddhism gain a breakthrough in the United States was the Parliament of World Religions in Chicago held in 1893, a highly publicized interfaith event attended by great Buddhist personalities of the world. Large scale Chinese immigrants in the 1850s and Japanese in the late 1880s, Koreans in around



Courtesy : invaluable.com

1903 and Tibetans after 1970s began to arrive. Since then, it is estimated that well over a thousand Buddhist temples and practice centers have been established in the U.S.A. The first Buddhist temple in America was built in 1853 in San Francisco by Sze Yap Company, a Chinese American fraternal society. California's Hsi Lai Temple is one of the largest Buddhist temples covering 15 acres (61,000 m²). The City of Ten Thousand Buddhas is geographically the largest Buddhist community in the U.S.A. located in Talmage, California covering over 480 acres (1.9 km²) of land. The first Theravad monastic community in the United States was established in Washington Buddhist Vihar in Washington in 1965 by the monks from Ceylon.

The Eighth Century Indian Sage and founder of Tibetan Buddhism, Guru Padma Sambhav (*The Lotus born*;

Guru Rinpoche; Lopon Rinpoche) did this prophecy and what came out to be now,

*"when the iron bird flies, horses run on wheels,
the Tibetan people will scatter like ants across the world,
and the Dharma will come to the land of red-faced
people."*

According to Ryuei Michael McCormick (2002), there are apparently three groups of Buddhism flourishing in the United States. The first group are the "Ethnic Buddhists"; the second group are the "Evangelical Buddhists"; and the third are the "Elite Buddhists" comprised of those native-born Americans. The Elite Buddhists comprise the most visible group of Buddhists in the U.S.A. Probably the best-known Tibetan Buddhist Lama to spread Buddhism in a more secular way in the United States was Chögyam Trungpa, who developed a series of secular techniques he called *Shambhala*



Courtesy : bulletin.hds.harvard.edu

Training. He established *Shambhala* International and Buddhist-inspired Naropa University in North America, first of its kind, that integrates ancient traditions of wisdom into the curriculum of modern education.

Robert A. F. Thurman (1990) once estimated there were 5 to 6 million Buddhists in America. And according to a 2004 study, more than 25 million Americans believe that Buddhist teachings have had an important influence on their spirituality. In a 2007 Pew Research Center survey, at 0.7% Buddhism was the fourth largest religion in the US after Christianity (78.4%), no religion (10.3%) and Judaism (1.7%).

Monastery to Living Room

Buddhism in the native land is performing rituals during birth, marriage, death, for peace and harmony. We have monastic way of practicing Buddhism. We do not meditate as a regular practice except monks and a few devoted Buddhists. Buddhism, especially Lamaism, has remained more of a passive type. Our

lamas and nuns were not trained in a way that could hold public teachings or social activities.

According to Perry Garfinkel in *National Geography* 2005, "Around the globe today there is a new Buddhism. Its philosophies are being applied to mental and physical health therapies and to political and environmental reforms. Athletes use it to sharpen their games. It helps corporate executives handle stress better. Police arm themselves with it to defuse volatile situations. Chronic pain sufferers apply it as a coping salve. Prisoners practice for self-reflection and rehabilitation." Buddhism is no longer just for monks and Asians in the United States; Christians and Jews practice it too. African Americans meditate alongside the Japanese Americans. Meditation has helped them to discipline their body and mind, finding a way out of dogmatism who don't believe in it, finding a disciplined life action, peace of mind, closer to nature and scientific verification.

University professors, writers, thinkers, Hollywood celebrities, sports men and women, executives have embraced Buddhism in a way of understanding and practicing. Meditation and chanting have become a way for many of them. One of the first who followed and got ordained as the monk of Buddhism was Robert Thurman. The other most well-known is Richard Gere who also supports freedom for Tibet and human rights.

The Fourth Form of Buddhism

Buddhism in the lands of Buddha is basically divided into three categories or sects: *Thervad* (Way of the Elders), a form of Buddhism practiced in Ceylon, India and other part of South-East Asia; *Mahayan* (Great Vehicle) popular in East Asia, China, Korea, Japan and part of Vietnam and *Vajrayan*, a refined form of Mahayan popular in Tibet, Himalayan region of Nepal and India, Bhutan, Mongolia, part of Eastern Russia. The fourth one coming up as the Western Form of practice popularly coined by Vietnamese Zen Buddhist Thich Nhat Hanh as “Engaged Buddhism” - socially engaged, livingroom-based, more secular, non-monastic, Humanistic, *Navayan* or *Dhyanayan*. The other best known who followed the path of Buddhism in a socially and politically way was Dr. Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar. Dr. Ambedkar, the Founding Father of the modern Indian constitution, is widely considered as the main figure who gave the coming back of Buddhism in India that was kept exiled for over 800 years.

Buddhism Is Rising

Many American youths question whether Buddhism is a religion or a philosophy. Because, Siddhartha Gautam did not say himself as a Son of God (*Jesus*

Christ), a Prophet of God (*Muhammad*) or a God of God (*Parameshwor Vishnu*), Buddhism does not preach the existence of God. The western quest to understanding the true meaning of Buddhism in daily life may have imparted an added value which is more than just a ritual practice as in the East. Buddhism has been least inimical against other religions.

The greatest man of the Century Albert Einstein appreciated Buddhism in his quote as the “Religion of the Future.” His prophecy is coming true judged by growing acceptance by Western intellectuals taking up meditation. Lama Surya Das, one of the most highly trained native-born American Lamas in the Tibetan tradition presents his definitive views in his book, “Awakening the Buddha Within” – “We are all Buddhists.” The problem is that most of us are sleeping Buddhas. Buddhism is a less theology or a religion than a promise that contains meditational practices and mind trainings which can effectively show us how to awaken Buddha nature and liberate us from suffering and confusion. U.C. Berkeley Prof. Lewis Lancaster, a practicing Buddhist and a distinguished scholar of Buddhism says: “Buddhism gave portable sanctity to the world; other Buddhism gave relics to the Western society; Buddhism connected its land of origin to China and parts of the ancient world; taught monastic living to other religions”

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About the Author

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Indian PhD student at CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY SOLVES 2,500-year-old SANSKRIT PUZZLE

**Rishi Rajpopat solved the 2,500-year-old Sanskrit puzzle
by decoding a rule taught by Panini, known as the father of linguistics**



Rishi Rajpopat

Photo: University of Cambridge

A grammatical problem that has defeated Sanskrit scholars since the 5th Century BC has finally been solved by an Indian PhD student at the University of Cambridge, it emerged as his thesis was published on Thursday.

Rishi Rajpopat made the breakthrough by decoding a rule taught by Panini, known as the father of linguistics, and is now encapsulated in his thesis entitled 'In Panini, We Trust: Discovering the Algorithm for Rule Conflict Resolution in the Astadhyayi'.

According to the university, leading Sanskrit experts have described Rajpopat's discovery as "revolutionary" and it could now mean that Panini's grammar can also be taught to computers for the first time.

"I had a eureka moment in Cambridge," recalls Rajpopat.

"After nine months of trying to crack this problem, I was almost ready to quit, I was getting nowhere. So, I closed the books for a month and just enjoyed the summer, swimming, cycling, cooking, praying and meditating. Then, begrudgingly I went back to work, and, within minutes, as I turned the pages, these patterns started emerging, and it all started to make sense. There was a lot more work to do but I'd found the biggest part of the puzzle," said the 27-year-old scholar.

Over the next few weeks, he was so excited that he couldn't sleep and would spend hours in the library, including in the middle of the night, to check what he'd found and solve related problems. It would take another two and half years before he would get to the finish line.

"Panini had an extraordinary mind and he built a machine unrivalled in human history. He didn't expect

us to add new ideas to his rules. The more we fiddle with Panini's grammar, the more it eludes us," says Rajpopat.

The 2,500-year-old algorithm decoded by him makes it possible, for the first time, to accurately use Panini's so-called "language machine".

Rajpopat's discovery makes it possible to "derive" any Sanskrit word, to construct millions of grammatically correct words, using Panini's revered language machine, which is widely considered to be one of the greatest intellectual achievements in history.

Panini's system – 4,000 rules detailed in his renowned work, the Astadhyayi, which is thought to have been written around 500 BC – is meant to work like a machine. Feed in the base and suffix of a word and it should turn them into grammatically correct words and sentences through a step-by-step process.

Until now, however, there has been a big problem. Often, two or more of Panini's rules are simultaneously applicable at the same step leaving scholars to agonize over which one to choose. Solving so-called "rule conflicts", which affect millions of Sanskrit words including certain forms of "mantra" and "guru", requires an algorithm. Rajpopat's research shows that Panini's so-called language machine is also self-sufficient.

"My student Rishi has cracked it – he has found an extraordinarily elegant solution to a problem that has perplexed scholars for centuries. This discovery will revolutionize the study of Sanskrit at a time when interest in the language is on the rise," said Professor Vincenzo Vergiani, Sanskrit professor and Rajpopat's PhD supervisor.



Six months before Rajpopat made his discovery, Professor Vergiani gave him some prescient advice: "If the solution is complicated, you are probably wrong". A major implication of Rajpopat's discovery is that now there is the algorithm that runs Panini's grammar, it could potentially teach this grammar to computers.

"Computer scientists working on Natural Language Processing gave up on rule-based approaches over 50 years ago. So teaching computers how to combine the speaker's intention with Panini's rule-based grammar to produce human speech would be a major milestone in the history of human interaction with machines, as well as in India's intellectual history," said Rajpopat.

Sanskrit is an ancient and classical Indo-European language from South Asia. While only spoken in India by an estimated 25,000 people today, it has influenced many other languages and cultures around the world.

"Some of the most ancient wisdom of India has been produced in Sanskrit and we still don't fully understand what our ancestors achieved. We've often been led to believe that we're not important, that we haven't brought enough to the table. I hope this discovery will infuse students in India with confidence, pride, and hope that they too can achieve great things," added Rajpopat.

Source: <https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/indian-phd-student-at-cambridge-university-solves-2500-year-old-sanskrit-puzzle/article66267473.ece>



A-B-C of MORALS and VALUES

(Continued)

By Siddheshwari Devi (Didi Ji)

Kis for Kindness. Those who are kind to us hold a special place in our heart. We fondly remember their acts of kindness, be it an encouraging smile, a helping hand, or a shoulder to cry on. Of what use is beauty, wealth, physical strength or status in society if the heart is dry and uncaring? If there is no desire to alleviate the suffering of another; if there is no concern to wipe the tears of fellow man, we are not deserving of being called 'human.'

Amongst all the people living in the world we find varying levels of kindness, with God leading us by example. Whether or not we acknowledge it, we are all heavily in debt for all that God has done and is doing for us. So kind and merciful is He that He does not require even gratitude. Keeping this in mind, we must learn to be kind simply because it's our duty.

Kindness starts in the mind. Always think kind thoughts. Be kindhearted. Your kind thoughts will turn into kind actions. Do not look for acknowledgment when you do someone a favor. Do not think highly of yourself for being kind. Being kind does not prove your greatness. True greatness lies in not having the pride of being kind.

L is for Loyalty. Individuals, nations, businesses and political parties alike desire loyalty. Airlines show appreciation to loyal customers and reward them in many ways. Employers reward loyal employees with bonuses and vacations. Being loyal to a party helps a person make political strides.

What does Loyalty mean? It means giving support in good and bad times. Just as birds flock to the fruit-bearing tree without invitation but fly away when the tree is bare, there are those who will befriend you when you are on the mountaintop but abandon you when you are down in the valley. If you wish to know who your true friends are, look at who is standing with you even in your darkest hour.

How can you be loyal in everyday life? You can give your honest feedback to friends and family. If you are concerned about a good friend's actions, tell her so. You can be loyal by refusing to gossip about friends and coworkers. When you commit to a cause, see it through. When you take on a job, make sure you stick with it.

M is for Modesty. In the midst of loud, brash and in-your-face culture, modesty is often mistaken as a weakness. It is anything but. Whether inner or outer, modesty is the strength of an individual. When you dress modestly, you show that you respect your body and do not wish to display it for all to see. It also shows that you are confident enough not to be pressured into wearing inappropriate clothing just to fit in or to please others.

We admire modesty in others. When you compliment someone on her achievements, which answer would you prefer? “I have worked hard and I deserve everything that has come my way.” Or, “Thank you; I really enjoy what I do.”

The Supreme Lord teaches His children modesty and sets a great example for all to follow. After giving a lecture to the citizens of Ayodhya, Bhagvan Shri Ram said, “Just because I am your king, do not think that I expect or instruct you to obey Me. I have said what I needed to say. You are free to do as you please.”

Being modest does not mean that you deny your talents and accomplishments. It simply means that you give the credit to God who has enabled you to see, hear, think and take decisions.

N is for Nonviolence. Every creature, big or small, is a child of God, and God resides in the heart of all His children. Even trees are living creatures that have a miniscule amount of intelligence. Even they experience pleasure and pain. Insects have more intelligence than trees; birds have still more intelligence; animals are more intelligent than birds. The human intelligence and potential is certainly the greatest of all creatures. Using our intelligence, we put even very large creatures to use. We use them as beasts of burden and also earn money by putting them in the zoo and the circus.

Being the most powerful of all creatures, it is our duty to be compassionate to not only fellow humans, but to all creatures. There are some instances in which

violence cannot be avoided, such as cutting trees and chopping vegetables for consumption.

The rule of thumb is to have a mind full of kind and benevolent thoughts. Non-violence will then become a natural way of life.

O is for Optimism. Whether you are nurturing a family, a corporation or even yourself, you are a leader, and leaders need to be optimistic. In the face of a bleak situation, you can either give up and wait for the sky to fall, or you can keep smiling, remain active and bide your time until things look up once more. Everyone’s life is full of ups and downs. If you happen to be in the valley today, you will be on the hill one day soon. If you resign yourself to failure, you are sure to fail.

To become optimistic, always look at the positive side of things. This is not to say that you should become unrealistic. Not at all! It simply means that while you are aware of the possible setback or failure, you choose to work towards success and choose to anticipate success.

Think of the people in history who accomplished great things in life. We would not know of Gandhi if he had become pessimistic and given up his peaceful fight for India’s freedom. We also would not know of the Wright brothers if they had given up after multiple failures to take flight. Edison’s success can be attributed to his consistent optimism.

P is for Patience. In this day and age, the word ‘patience’ sounds odd to many people. Technological advancements have been occurring at a dizzying pace and we have become accustomed to instant soup, instant nails, fast food and instant gratification. No one wishes to play the waiting game.

The dangers of impatience are seen on the highway where a driver becomes so annoyed at having been cut off that he takes revenge by cursing and even shooting



at the offender. The impatient patient at the doctor's office cannot seem to relax and worsens his condition by stressing himself out even further. And when it comes to interpersonal relationships patience is a nurturing agent. Impatience contributes to the death of a relationship.

We should learn to be patient by observing Nature. Look around and you will see that Nature simply will not be rushed. The gardener waters the plants, but flower buds appear only when it's the right season.

Q is for Quietness. We are constantly exposed to sounds from digital devices, traffic noises, construction noises and loud conversations. Exposure to these sounds affects our ability to concentrate and take the right decisions. Even sleep time is disturbed by the presence of the humming and buzzing sounds from the devices that are with us all day and that we cannot do without even at night. Quiet moments in which there are no distractions allow us to remain calm throughout the day. At the end of the day, they help us learn lessons by processing the events of the day peacefully.

Noise kills creativity, and quietness encourages it. The masterpieces in art, architecture and literature were created by those who scheduled daily quiet time to work on honing their skills.

Quiet reflection is essential for a true seeker. In quiet moments the seeker connects with his inner self, and he can then hear the still, small voice of God.

R is for Respect. Respect is something we desire for ourselves but do not always give to others. Every person deserves our respect. Elders must be respected for their life experiences and the wisdom we can acquire from them. Instead of regarding them as wise teachers, society often casts them aside and generally ignores them.

Respect ought to be given to each and every individual and to all creatures. God lives in the heart of everyone, and every person has a lot of goodness within. Every child of God is unique and special.

Respecting Nature and the environment is a critical issue these days. We see the damage we have caused by abusing Mother Earth. Pollution and needless wastage are examples of the disrespect and disregard we have shown for Nature.

Respect starts in the mind. If it's only for show, you may fool the other person but you will eventually turn into a hypocrite. Genuine respect for others makes us into better human beings. Our thoughts make us into who we are. The person who truly appreciates and respect others, is gradually molded into a beautiful person who sees goodness in all and learns from everyone.

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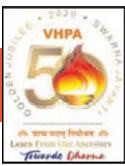


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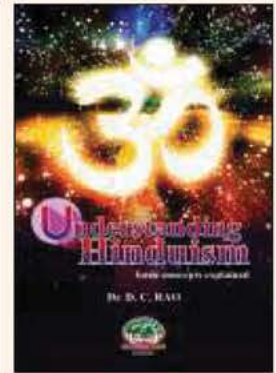
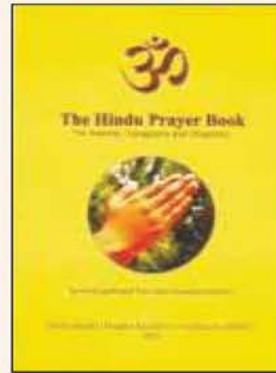
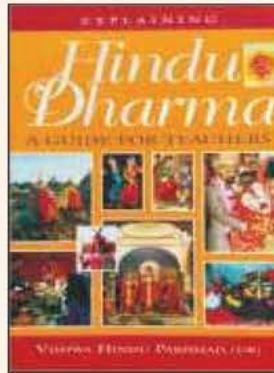
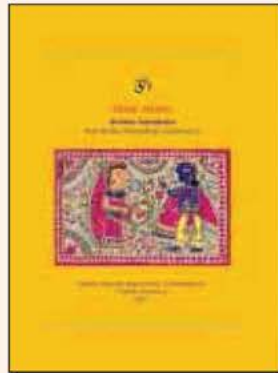
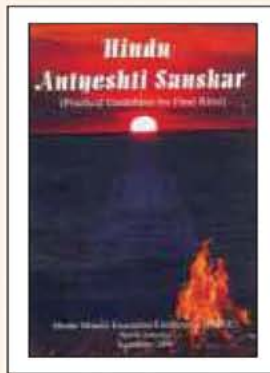
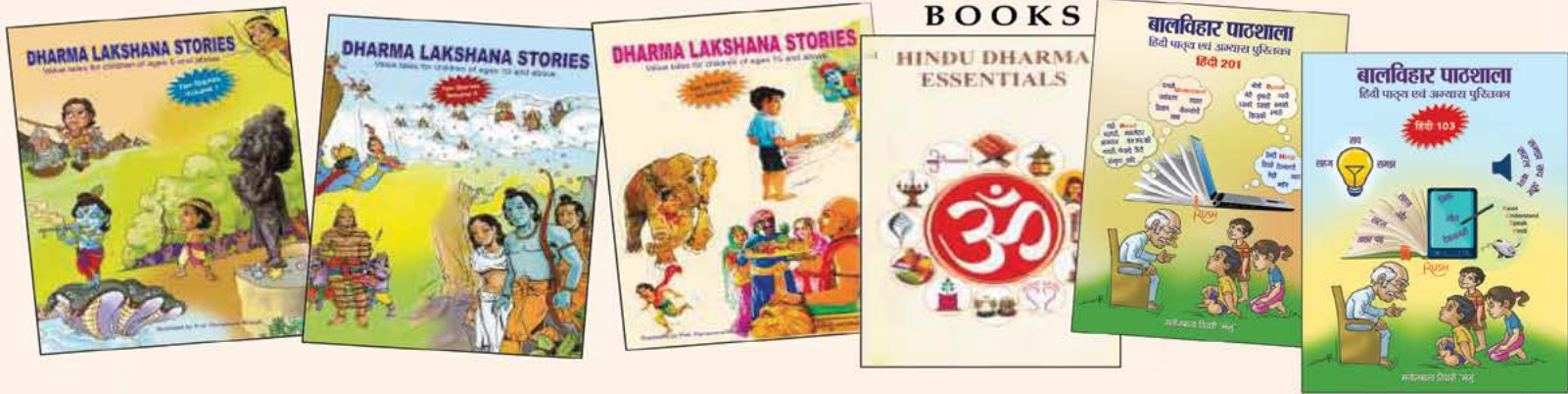
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ॐ असतो मा सद् गमय । तमसो मा ज्योतिर्गमय । मृत्योर्मांमृतम् गमय ।।

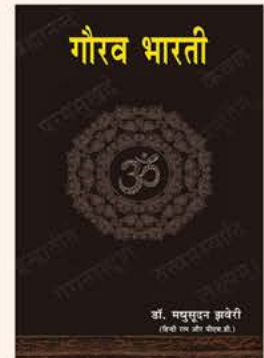
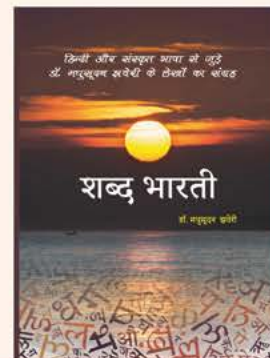
Om, Asato Maa Sad Gamaya; Tamaso Maa Jyotir Gamaya Mrityor Maa Amritam Gamaya

ॐ शांतिः शांतिः शांतिः

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