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MOTHER

An Embodiment of Divine Mother

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National Office:
200 New Bond Street,
Sugar Grove, IL 60554-9171

www.vhp-america.org

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

Advisor
Dr. Abhay Asthana
abhayaji@gmail.com

गतिर्भर्ता प्रभुः साक्षी निवासः शरणं सुहृत् ।
प्रभवः प्रलयः स्थानं निधानं बीजमव्ययम् ॥

— श्रीमद्भगवद्गीता, 9.18

I am the Supreme Goal of all living beings, and I am also their Sustainer, Master, Witness, Abode, Shelter, and Friend. I am the Origin, End, and Resting Place of creation; I am the Repository and Eternal Seed.

gatiṛ bhartā prabhuḥ sākṣhī nivāsaḥ śharaṇaṁ suhṛit
prabhavaḥ pralayaḥ sthānaṁ nidhānaṁ bījam avyayam

Bhagvad Gita, 9.18

ABOUT THE HINDU VISHWA

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

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HINDUISM Through Technology

However, despite its widespread influence and popularity, Hinduism has faced numerous challenges in recent years. The rise of fundamentalism and extremism has led to increasing incidents of discrimination and violence against Hindus and other minority communities. In some countries,

Many, not all, of us in the Hindu renaissance movement are despondent and generally pessimistic about the future due to technology. Some of us tend to see the newest technology as the conspiracy of the West to undermine us. Technology can indeed be used for the greater good of society but the same can be used to harm progress and understanding. It has been true for all technologies. It is also true that some of the great advancement in technologies and tools that were recently created has been hijacked by adharmic forces for their nefarious agenda for example Wikipedia and Twitter not too long ago. I was intrigued by the latest buzz in this field, ChatGPT, and wanted to check it out. I had heard about the relative lack of respect shown to Hindu Dharma's icons as was done in the case of others. It is a case of the Garbage-In-Garbage-Out algorithm but all is not necessarily a conspiracy. To prove my point, all that you have read in this editorial before this paragraph is the output of ChatGPT. While the criticisms are largely true, it is incumbent upon us to help shape the future of AI (Artificial Intelligence). Hindu Dharma shorn of its dogma is itself an apt metaphor for a science that has engendered many useful technologies like Yoga, meditation, and others.

EXPERTS DISCUSS WOMEN HEALTH, WEALTH and OVERALL WELLBEING at HWC

Hindu Women's Network' an initiative of the World Hindu Council of America, Atlanta Chapter, reconvened for their annual Hindu Women's Conference on February 25th, 2023, from 9:00 am to 4:00 pm courtesy of the Best Western at 907 Holcomb Bridge Road, Roswell.

Aligned with the trivet of Seva(service), Samskara(values) and Sampark(network) the agenda of HWC meet was to further the conversation on women empowerment and enrichment.

The board room of Best Western was bedecked with colorful Indian tapestry on the walls, Statue of Ganesha was clad with pink, fuchsia floral garland, and the projector screen displayed the mission statement of HWC. The conference was inaugurated with lamp lighting ceremony done by Veena Katdare-President of VHPA Atlanta Chapter, Kusum Khurana – Vice president of VHPA Atlanta Chapter, Nilesh Oak-Keynote Speaker followed by prayers led by Manju Tiwari, Smita Daftardar, Manjula Reddy, Kusum Khurana, Veena Katdare, and Neetu Sharma.

The facilitator of HWC Sabitha Venugopal outlined the program schedule and announced the conference open for dialogue and panel discussion. Mina Menon, a certified yoga instructor, led the conclave



From left to right - Kusum Khurana, Nilesh Oak and Veena Katdare lighting the lamp for inauguration

through breathing exercises. Pranayama, Prandhara Brahmini and Omkar Sadhana, which energized the convocation.

Manjula Reddy, a veteran volunteer with VHPA introduced Nilesh Oak, the Keynote Speaker, to the

“Man makes roads, but it's the women who teach the children how to walk on them



From left to right - Kusum Khurana, Nilesh Oak, Veena Katdare, Smita Daftardar, Manju Tiwari, Manjula Reddy offering ordination prayers.



Mina Menon guiding through a yoga session.

group. Nilesh Oak is a historian and author. He has an MS in chemical engineering and an executive MBA. He is the author of three books that delve extensively into ancient Indian history. Nilesh Oak addressed the forum on the cultural history of Hindus. The conservation, growth, and transmissible inheritance of the Hindu values. Key takeaways for the audience were---

~Values are not taught but caught.

~Mothers teach through example.

~Fostering freedom of thought through story style recounting of history.

The thirty-minute intense talk was followed by a timed Q&A session with the audience. Nisha Desai, a volunteer, clocked all the sessions ensuring we stayed on schedule throughout the day.

The ensuing thirty minutes was a lively discussion where the audience discussed quandaries posed like "As a Hindu woman, what do you stand for? Would you actively come out to support? What can the community do to support you? With the group invigorated by the back and forth the summit moved to the next chalk talk.

Mental Well Being was the theme wherein the moderator Dr. Sarika Jaswani invited Dr. Sreedevi

Vayalpalli MD – a double board-certified doctor in addiction and adult psychiatry, Dr. Priyanka Patel – a general and forensic psychiatrist, Dr. Kalpana Prasad – and adjunct asst. professor at Emory and the program director at Northeast Georgia Medical Center to take center stage. Dr. Vayalpalli talked, about mental health issues in women and why they are at increased risk of depression. Dr. Patel spoke about neurobiology of mental illness in adults and children and voiced the influence of social media on mental health and warning signs of suicide. Dr. Prasad vocalized other facets of mental health Issues related in older south Asian women. The challenges created by limited research in US based Asian community and the stigma associated with mental health that adds to the existing problems. The trio stressed education, conversation and reaching out for support and resources for mental wellbeing.

Thence forward, Smita Daftardar, a veteran teacher at Gwinnett Balvihar, heralded in her speech the growing community of VHPA organization. Semicentennial VHPA's foundation was instituted to bring community together for social and spiritual growth of Hindus in America. Balvihar Hindi School was established in 1969 followed by a family camp



Mental Well Being: Dr. Kalpana Prasad, Dr. Sreedevi Vayalpalli MD, Dr. Priyanka Patel, Moderator: Dr. Sarika Jaswani



Drake House: Board of Directors, Anu Whitaker

in the same year. Hindu Student council in 1990, Coalition of Hindu Youth 2010, Bhagwat Gita Santana Dharma Scholarship in 1993, which was later expanded to Sharada Scholarship Program 2022. Durga Project supports abused women, Hindu Women Network, to name a few.

Hitherto to lunch of Indian delicacies like Palak Paneer, Pulao and Halwa, Anu Whitaker, one of the board of Directors at Drake house, elaborated about the 501c3 Non-Profit for abused women and children. She implored the attendees to support the growing number of single mothers who experience homelessness in North Fulton as they work towards their self-sufficiency.

Lunch was followed by Yoganidra shepherded by Anita Houde who guided the audience to succinct relaxation. Followed by audience discussion in 'Chai pe Charcha' session. The topic of conversation was "Does the media

portray or reinforce stereotypes, or do they empower women? What can we do as women to break the pattern?'. The subsequent back and forth energized the audience for the next two sessions of the conference.

Shobha Shivram, one of the teachers at Cobb County Balvihar, hosted the next session of Wills, Living wills and Trust. She introduced the dignitaries for the panel. Ritu and Anuj Jain who are licensed professionals and specialize in financial planning, estate planning and managing risks to plan for retirement. Sheetal Desai who is managing partner at the Trusted

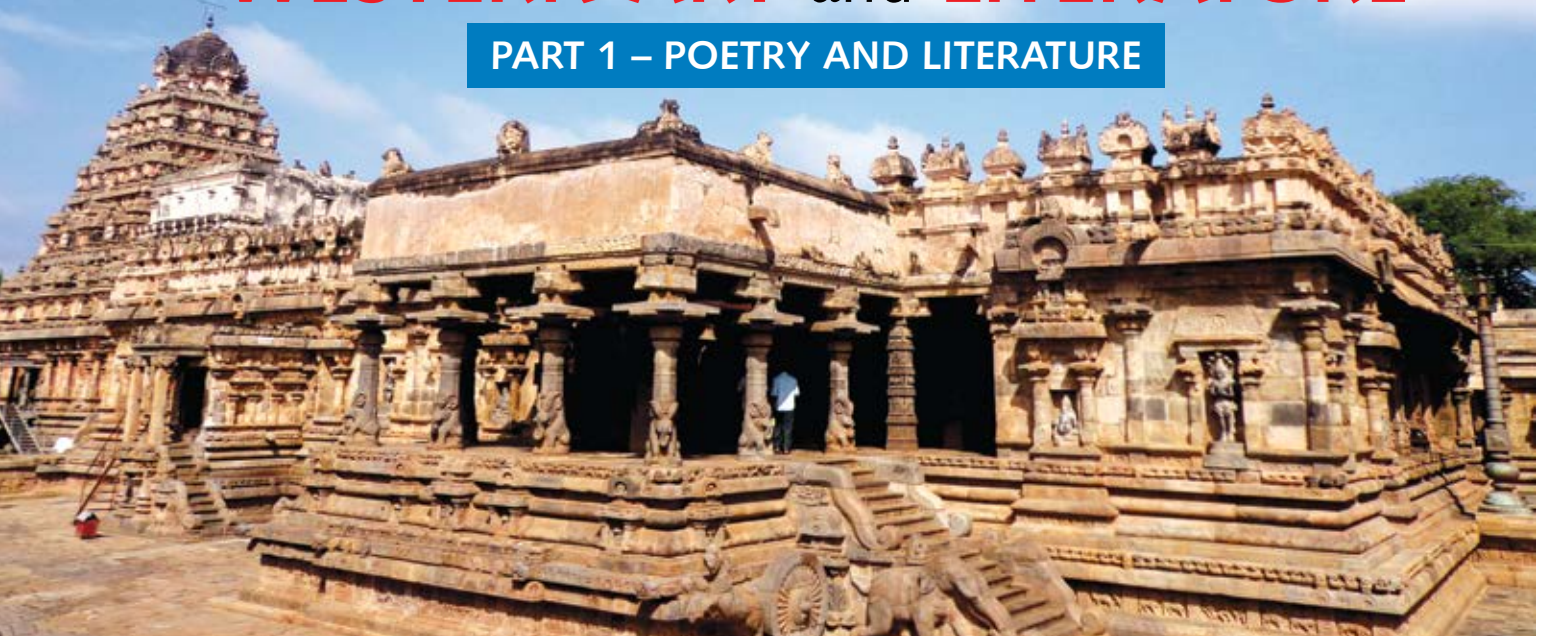
lawyers, a Desai Law Group, PC. She is President of Southeast regional chapter of the US Pan Asian American Chamber of Commerce. Member of Judicial Nomination Commission. Member of the Gwinnett County Outreach Advisory Board. They talked about financial awareness and making personal asset lists.



Panel : Sheetal Desai, Ritu and Anuj Jain

Influence of Hindu Thought on **WESTERN ART** and **LITERATURE**

PART 1 – POETRY AND LITERATURE



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

Kalyan Viswanathan, President - Hindu University of America

In a world bred and brought up on a deeply Eurocentric worldview, any claim of Hindu thought influencing Western culture seems like a chauvinistic boast. Yet a closer examination would show this to be an indisputable fact.

Indeed, there have been numerous pioneers who used art as the medium to bring traditional Hindu ideas to the West. They, in turn, were closely followed by “transmitters who helped spread these ideas across the country. Similarly, there were numerous adapters who took parts of what they received and recast them into their own genres.

This article gives an overview of how Hindu thought has travelled to the West and has left its indelible mark on the Western literature and performing arts. The article is based on our coffee-table book “Hinduism and America: How Hindu Dharma is Transforming the West.”

Hindu Influence on Western Poetry

Much of the Sanskrit literature has been written in verse form. As it began to be translated into English in late 18th century, it immediately found favour with the litterateurs of the West. As a result, several Hindu thoughts, concepts and philosophies found their way into Western works. English poetry is no exception, as these examples from the inkpots and feather pens of the romantic poets demonstrate:

“A motion and a spirit, that impels / All thinking things, all objects of all thought, / And rolls through all things.” *From ‘Lines Written a Few Miles above Tintern Abbey’* (1798) by **William Wordsworth**.

“The translucence of the Eternal through and in the temporal.” *From The Statesman’s Manual (1816) by Samuel Taylor Coleridge.*

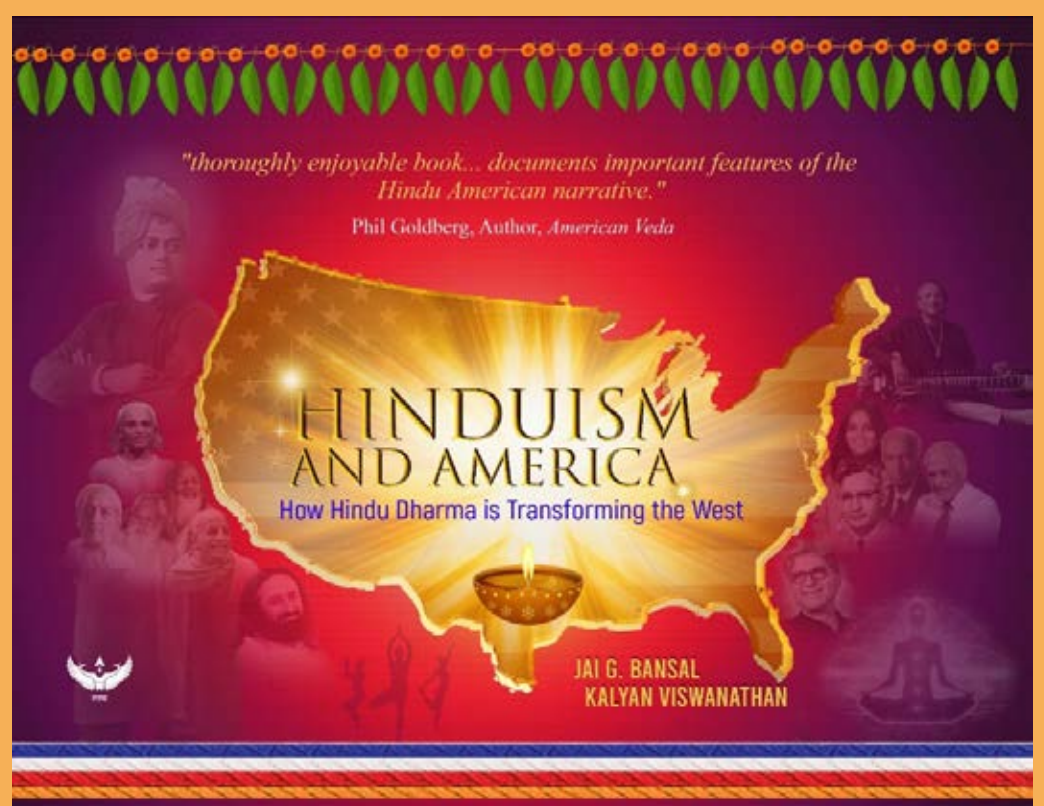


Another poet on whom the spirituality of Hinduism left a lasting impression was T. S. Eliot (1888-1965). As an undergraduate student at Harvard University, he came in contact with Hindu philosophy while learning Sanskrit from the eminent Sanskrit

Among these pioneers one name that stands apart is that of Christopher Isherwood (1904-1986), a British writer who subsequently relocated to the US. Introduced by fellow British Writer Aldous Huxley to Swami Prabhavananda's Vedanta Society, Isherwood collaborated with Swami ji on several literary projects on Vedanta. In 1944 he co-authored with Swami Prabhavananda, their famous book titled Bhagavad Gita, The Song of God, which was feted by Time magazine as 'a distinguished literary work' and went on to sell over a million copies. Isherwood produce several other works on Vedanta, such as, Vedanta for Modern Man (1945), Vedanta for the Western World (1949), An Approach to Vedanta (1963), Essentials of Vedanta (1969) and articles which appeared in Vedanta and the West, a bi-monthly journal of the Vedanta Society of Southern California.

Aldous Huxley (1894-1963) discovered Vedanta in 1939, and under the guidance of Swami Prabhavananda, learnt the nuances of meditation and spiritual practices. Among the authors who made a particular genre their own, Huxley straddled various literary universes, excelling in science fiction as well as in spirituality. While the dystopian *Brave New World* (1932), his last novel *Island* (1962) that created a utopian world in which the inhabitants lived in harmony and practice the philosophy of Vedanta, and *The Doors of Perception* (1954), an essay collection, elevated him to stardom, his contribution to the West's understanding of Vedanta offers him a special place in the pantheon of thinkers. In *The Perennial Philosophy* (1944), Huxley discusses the concept of Sanatana Dharma and concepts like immortality, non-attachment, knowledge of self, temperament, and religion.

Huxley was closely associated with many Vedantists of his time. In particular, he wrote the introduction to the 'Bhagavad Gita,



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 the authors of this article, this book represents two-and-half-year long collaboration effort of VHPA and HUA.

Order your copy at tinyurl.com/3svef6mm, or scan the QR code:



“This book should adorn every Hindu American's coffee table.”:

Prof. Ved Nanda, Director,

*The Ved Nanda Center for International & Comparative Law,
Padma Bhushan*



that Time magazine would refer to as ‘one of the most extraordinary religious documents.’ However, the work that made him a legend in the American literature was *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* (1949), in which he explored several Hindu concepts and drew from the *Bhagavad Gita*.

Indian spiritualism has made its presence felt in numerous works of fiction in the West. In some cases, it has served to inspire, and in others, occupied the centre stage.

Hermann Hesse's (1877-1962) tryst with the Hindu thought started in early childhood, for his grandparents had been missionaries in India and his mother was born there. Most of his work explores the soul, and the self and that part of the individual that is neither the external shell nor the internal thought.

“...those souls that find the aim of life not in the perfecting and molding of the self, but in liberating themselves by going back to the mother, back to God, back to the all.” These words from Steppenwolf hint at the ultimate goal of attaining moksha, the ultimate liberation from the cycle of rebirth. In Siddhartha, the protagonist realises that it takes a long journey of relinquishment to be able to surrender one’s all, a spiritual journey that takes one past maya and renunciation – two fundamentally Hindu concepts.

Sometime in 1938, renowned author W. Somerset Maugham (1874-1965) arrived in India, with plans of building his next novel on the foundations of Hindu philosophy. A chance meeting with Sri Ramana Maharshi set his creative wheels in motion and *The Razor's Edge* was born. The protagonist of the novel would be a fictionalised version of the Maharshi. The title of the book itself is a nod to an extract from the Katha Upanishad which says, "The sharp edge of a razor is difficult to pass over; thus the wise say the path to Salvation is hard."

As the entire world was gripped in the throes of a second world war, Campbell was looking for peace, and he found it in a translation of the Mandukya Upanishad (1936) by Swami Nikhilananda. In the years to come, Swami and Campbell would collaborate on a book, *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna* (1942),



By **Harish G. Bhatt**

In this whole world, there is no one who gives you unconditional, unlimited selfless love all the time except your mother. Her love flows equally to all her children without any consideration for their physical, mental, intellectual, social, political, financial status or their achievements or lack of it or any limitations they might have. She gives and gives and gives and keeps on giving without expecting anything in return. She gives same unconditional love when her children are nice to her because she may be young, strong, pretty, powerful, educated, influential and resourceful. She gives the same unconditional love when her ignorant, and stupid children are indifferent to her because she may be old, weak, simple, unassuming, non-controlling and un-resourceful. But she still gives the same un-conditional love when her stupid children are abusive to her because she may be old, feeble, uneducated, weak, powerless, poor, dependent, helpless. Children may have conditional attachment with their mother, but mother has nothing but limitless, unconditional love for each of her children. There is no parallel to mother's love, affection, sacrifice and her well wishes for her children. To a mother, there is nothing more important in her life than to see her children happy no matter what happens to herself. This is a tremendous sacrifice which is built into the Motherhood ! This is why one of the greatest Hindu philosophers and a great Vedantic Master Jagadguru Shri Shankaracharya has very profoundly proclaimed:

1. Mother
2. Mother Nature and
3. Motherland - Our Birth place (जन्मभूमि)-
the country we were born in that is our
motherland.

When we think about Mother, practically unlimited thoughts come to our mind ! It starts with love, kindness, affection and then overflows into sweetness, security, protection, nurturing, selflessness, sacrifice, strength, helpful, support, understanding, courage, responsibility etc. For a child, the mother is no less than the God. There is a myth that while creating a being and then the human being, the God thought about protecting and nurturing it HIMSELF all the times until it gets on its own feet. But then HE thought it would be too much for HIM to do it all by HIMSELF so he thought about delegating that sacred task. To accomplish this, God created a very powerful force that we all know as the Mother or the Motherhood. Thus the Motherhood is considered a very sacred entity.



her by worshiping her in the well-known Pauranic Prayer of mother worship from Chandipath (चण्डीपाठ) that thunders with devotion to Mother:

या देवी सर्वभूतेषु मातृरूपेण संस्थिता,
नमस्तस्यै नमस्तस्यै नमस्तस्यै नमो नमः॥

**YA DEVI SARVA BHUTESHU MATRU
RUPENA SAMSTHITA,
NAMAH TASYAI, NAMAH TASYAI,
NAMAH TASYAI NAMO NAMAH.**

It means, "O, Goddess, O, Divine Mother, you are always residing in this universe, around us in the form of our mother, taking care of all of us and for that I Respectfully Bow Down to you (my salutations to you) again and again and again to express my appreciation and thanks to you.

Mother is full of Devine qualities and because of that she sees God in all her Children and loves her children unconditionally.

When our mother dies and merges herself with God and is no more around us physically, we realize the value of, the importance of our mother being with us physically. When our mother is no more, we miss her so much but when she is around us, we don't show our appreciation for her unconditional love and her total devotion to our wellbeing and happiness.

We are eternally indebted to our mothers for sacrifices she makes for our happiness and well-being which majority of us fail to acknowledge to her. We missed our chances to sit at her चरणकमल (feet) to realize divine truth and our real self.

We all are indebted to Mother Nature who provides us essential elements to sustain our lives such as Air, water, food etc. without which we can't survive. We

all need to be responsible human being and take care of our environment, protect the Mother Nature. Let's do our part for the well-being of our future generations.

Also it is truly said that:

जननी जनमभूमिश्च स्वर्गादपि गरीयसी।

**JANANI JANMBHUMISCH SWARGADAPY
GARIYASI**

It means: The Mother and the Motherland (जन्मभूमि) are greater than the Heaven.

I am greatly indebted to my Motherland for supporting and helping me until I migrated to USA. I am immensely indebted to my new, adopted Motherland for supporting and taking care of me for more than last 40 years. I have gained a lot from this land, from people of this country. It is impossible to pay it off, but I am trying my best to return the favor as much as I can by way of helping those who need help.

At this point I would like to acknowledge my immense indebtedness to my beloved loving mother. I salute and thank my beloved mother for everything she has done for me. Whatever I have achieved so far is because of her blessings, because of her sacrifice for me, because of her continued concerns and hard work to improve my quality of life. It is beyond my capacity and ability to pay back to her in full. But I must try to do whatever

I can, in that direction. I hereby convey my utmost regards to her and ask for her forgiveness, if I ever did anything that could have hurt her in any way.

Let us all pray to the Divine Mother that She may give us all the insight and strength to appreciate what our Mothers have done for us and be worthy of it.

About the Author

Harish G. Bhatt, based in Chicago, is a prolific writer and published many articles on various topics.



Diwali, the Festival of Lights, as a Holiday in American Public Schools : Two Models

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

There is a growing movement among some Hindus in the United States to persuade town Boards of Education to declare a day in November as a school holiday so as to enable Hindu families to share the venerable and much loved festival Diwali. This is important and appropriate as the estimates of Hindus in America vary with numbers reaching close to 4 million. There is, across the country, a growing number of our children enrolled in public schools. In one of our towns in Connecticut we learn that the number of Hindu students is close to 4000 (20%). Therefore appealing to Boards of Education to declare a Diwali holiday is consistent with the decades old rich immigrant experience in America. Consider the background.

The United States of America is the envy of the world, not because of its fighter aircraft and submarines, but because of its success in assimilating and building a composite society from a wide variety of immigrants with vastly different cultural and religious backgrounds and political beliefs. Thus Irish Americans, Italian Americans and all other hyphenated Americans are patriots in love with this country even as they are free to practice their unique heritage and cultural traditions. So it is with Indian-Americans. Most of the immigrants from India since the 1960s came here not fleeing something but to obtain higher education. Most of us intended to return but the magnetism of

America with its unique and welcoming attitude made thousands of us settle here and we now feel part of the mainstream.

No further proof of our community settling here is needed than the fact that there are now several hundred Hindu temples in the country. We in Connecticut were able to build and sanctify a temple in Middletown as far back as 1999. The inspiration obviously came from the experiences of earlier immigrants who made sure that their children and grandchildren and succeeding generations maintain and practice the faith and culture derived from their countries of origin. And of course, generations later, that is exactly what we have: a multicultural, pluralistic society where you are free to enjoy your own art, music, food and other cultural components even as our American born children grow up to be loyal, productive, hard-working, prosperous citizens of this great country.

Therefore it is not unusual for us to attempt to add an Indian component to the education system and seek recognition of a holiday that exemplifies the culture and tradition of the old country we came from decades ago. This, we believe, adds yet another colorful fiber to the already magnificent fabric of America. We propose that school districts across this country formally recognize the strong Indian-American community and its contributions to science and technology, education, healthcare, business, service on some town

councils and boards, state legislatures, governments and the Congress. And of course the Vice President of the United States, Kamala Harris, is of Indian heritage.

Simply put, Diwali celebrates the triumph of good over evil. There are many legends that tell stories of serious conflicts which endangered the lives of citizens and required divine intervention to restore what Hindus call Dharma. The literal meaning of the word diwali is a “row of lamps.” Earthen lamps (small enough to fit in a child’s palm) are still used in rural India. Filled with a couple of tablespoonfuls of oil and a cotton wick, they are lit and arranged in a pattern or rows on a home’s or public building’s threshold, roof edges, window sills, and front porch. In urban areas, electric bulbs are used. The row after row of these lights, in every building, proclaim a happy occasion for one and all. The event is celebrated in the Hindu month of Kartika in the dark fortnight that falls in late October or early November.

So, what are some of these legends that form the basis for that holiday:

- **The return of the epic hero Rama to his kingdom after 14 years of exile.** Diwali is considered to be the day when the epic hero made his triumphal return to his capital Ayodhya after 14 years of exile and killing Ravana who had kidnapped Sita. Legend has it that the overjoyed citizens decorated their homes and lit hundreds of lamps to greet their king.
- **Naraka Chaturdashi:** The killing of demon Narakasura by Krishna. Narakasura was a menace who kidnapped women and made the lives of priests and monks a living hell. People breathed a sigh of relief and set aside a day of celebration, on Chaturdashi nakshatra during Krishna Paksha, the dark half of the Hindu month Kartika (generally late October or early to mid-November), of the triumph of good over evil.
- **Worshipping Dhanalakshmi, the goddess of wealth:** Merchants and businessmen worship Lakshmi in the form of Dhanalakshmi (Lakshmi, the goddess of wealth) during the Diwali festival.

In fact, businesses use this special day to close the books for the year and make preparations to begin the new fiscal year. The day is believed to coincide with the emergence of the goddess from the cosmic ocean during the great churning event when gods and demons churned up many precious items that had been lost during the Great Flood (See page 116-117 of my book *Hinduism for Dummies* about Amrtamanthana by devas and danavas).

Wearing new clothes and jewelry during Diwali is a must, as is distribution of a variety of sweets. It is customary to light up colorful fire crackers and enjoy the sound and light. The excitement among clothing and jewelry merchants is palpable as they expect to make a lot of money during the week before Diwali!

The Diwali season is also a bonanza for those who sell sweets. Many varieties of aromatic, colorful, and delicious sweets are made fresh just for this season, and thousands of pounds of these delicacies are bought and distributed among family and friends. In large cities, the whole city erupts with gaiety, color, smiles, and sweets.

So we can argue that the festival is non-religious or semi-religious as the primary focus is the celebration of good over evil. A Hindu Thanksgiving if you will. As stated above the festival falls either in October or November. But the Hindu lunar calendar varies from year to year so we don’t have the same date for the festival each year.

What is the issue in adding a Diwali holiday in public schools? The boards of education in some school districts are reluctant to add another day in which the students are not attending classes. In some parts of the United States students lose a day or many due to weather conditions such as heavy snow and ice which require the districts to add these lost days to the end of the semester. Clearly this postpones the last date of the school year and inconveniences families planning their summer vacations.

More complicated is the issue of other religions claiming their need to have one or more school holidays to celebrate their festivals. Where does one draw the line?



Besides, should religion even factor in the consideration of school holidays? Traditionally Easter and Christmas (clearly Christianity-driven for the obvious reason that the first founders of the established 1776 democracy were Christians) have been celebrated as holidays in schools. The special holiday, Thanksgiving, may be explained as non-religious or semi-religious as it is harvest-related, celebrating and giving thanks to the Almighty for the bounty of food grown in the new land when the English pilgrims set foot in Plymouth, Massachusetts.

With this background, we offer two models for the boards of education in the United States to consider declaring Diwali, the Indian Festival of Lights, as a school holiday. But before that let me comment on our communities' role in the context of our involvement with town affairs. That pertains to the nature and extent of interaction between the Hindu community and the people and leaders in town. In a democracy policies are enacted based primarily on the basis of demographics, active organizations and active voices. While our people hold important positions in corporations, healthcare, academia and business, what is the level of our participation in the town affairs? Do we attend meetings of the Town Council and Board of Education and offer our opinions and ideas? Do we know the shakers and movers there? Do we invite leaders in town when we have a Hindu event or celebration? Do we volunteer to help in a library or a senior center? Remember volunteering is America's apple pie! In short, how much does the town know us, our roles in society, our culture, food and music? Do we participate in major events in town? I submit that the strength of such interaction goes a long way when we need the town leadership to consider something of special interest to our community. This is

an important issue that needs to be taken seriously by our community.

Now about the models. The first model is to set aside a day in late October or mid-November as scheduled in the Hindu calendar for that year and declare a school holiday so our children may enjoy celebrating the day with their schoolmates and their families.

The second model may appeal to some school districts. In the context of declaring a school holiday for Diwali, my recommendation is that school districts declare Friday after the Thanksgiving Thursday as Diwali Holiday. This overcomes the concern about adding another day to the school year. We can justify this from the fact that there is no fixed date for Diwali anyway from year to year, and the festival usually occurs in early or mid-November. This does not however prevent some Hindu families from celebrating the festival in their homes on the day prescribed in the calendar if they chose to.

Further the spirit of the festival is one of joy and gratitude for a successful year and looking forward to a New Year. This fits perfectly with the concept of Thanksgiving and may follow the American Thanksgiving with a Hindu Thanksgiving.

This concept is similar to my wife Kamla's introduction in the early 80s of the Amritamanthana concept at our temple in Connecticut in which Hindu children decorate Kalpa Vrksa, a gift-giving "Christmas" tree in December with objects emerging from that great story of the Amrtamanthana.

Let us offer these options to the Boards of Education in each of the 16,800 school districts in the country and enjoy two days in November with two Thanks givings!

So let us make this Hindu holiday an American holiday!

About the Author

Dr. Srinivasan is the author of several articles and books on Hinduism published in the United States, India and the U.K. <https://www.avsrinivasan.com>

Inside India's Indigenous Cowboy Ranch : **Abor Country**

By Subhasish Chakraborty

The high point of my early childhood days in India's northeastern state of Arunachal Pradesh were those amazing mountain treks to hidden Himalayan villages in the company of innocent, yet, very fascinating tribal Monpas. Now, decades of living in metropolitan India has meant that most of the details are blurry, but two outstanding memories are forever etched in my memory – the ravishingly beautiful young Monpa lady coming to greet my mom “Good Morning Memsahib”, weathering the snowy terrain with a bunch of hugely shaped Tawang Rose and observing those hardy hands of Monpa farmers engaged in “Jhum Cultivation”.

Today, looking at the present-day jet-set lifestyle of the contemporary human race, starved of emotional cultural experiences, I feel so fortunate to have been blessed with such exceptional memories.

Many people worldwide might as well be harboring dreams of experiencing such a high-altitude ranch experience at least once in their lifetime. Well, how about a truly indigenous Indian dude ranch experience in the backyard of India's Northeast? Sounds too good to be true. Ain't it? Yet, let me tell you, it is perfectly possible. You don't have to go searching for a luxury cowboy ranch in the US.

A typical American dude ranch holiday is all about safeguarding the romance of the Wild West and conjuring up dreams of mucky roads, rugged accommodations and roughing it up in the wilderness. All these and much more at India's very own cowboy-style ranch – Abor Country Travels & Expeditions.

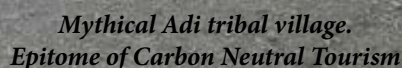
Out here in this part of India's remote Northeastern state where Abor Country is located, the linens are plush, adventures are guided, Himalayan tours are

immersive and the cuisine is farm-to-table, all these in an incredible natural setting.

My good friend Oken Tayeng, founder of Abor Country; and many in India's tourism industry regard him as the Blue-Eyed Boy of India tourism, has by setting up this one-of-a-kind eco-ranch, offered perhaps one of India's truly outstanding indigenous “Indian Cowboy Vacation” product that stands out distinctively from the crowded hospitality landscape.



Entrance to Abor Country Resort



Oken's standalone idea of coming up with Abor Country deep inside India's remote Northeast and selling the romance of the cowboy life has caught the attention of people who truly love the outdoors and wilderness. You have all the options to indulge in physically demanding tasks out here - river rafting, Himalayan treks, homestay options with unknown but

Cowboy is symbolic of a spirit of independence and just as the American cowboy lives life to the fullest, India's very own indigenous Cowboy – Oken Tayeng too has given shape to the Indian Cowboy version

by blending the centuries-old tribal culture of India's Northeast with that of the Wild West.

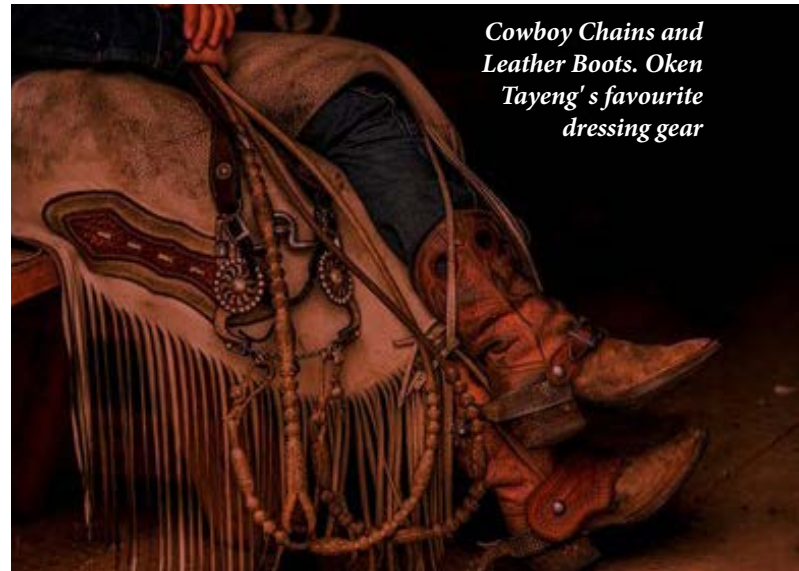
For all those men of substance, strength and courage in search of adrenalin pumping, life-transforming adventure holidays, Oken Tayeng, Abor Country Resort's founder is a certified contractor and a proud recipient of the "Certificate of Excellence" issued by the US Dept. of Defence' POW/MIA division for offering his invaluable services and expertise in unearthing missing World War II allied fighter aircraft.

War and battles aside, Abor Country River Camp is a serene eco-lodge, located on the banks of the gurgling Siang River that meanders through the town Pasighat in Arunachal Pradesh. The rooms are rugged, predominantly bamboo and wood furnishings. Food is organic and even the water you drink comes from the natural spring. No wonder, some of the world's most renowned lifestyle & travel publications like Nat Geo Traveller, Lonely Planet and Conde Nast Traveller have all carried exclusive coverage of this extraordinary indigenous Northeastern ranch.

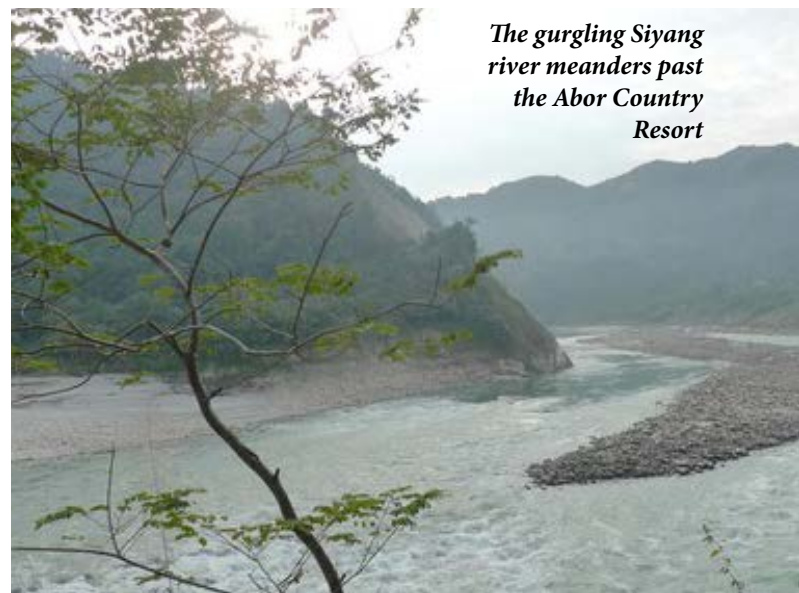
If you are activity-oriented, Abor Country is just the right place for you – come face to face with head hunters, yeah I am talking of those fearless Ao Nagas! Dive deep into tribal traditions – how the clans practice patriarchal and exogamous lifestyle., the concept of the village chieftain, exotic handloom, and handicrafts of India's Northeast – how indigenous Northeast fashion designers are carving a niche for themselves in the global fashion landscape.

The tribal people of the Northeast are of a rare breed. By laying anchor at Abor Country, you can embark on a truly epic tribal voyage crisscrossing the seven sister states and the maverick Oken Tayeng will take care of all the logistical support you need to embark upon such a life-changing, transformational adventure. How very exciting it is for today's contemporary jaded traveler to clinically observe the manner in which these fascinating tribes react to natural phenomena like thunder, drought, earthquake, floods, life and death.

The cowboy is an of American culture alright, but the Indian version prevalent in the Northeast is more colorful, more vibrant and fascinating. For all



Cowboy Chains and Leather Boots. Oken Tayeng's favourite dressing gear



The gurgling Siyang river meanders past the Abor Country Resort



The Flame says it all. Welcome to Abor Country, the spirit of India's first Cowboy Ranch



Minimalist bamboo & wood Adi tribal architecture lures you for a siesta



Winter time. Outside it's chilly, inside it's warm and rugged with a few sips of the traditionally brewed Appo!

those Cowboy experience seekers who have done Kansas, Utah, Montana, Dakota, etc. which is where most cowboy ranches are located in the US, a visit to India's Abor Country could open up a Pandora's box in terms of diversity.

There is no denying the fact that the centuries-old cowboy lifestyle has evolved into a more corporate model in the US, while in this part of India's remote Northeast, the spirit of wanderlust hasn't yet been overly commercialized and has remained more or less pristine.

Cowboy lifestyle in India's Northeast is kind of folk culture and the tribals have been practicing and passing on their unique traditions and rituals from generation to generation. Oken Tayeng's remarkable accomplishment as an adventurer at such a young age is that he has successfully positioned India's indigenous brand of ranching in India's tourism map.

It is about time the government both at the center as well as the respective states takes a leaf out of Oken's stellar efforts to brand the Cowboy lifestyle in a truly Indian way. I am optimistic that if 20 such indigenous Indian ranches were to be set up in the Northeast and promoted aggressively in the global media, it could be a game-changer for Northeast Tourism.

It is about time big names of India's hospitality landscape like The Taj, The Oberois, Pugdundee Safaris, etc. who have magnificent jungle properties spread across wildlife sanctuaries like Ranthambore, Bandhavgarh, Corbett, Kanha, etc. to invest big time in developing and curating indigenous Indian-style luxury ranch properties in India's Marlboro Land – The Northeast.

Before I conclude, let me bow down in reverence to that ancient Cowboy ancestor who said:

Ranching breeds adventures and adventures breed stories!



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 Cathay 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.

Sanskrut or Sanskrit?

By Dr. Bharat C. Patel

On December 11, 2014, the United Nations (UN) proclaimed June 21 as the “International Day of Yoga” by resolution 69/131¹. Since 2014, every year, it has been observed internationally. In its 2022 Theme: Yoga for humanity, the UN, in part, states, “People around the world embraced yoga to stay healthy and rejuvenated and to fight social isolation and depression.” In describing ‘What is Yoga and why do we celebrate it?’ the UN states, “Yoga is an ancient physical, mental and spiritual practice that originated in India. The word ‘yoga’ derives from Sanskrit and means to join or to unite, symbolizing the union of body and consciousness.”

The use of the spelling **Yoga** for योग and **Sanskrit** for संस्कृत, not only by the UN but also by countless individuals, including those who can read and write संस्कृत, do grave injustice to the root language of many Indian languages². Most people pronounce “ga” in the term Yoga (योग), like how “fa” is pronounced in “farm.” That is flawed³. Can we assume that the UN had an intention of using the IAST standard with diacritic markings⁴ and that “ga” was intended to be pronounced like “gu” in “gut?” I do not think so. Except for a handful of scholars, I do not believe any ordinary person even knows about the existence of the IAST standard of transliteration of the Indic script. The term Sanskrit used by the UN above is incorrect. The कृ in संस्कृत as written in the UN proclamation as “kri” is erroneous. Universally “kri” is pronounced like the “cre” in “creator.” For all those who know संस्कृत, the consonant कृ is pronounced like the “ru” in “thruway.” I am surprised how **Sanskrut** scholars have condoned

such a grave transliteration error. संस्कृत should be correctly transliterated as **Sanskrut** when IAST with diacritical markings is not used. Therefore, there is a need for a concerted worldwide effort in transliterating संस्कृत as **Sanskrut**, योग as **Yog**, and other Sanskrit terms when IAST with diacritical markings are not used.

The term Yog (योग) is derived from the Sanskrit root युज् (yuj) which means to join, to unite, or to combine. It has been described in Shrimad Bhagavad Gita in many ways. समत्वं योग उच्यते, samatvaṁ yoga ucyate, Equanimity of intelligence is called Yog (BG 2.48). योगः कर्मसु कौशलम्, yogaḥ karmasu kauśalam, Yog is the skill in actions (BG 2.50). यं संन्यासमिति प्राहुर्योगं तं विद्धि पाण्डव, saṁnyāsamiti prāhuryogaṁ taṁ viddhi pāṇḍava, Hey Arjun! Know that which they call “Renunciation” as “Yog” (BG 6.2). दुःखसंयोगवियोगं योगसंज्ञितम्, duḥkhasaṁyogaviyogaṁ yogasañjñitam, that state where there is the absence of conjunction with sorrow should be known by the name Yog (BG 6.23). सर्वसंकल्पसंन्यासी योगारूढस्तदोच्यते, sarvasaṁkalpasamnyāsī yogārūḍhastadocyate, the renouncer of all resolves is said to have ascended in Yog (BG 6.4). Patanjali in his Sutra 1.2 provides the meaning of Yog – “योगश्चित्तवृत्तिनिरोधः, yogaścittavṛttinirodhaḥ.” It is the suppression of the modifications of the mind. Swami Parmatmanand Saraswati, based on Vedant, has aptly defined “युज्यते अनेन सांख्य शास्त्रेण सः आत्मज्ञानेन सः इति योगः, yujyate anena sāṁkhya śāstreṇa saḥ ātmajñānena saḥ iti yogaḥ.” Yog is that which joins, with Sankhya Knowledge, with the Knowledge of the Self. Unfortunately, Yog, in the minds of most, has been reduced to आसनप्राणायाम योग, āsanaprāṇāyama



The intent herein is not to stop anyone from learning English. English is a vital communication medium in the global educational, social, commercial, and diplomatic arena. However, it is also necessary to understand the limitations of the English language. Because the word meanings of any language are forged by a cultural and philosophical framework of people who speak that language, it is almost impossible to find English words equivalent to those used in other cultures. The English language is expressed through 5 vowels (a, e, i, o, u) and 21 consonants (b, c, d, f, g, h, j, k, l, m, n, p, q, r, s, t, v, w, x, y, z). However, Sanskrit (संस्कृत), the root Indic language, mother of many Indian languages has 15 vowels (अ, आ, इ, ई, उ, ऊ, ऋ, ॠ, ए, ऐ, ओ, औ, ऌ, ॡ) and 33 consonants (क, ख, ग, घ, ङ, च, छ, ज, झ, ञ, ट, ठ, ड, ढ, ण, त, थ, द, ध, न, प, फ, ब, भ, म, य, र, ल, व, श, ष, स, ह). Most Indians who speak those Indic languages can pronounce all Sanskrit alphabets. With only 26 English alphabets, how can words written in Sanskrit of 48 alphabets be correctly expressed in English? Indeed it is hard to find words in English that contain equivalents of छ, ठ, ढ, ण, त, द, भ, and ष. The cardinal error made by the British two hundred and thirty years ago, and that continues even today, is how even the name of the root

Indic language संस्कृत is erroneously transliterated in English as Sanskrit, instead of the correct Sanskrut. It seems the English blunder commenced in 1791 when under the proposal of Sir Jonathan Duncan of East India Company and the approval of Governor General Lord Cornwallis, the **first Government Sanskrit College** was established in Benares. Pandit Kashinath was its first teacher and Acharya. The curriculum included the teaching of subjects such as Ved, Vedant, Puran, Ayurved, Sahitya, Astrology, Theology, Mimamsa, Nyaya, etc. It appears that Sir Jonathan Duncan, in his proposal, continued the error of transliterating संस्कृत as Sanskrit similar in pronunciation to “Sanskreet” as was done by Sir Charles Wilkins earlier.

In 1785 the Nourse printing press published “Bhagwat Geeta- or the Dialogues of Kreesna and Arjoon; in eighteen lectures; with notes. Translated from the original, in the Sanskreet, or the original language of the Brahmans,” by Charles Wilkins, the first recognized English translation of Gita⁶. It is said that Warren Hastings, the first Governor-General of the Presidency of Fort William (Bengal, India), took a personal interest in seeing the translation materialize. He wrote its introduction, which appeared on October 4, 1784, in the “Benares.” In his lengthy introduction, he wrote: “I hesitate not to pronounce the ‘Gita’ a performance of great originality, of a sublimity of conception of reasoning and diction almost unqualified and a single exception among all the known religions of mankind.” Wilkins is credited for the creation of the Devnagari font as well as the publication of “Grammar of the Sanskrit Language.” Hailing Wilkins’ for his grasp of Sanskrut, Sir William Jones, a British philologist and a puisne judge on the Supreme Court of Judicature at Fort William in Bengal, said, “But for Wilkins’ aid, I would never have learned Sanskrit.”

Wilkins transliterated योग as Yog, ब्रह्म as Brahm, गीता as Geeta, कृष्ण as Kreeshna, अर्जुन as Arjoon, संस्कृत as Sanskreet, महाभारत as Mahabharat, plural of वेद as Veds, पंडित as Pandeet, व्यास as Vyas, धृतराष्ट्र as Dhreetarashtra, सञ्जय as Sanjay, भीष्म as Bheeshma, कृप

as Kreepea, दुर्योधन as Dooryodhan, पांडु as Pandoo, द्रुपद as Droopad, भीम as Bheem, युयुधान as Yooyoodhana, विराट as Veerat, धृष्टकेतु as Dhreeshtaketoo, चेकितान as Chekeetana, पुरुजित् as Pooroojeet and so on. The transliteration employed by Wilkins lacked consistency. For example, Wilkins has “a” ending after the म in भीष्म but not after the म in भीम. Pronouncing Bheem is easier and correct compared to Bheeshma, where one could easily incorrectly pronounce the “ma” in Bheeshma, like how one would pronounce “ma” in the market rather than “ma” in macaw. **Notwithstanding the limitations, many transliterated words by Wilkins, such as Yog for योग, Brahm for ब्रह्म, Ved for वेद, Mahabharat for महाभारत, Vyas for व्यास, etc., did not leave room for mispronouncing.**

Despite the apparent flaws, Wilkins’ translation marked a watershed in the cultural history of India as it sparked translation into various European languages and attracted worldwide acclaim and attention. J.P. Parraud, a French scholar, translated Wilkins’ English version of Gita into French in 1787. Johann Gottfried Herder quickly translated excerpts from Wilkins’ translation into German. They appeared in *Zerstreute Blatter* in 1792. In 1802, the entirety of Wilkins’ translation was rendered into German by Friedrich Meier. More excerpts from the Gita were translated directly from the Sanskrut by Friedrich Schlegel in 1808, appearing in the appendix to *Über die Sprache und Weisheit der Inder*. The understanding of the Gita as the embodiment of the “Sanatan Dharm” gained significant currency throughout the Western world only after Wilkins’ translation. However, most western scholars recognized the limitations of the English language and the transliterating schemes employed by many in the romanization of Indic scripts. Over the years, different scholars and translators have viewed translation differently. While some translators insisted on word-for-word translation, others advocated free translation. Some insisted on the form and style of the source language being retained in the target language, while others supported only transmitting the sense across the tongue.

Devanagari	IAST	Description
अ	a	Short guttural vowel
आ	ā	Long "a" vowel
इ	i	Short palatal vowel
ई	ī	Long "i" vowel
उ	u	Short labial vowel
ऊ	ū	Long "u" vowel
ऋ	r̥	Short retroflex vowel
ॠ	r̄	Long "r̄" vowel
ऌ	l̥	Short retroflex-dental vowel
ॡ	l̄	Long guttural-palatal vowel
ए	e	Long guttural-palatal diphthong
ऐ	ai	Long guttural-palatal diphthong
ओ	o	Long guttural-labial diphthong
औ	au	Long guttural-labial diphthong
ं	m̐	Nasal "m", ½ length of short vowel
ः	h̐	½ length of short vowel
क	k	Hard guttural consonant
ख	kh	Hard guttural-aspirate consonant
ग	g	Soft guttural consonant
घ	gh	Soft guttural-aspirate consonant
ङ	ṅ	Soft guttural-nasal consonant
च	c	Hard guttural-palatal consonant
छ	ch	Hard palatal-aspirate consonant
ज	j	Soft palatal consonant
झ	jh	Soft palatal-aspirate consonant
ञ	ñ	Soft palatal-nasal consonant
ट	ṭ	Hard retroflex consonant
ठ	ṭh	Hard retroflex-aspirate consonant
ड	ḍ	Soft retroflex consonant
ढ	ḍh	Soft retroflex-aspirate consonant
ण	ṇ	Soft retroflex-nasal consonant
त	t	Hard dental consonant
थ	th	Hard dental-aspirate consonant
द	d	Soft dental consonant
ध	dh	Soft dental-aspirate consonant
न	n	Soft dental-aspirate consonant
प	p	Hard labial consonant
फ	ph	Hard labial-aspirate consonant
ब	b	Soft labial consonant
भ	bh	Soft labial-aspirate consonant
म	m	Soft labial-nasal consonant
य	y	Soft palatal semivowel
र	r	Soft retroflex semivowel
ल	l	Soft dental semivowel
व	v	Soft labial semivowel
श	ś	Hard palatal sibilant
ष	ṣ	Hard retroflex sibilant
स	s	Hard dental sibilant
ह	h	Soft guttural sonant aspirat

During the nineteenth century, from suggestions by Monier Monier-Williams, Charles Trevelyan, William Jones, and other scholars, and formalized by the Transliteration Committee of the Geneva Oriental Congress in September 1894, the “**International Alphabet of Sanskrit Transliteration (IAST)**” was adopted. Even here, the British error continued to be carried forward in naming the standard. In the title, the spelling **Sanskrit** was used instead of **Sanskrut**. The infra IAST Table provides the diacritic transliteration of Sanskrut vowels and consonants scripted in Devanagari with their description.

Indeed the English alphabet with diacritic markings based on IAST allowed readers to read the Indic text unambiguously, precisely as if they were in the original Indic script. This faithfulness to the original writings accounts for its continuing popularity among scholarly publications. It was a step in the right direction for scholars who wanted to translate Vedic scriptures.

However, we all need to be mindful that Sanskrut is a vibrational language whose sound quality of the syllables affects and influences human physiology and psychology. The vibration of the syllables has frequencies that help us begin to resonate and align ourselves with Universal goodness and purpose. Therefore, transliteration in English or other languages ought to provide the ability to pronounce the Sanskrut words correctly. While the IAST has provided a means of lossless romanization of Sanskrut words, except for scholarly publications, most people in their writings ignore diacritical markings.

All transliterated Sanskrut consonants under IAST written in the non-IAST end in “a”. Transliterating Sanskrut words in English with consonants ending in “a” without diacritic markings has introduced a colloquial English of Sanskrut words that sometimes completely change the meaning.

Case in point : The International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON), known colloquially as the Hare Krishna movement, was founded in 1966

Proposed IAST Pronunciation Guide

Devanagari	IAST	Pronunciation	Vowel Description
अ	a	like the "u" in but	Short guttural vowel
आ	ā	like the "a" in far	Long "a" vowel
इ	i	like the "i" in pin	Short palatal vowel
ई	ī	like the "ee" in beet	Long "i" vowel
उ	u	like the "u" in full	Short labial vowel
ऊ	ū	like the "oo" in root	Long "u" vowel
ऋ	r̥	like the "ru" in thruway, slightly rolled "r"	Short retroflex vowel
ॠ	r̄	like the "roo" in roof, rolled "r"	Long "r" vowel
ऌ	l̥	like the "lru" in polruan	Short retroflex-dental vowel
ए	e	like the "a" in mate	Long guttural-palatal vowel
ऐ	ai	like the "ai" in vaidic	Long guttural-palatal diphthong
ओ	o	like the "o" in boat	Long guttural-labial diphthong
औ	au	like the "ou" in loud	Long guttural-labial diphthong
ं	m̐	like the "um" in umbrella	Nasal "m", ½ length of short vowel
ः	h̐	like aha	½ length of short vowel
क	k	ka like the "k" in kite	Hard guttural consonant
ख	kh	kha like the "kh" in khalifa	Hard guttural-aspirate consonant
ग	g	ga like "g" in give	Soft guttural consonant
घ	gh	gha like the "gh" in ghost	Soft guttural-aspirate consonant
ङ	ṅ	ṅa like the "ng" in sing	Soft guttural-nasal consonant
च	c	ca like the "ch" in chose	Hard guttural-palatal consonant
छ	ch	cha like the "ch-h" in catch-her	Hard palatal-aspirate consonant
ज	j	ja like the "j" in just	Soft palatal consonant
झ	jh	jha like the "dgeh" in hedgehog	Soft palatal-aspirate consonant
ञ	ñ	ña like the "ny" in canyon	Soft palatal-nasal consonant
ट	ṭ	ṭa like the "t" in tub	Hard retroflex consonant
ठ	ṭh	ṭha like the "th" in pothole	Hard retroflex-aspirate consonant
ड	ḍ	ḍa like the "d" in dot	Soft retroflex consonant
ढ	ḍh	ḍha like the "dh" in godhead	Soft retroflex-aspirate consonant
ण	ṇ	ṇa like the "n" in turn	Soft retroflex-nasal consonant
त	t	ta like the "t" in tub	Hard dental consonant
थ	th	tha like the "th" in thunder	Hard dental-aspirate consonant
द	d	da like the "d" in dove	Soft dental consonant
ध	dh	dha like the "th" in there	Soft dental-aspirate consonant
न	n	na like the "n" in nut	Soft dental-nasal consonant
प	p	pa like the "p" in punk	Hard labial consonant
फ	ph	pha like the "fu" in fur	Hard labial-aspirate consonant
ब	b	ba like the "b" in bird	Soft labial consonant
भ	bh	bha like the "bh" in abhor	Soft labial-aspirate consonant
म	m	ma like the "m" in mother	Soft labial-nasal consonant

Devanagari	IAST	Pronunciation	Consonant Description
य य	y ya	like the "y" in yes	Soft palatal semivowel
र र	r ra	like the "r" in run	Soft retroflex semivowel
ल ल	l la	like the "l" in lunge	Soft dental semivowel
व व	v va	like the "w" in won	Soft labial semivowel
श श	ś śa	like the "sh" in cash	Hard palatal sibilant
ष ष	ṣ ṣa	like "sh" in shine	Hard retroflex sibilant
स स	s sa	like the "s" in surf	Hard dental sibilant
ह ह	h ha	like the "h" in hum	Soft guttural sonant aspirat

in New York City by A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada. It is commendable that their chants have spread "Krishna (sic) Consciousness" worldwide. On the streets of New York, the followers chant, "Hare Rama! Hare Rama! Rama Rama Hare Hare! Hare Krishna! Hare Krishna! Krishna Krishna Hare Hare!" While they correctly chant the **Ra** of **Rama** (राम) like the "ra" of the rather, but incorrectly pronounce the "ma" like the "ma" of the mart. Further, the कृ of कृष्ण as elaborated earlier, should be **Kru** and not **Kri**. Most significantly, when कृष्ण is chanted as **Krishna** with the "na" like the "na" of the narcotic, it no longer represents Bhagavan Shri कृष्ण, but means कृष्णा, the birth name of Draupadi, who Bhagavan considered as his sister. ISCON ought to cogitate on changing the pronunciation of the chants to do justice to the holy names of Bhagavan Shri Ram and Bhagavan Shri Krushn.

On November 24, 2022, Gujarat Vishwakosh, Ahmedabad, India, released my first book "Intent of Śrīmad Bhagavad Gītā – Path to Self-Realization." All Sanskrit words in the book are transliterated in accordance with the IAST standard. However, in the Pronunciation Guide, beginning on page 567, I have used the pronunciations of ऋ, ॠ, and ॡ, as is currently in vogue. Though in the second edition of the book, I intend to modify the IAST Pronunciation Guide to reflect the true pronunciation of ऋ, ॠ, and ॡ the way I learned Sanskrit in the summer of 1962 from Shri Kashiram Shastri, the father of Shri Keshavram Kashiram Shastri,

the Bhiṣma Pitā of the Sanskrit world of Gujarat. A draft IAST Pronunciation Guide is at the end of this document. The English words related to छ, ठ, ढ, ण, त, द, भ, and ष in the guide are not perfect and need to be addressed.

Based on the foregoing, the following is the call for action to protect the sanctity of the Sanskrit language from further degradation and ensure that Sanskrit transliterated words are so written that the original Sanskrit pronunciation has adhered to. It is recommended that a committee of distinguished International linguists proficient in English and Sanskrit is formed by an eminent organization to review and adopt the recommendations herein.

Recommended Actions

1. Identify individuals and organizations that can implement the actions recommended herein.
2. Develop a list of commonly mispronounced transliterated Sanskrit words.
3. Continue to follow the IAST standard with diacritic markings. In order to distinguish the IAST words from non-IAST words, it is suggested that all IAST words ought to be *italicized*.
4. Modify the current IAST (ऋ) written in non-IAST words as **ri** to **ru**, IAST (ॠ) written in non-IAST words as **ree** to **roo**, and IAST (ॡ) written in non-IAST words as **lry** to **lru**.
5. Replace **Sanskrit** with **Sanskut** – in all written and verbal communications and educational institutions such as schools, colleges, and

universities. Begin with renaming all education institutions or their departments that have “Sanskrit” in their names with Sanskrit in their names.

6. Develop and adopt a dictionary of non-IAST transliterated Sanskrit words, as appropriate, by removing the ending “a” in consonant ending Sanskrit words when IAST diacritical markings are not used, such as Yoga to Yog (योग), Karma to Karm (कर्म), Moksha to Moksh (मोक्ष), Ramayana to Ramayan (रामायण), Rama to Ram (राम), Krishna to Krushn (कृष्ण), Arjuna to Arjun (अर्जुन), Mahabharata to Mahabharat (महाभारत), Veda to Ved (वेद), Upanishada to Upanishad (उपनिषद) and so on. Sanskrit words ending in य may be an exception.

7. In currently published literature, for all consonant ending Sanskrit words that, upon transliteration, have “a” ending and are written without diacritic markings (non-IAST), develop an outreach program to teach the correct pronunciation of the word by pronouncing the ending “a” as how “u” is pronounced in but.
8. Develop an outreach program to encourage all, particularly Indians, to pronounce the transliterated Sanskrit words, whether in regular communication or formal speeches, as if they were reading that word in their native language.
9. Adopt an IAST Pronunciation Guide. A proposed guide for consideration is appended. The English words related to छ, ठ, ढ, ण, त, द, भ, and ष in the guide are not perfect and need to be addressed.

1. <https://www.un.org/en/observances/yoga-day#:~:text=Recognizing%20its%20universal%20appeal%2C%20on,many%20benefits%20of%20practicing%20yoga.>
2. Sanskrit language was spoken in Bhāratavarṣa (भारतवर्ष) during ancient times. Sanatan Dharm embedded in the Vedic scriptures was expressed in Sanskrit. Brahmi script is the earliest known form of the language. It is also written in many regional scripts such as Oriya, Bengali, Telugu, Tamil, Kannada et. al. Though in modern times Devanagari script is dominant. Interestingly, Sanskrit is still spoken as the main language in a few areas in India. In the village of Mathur in the state of Karnataka almost the entire population is well versed in Sanskrit. In the city of Mysore, a daily newspaper in Sanskrit, “Sudharma Sanskrit Daily” is being published since 1970. <https://sudharmasanskritdaily.in/>
3. Based on Skanda Purāṇa (स्कन्द पुराण) one of the eighteen flaws of Vāṇī (वाणी, speech) is - पदान्त अक्षर गुरु उच्चारण (padānta akṣara guru uccāraṇa) – Speech where there is long pronunciation of the suffix letter of a word. Such as pronouncing Shiva (शिवा, śivā) instead of Shiv (शिव, śiva), Krushna (कृष्णा, kṛṣṇā) instead of Krushn (कृष्ण, kṛṣṇa), Yoga (योगा, yogā) instead of Yog (योग, yoga). Shiv means Bhagavan Shiv, and Shiva means wife of Shrugal (श्रुगल, śrgāla). Krushn means Bhagavan Krushn, and Krushna means Draupadi, wife of the five Pandavs.
4. IAST is based on a standard established by the International Congress of Orientalists at Geneva in 1894.
5. Swami Parmatmanand Saraswati at the book release of “Intent of Shrimad Bhagavad Gita” on November 24, 2022 at the Gujarat Vishwakosh Trust, Ahmedabad, India. <https://youtu.be/jjkrOHkLH9w>
6. https://www.rarebooksocietyofindia.org/postDetail.php?id=196174216674_10154320737466675

About the Author

Dr. Bharat C. Patel has published two books 1) Intent of Shrimad Bhagavad Gita – Path to Self-Realization, and 2) Essence of Shrimad Bhagavad Gita - with Compound Separation (पदच्छेद, Padaccheda) and Concordance (अन्वय, Anvaya). These books were displayed at the World Book Fair in Delhi, India (February 25 to March 5, 2023). They are available on Amazon worldwide.



By **Koenraad Elst**

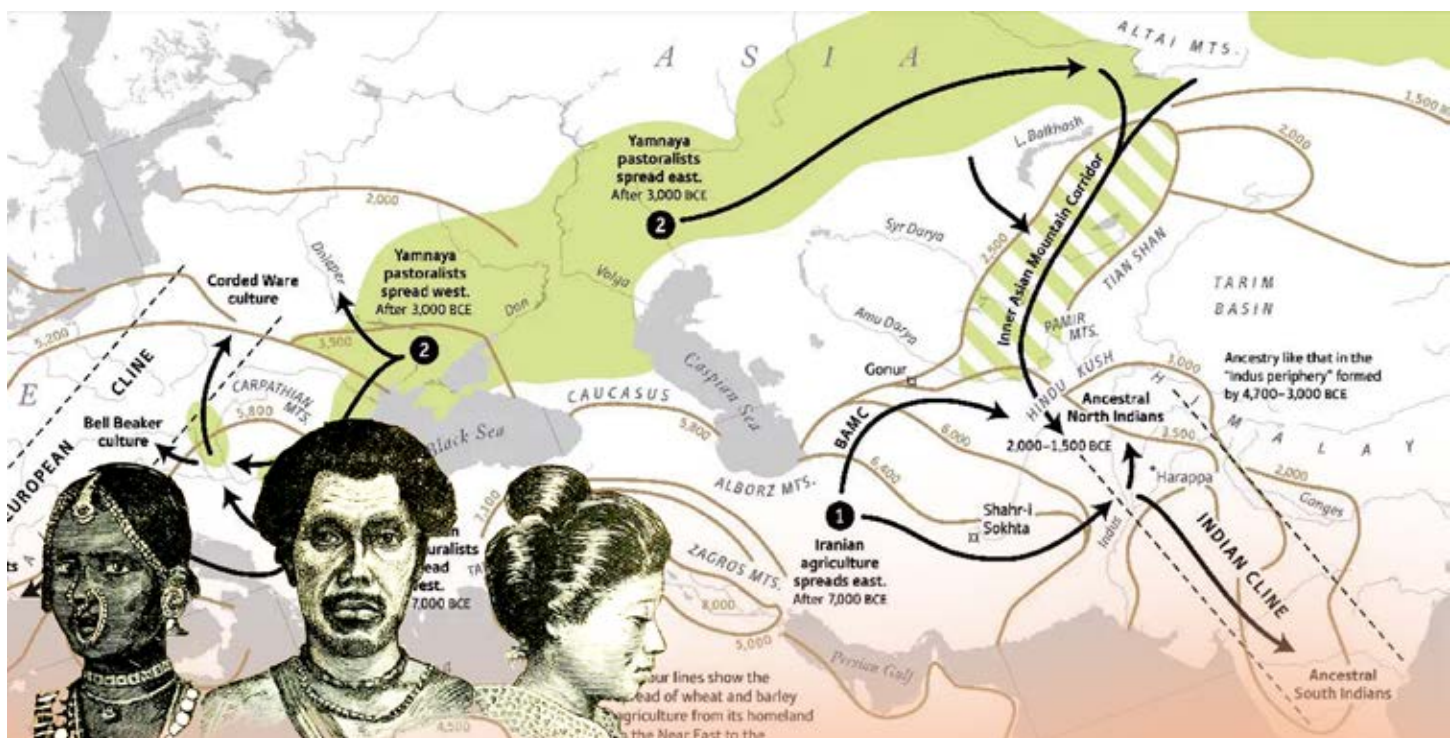
Let us first get our terminology straight. Squeamish AIT scholars are making everyone toe their line that instead of an “invasion” there was an “immigration”. They have to, for unlike in Europe, where the “Aryan” (meaning Indo-European-speaking, IE) invasion from the steppes ca. 2800 BCE was a dramatic and sometimes genocidal event, India presents no evidence at all of such foreign conquest in the period considered. So they shifted to the thesis of a subtle infiltration under the archaeological radar, yet revolutionary in its impact: unlike the Scythians, Greeks, Huns or Kushanas, these intruders succeeded in not just conserving their language and religion, but imposing both on the far more numerous natives. Well, the word “invasion” is not about the means used, but the resulting power equation: it’s an “immigration” if the foreigners adapt, but an “invasion” if they take power. And this is clearly what the supposed Aryan invaders did. So it was definitely an invasion, but we won’t insist: even with an “immigration”, it remains the “AIT”.

However, another consideration started to undermine the dominant position of the OIT. Linguists realized that Sanskrit was not the mother but merely an elder sister of the other branches. There

was a distance between the putative language of origin (Proto-Indo-European, PIE) and Vedic Sanskrit, and this translated into a possible distance between the Homeland and India. Not really compelling logic, for languages can evolve while staying in the same place; but this change of opinion won through. What made the scales tip was probably August Schlegel's proposal in 1834 that the Homeland lay in or near the Caucasus mountains. Bible-thumpers had already thought of Armenia, where Noah's Ark had landed: the Aryans were deemed the descendants of Noah's son Jafeth. Successive Homeland theories after this would rarely move away sharply from the Caucasus area. Since Gordon Child's choice in 1926 for the Don-Volga region, this area has mostly remained the favorite, today known as the Yamnaya ("pit-grave") culture. But the OIT school did not give up. The defense was taken up again by Europeans living in India. The most prominent and surprising figure here is Mountstuart Elphinstone, a proverbial colonialist. After his retirement as governor of Bombay, he wrote a History of India. Among his arguments, the most compelling is that no Hindu scripture gives any indication of a foreign origin: "There is no reason whatever for thinking

that the Hindus ever inhabited any country but their present." (1841) Yet this could not save the OIT. In the mid-19th century, two developments served as nails in its coffin. One was the start of Linguistic Paleontology, the "science" of discovering a language's habitat from its vocabulary. Thus, it was realized that PIE flourished in a society familiar with wheeled transport: six words for the cart and its parts exist throughout the daughter languages and must have existed in PIE. Now for the Homeland question, it was deemed significant that there were words for cold-climate species like birch tree, wolf and bear. This doesn't really refute the idea of an Indian Homeland, for these species also occur in India, which has islands of cold climate.

Recently, OIT mastermind Shrikant Talageri has shown that hot-climate species like ape, lion and elephant are equally present in the PIE lexicon, and they are hard to reconcile with a northern climate zone. But back then, the exclusion of India as a Homeland candidate won the day. The other factor was the appearance of Veda translations which followed the then-emerging racial paradigm. Thus, in the Rg-Vedic description of the Battle of the Ten Kings, it was commonly pretended that the enemies were "black



aboriginals”. In reality, the names of the kings and of their tribes (most notably Dâsa, Dasyu) are recognizably Iranian, and their characterization as “the black tribe” is a mistranslation. The word Asiknî does not refer to a skin color, but to the area they come from, the basin of “the Black River”, the Vedic name of the Chenab. This way, several racist distortions, perhaps made in good faith because of the racist Zeitgeist, created the impression that an Aryan invasion into India had been described by the Vedic composers themselves. It thus became futile to deny the AIT.

The ensuing political abuse of the AIT by the British colonialists and even by the National-Socialists could not inspire the Indo-Europeanists to a rethink. After 1945, the “Aryan” political discourse went out of fashion in the West, but in India its political use by Christian missionaries, Ambedkarites (though not BR Ambedkar himself, an articulate opponent of the AIT), Dravidianists and Nehruvians continued. In the West this has not been noticed till today. hilariously, the few Western scholars who have heard of the OIT at all, claim that it is “a politicized concoction”, when in fact it is their own AIT that has played a poisonous role in Indian politics all along. The OIT started a second life in 1982, when KD Sethna published the book Karpasa (cotton), showing that cotton was common in the Harappan cities (starting 2600 BCE), and in Sanskrit writings younger than them, but not yet in the Rg-Veda. He concluded that the Rg-Veda largely predated them. This high chronology is detrimental to the AIT, which postulates an Aryan invasion (importing the Vedic language) only in the 2nd millennium. In 1984 the US archaeologist James Shaffer showed that there is zero

archaeological proof for an Aryan invasion, including a peaceful immigration. Indian archaeologists became more outspoken about their findings to the same effect. Even BB Lal, long the main archaeological supporter of the AIT, shifted to the position: “Vedic and Harappan are two sides of the same coin.”

Several linguists and historians joined in, and latterly some geneticists: people of the same academic rank as any pro-AIT professors you can cite. Until the millennium year 2000, there had been many voices doubting or plainly rejecting the AIT, and contributing many little arguments from linguistics or archaeology, all indirect evidence, but a clear alternative was lacking. Shrikant Talageri, after a preparatory book in 1993, then broke through the wall of ignorance about the enigmatic Vedic age. In *The Rigveda, an Analysis*, and its 2008 sequel, *The Veda and the Avesta*, he pioneered a convincing OIT, which should henceforth count as the OIT. This work is, as I have been able to verify at Indo-Europeanist conferences, completely unknown in the West and also in India’s AIT camp. Whereas the mere handful of OIT thinkers know the AIT quite well and often write answers to it, the well-established AIT doesn’t really get beyond derogatory comments on the OIT and stonewalls all arguments in its favour. Around the year 2000 there was a little bit of dialogue, mostly thanks to the American scholar Edwin Bryant (the coiner of the term “OIT”), but this has remained a blip. Today, the AIT camp is a happy valley protected from the rising waters of counter-evidence by a protective dam. But the waters keep rising, and the time can’t be far off when the waters will overcome the dam and drastically impact the cozy life in the valley.



Koenraad Elst, a renowned Belgian Indologist, has written several books on Indian history and culture. He is best known for his writings on controversies in Indian history.

Source: <http://koenraadelst.blogspot.com/2023/02/let-aryan-debate-become-debate-again.html>

About the Author

A Healing and Reconciliation Narrative After the **GUJARAT RIOTS**

By Rajat Mitra

It was a phone call from National Human Rights Commission one afternoon in March 2002. “Would your organization be interested in providing trauma counselling and therapy to children and adolescents in Gujarat affected by the riots?” they asked. At that time, our organization was working on a project on victimology providing trauma care and support to the children in Delhi affected by heinous crimes. Grief is not an emotion in itself but consists of sequence of stages beginning from denial to forgiveness after undergoing a deep loss. “The Commission feels that considering your work in this area, your team would be able to bring healing to many victims,” they noted.

This article is not about the work we did in Gujarat, in the camps, in homes, but tries to understand why most narratives bypass the role of the mob who torched the train. Grief is a universal phenomenon, one that has no geographical boundaries. Its features are the same everywhere and transcends boundaries of religion and nationality. Grief work is a field where one has to work with keeping personal beliefs away only seeing the grieving individual in front with only the value for the truth. The face of the unknown person, trying to come to terms with the worst hour of his life is one’s chief concern, never his background.

Several years ago, during a lecture in Germany, I had asked in response to a question on violence, what would have happened in Germany if a train bogey full of German women and children were torched alive at a station by Turks? After a hushed silence, one of the participants said, “First of all no one would even dream of that. It will be very difficult

to think that such a thing can happen here. But if it does, it will be difficult to control the emotions and the violence that would follow.” I had asked a similar question in USA what would have happened if a train full of White women and children were torched by Blacks or Hispanics? “It will become a nightmare,” one of the Whites in the audience had replied. So why does the pogrom where a lynching and murderous mob who tried to kill the pilgrims of a bogey finds almost no mention in the narratives of Gujarat riots and if so only in passing, never the cause of it? “The grief of Gujarati people after the torching of the train, what are you talking about?” One of the White journalists had asked me, puzzled when I had tried to mention it as a causative factor in the violence that ensued. Like most of his ilk, it is difficult for him or others to understand that Black men, men of color and societies can feel rage, when a pogrom, act of mass violence is carried out against them. A legacy hard to let go or understand for many whose forefathers and institutions taught that the societies of color were not supposed to be angry, whereas they themselves created two world wars and bombed the world everywhere.



Image Courtesy : The Indian Express

How could a murderous mob carry out a pogrom of burning alive fifty nine people and get away, one wonders. Is that because journalists of the world, mostly White, will not see it as a story when it is the grief of society of color whose people can be butchered, attacked and killed and who are expected to be silent. A narrative based on the victim as the perpetrator is built, paraded and put before the world as truth. The focus is taken away from the real perpetrators and they are allowed to hide their role. The literature, the print media of the enslaved rarely contains any narrative of rage, but only of guilt and self-blame. This is what colonialism has done to the psyche of the enslaved as the victim is unable to point a finger at the perpetrator and accuse him of the crime. The perpetrator knowing the characteristic of the victim, drives home the point that he alone is the perpetrator and responsible for the carnage. The narrative becomes where the victim is held responsible by the friend of the perpetrator who also acts as the jury, in this case the BBC and the journalistic fraternity. The narrative of Gujarat violence bears a striking resemblance to the above where the original perpetrator, the murderous mob is nowhere in print or news. They haven't been talked about in debates, their motives never analyzed. It is as if on the victim lies the entire burden of guilt.

In almost every pogrom, the perpetrator tries to hide and portray the victim as responsible aided by powerful allies. It is time that Indians understand that this strategy has been played ad infinitum on them, keeping us forever guilty and ashamed.

The BBC documentary has chosen not to give any account of the pogrom how it all started by a murderous mob who had planned and tried to annihilate a group of innocent pilgrims. It doesn't tell what it may have been for the terrified women and children who screamed for escape asking to be let out

but found no mercy and were burnt alive. It doesn't spare a line about the motives of the mob who came prepared and organized and carried out an act of monstrous proportion and discover the reasons behind it. Would the BBC ever have a conscience to think what it was like for the pilgrims surrounded and threatened with painful and slow death? Not having done that takes the perpetrator out of the narrative, putting him as someone who didn't cause it. A very Nazi way of putting every responsibility on Jews, even their own killing. Will a documentary ever be made on that narrative?

The violence in Gujarat where such a murderous mob gathered at one spot, ready to lynch, torch the pilgrims may be said to be one of the biggest one of its kind, next only in ferocity to the living memory to thousands of Sikhs who were butchered on the streets of Delhi. One wonders why the BBC didn't make something on that naming and associating it with Rajiv Gandhi?

All violence denigrates human dignity and respect and is never justified. Yet a distinction needs to be made between violence unleashed by the perpetrator and the violence shown by the victim in retaliation. The violence of the abuser and the abused can never be the same and equated. While the former tries to subjugate and annihilate, the latter is a retaliation to the former, the inability of the victim to succumb to injustice.

What is the most important lesson we learnt from our work on the violence in Gujarat. I would say it is that violence has a color, a name and a copyright. That it is a colonial legacy left to us that we haven't been able to throw off as yet. I hope that sooner than later the present debate will take us a step further towards that goal.

Healing and closure to the Gujarat riots is long overdue and is a need for a nation to heal itself. A narrative that takes into account truthfully the role of everyone from beginning to end is the only path towards that recovery.

About the Author



Rajat Mitra is a Psychologist, Speaker and Author of 'The Infidel Next Door'

www.rajatmitra.co.in

SEATTLE CASTE ORDINANCE

Divisive, Discriminatory, and Violation of First Amendment

By Richa Gautam

Recent ordinance on Caste discrimination in Seattle has caused widespread concern among the Hindu American diaspora community throughout the United States. The legislation is viewed by many as anti-Indian American, divisive, and a violation of First Amendment rights. More than a thousand emails have gone to the councilors, and city council meetings have been flooded with concerning comments on the caste legislation.

In this article, we will examine the reasons why the ordinance is seen as discriminatory and biased and why it is opposed by many members of the South Asian community in the United States.

Firstly, Ms. Kshama Sawant, who proposed the Caste ordinance, has faced a recall[1] for violating her oath of office three times. In the Indian Community, she is notorious for having twisted facts during the anti-India and anti-CAA resolutions in Seattle. Her name was dropped many times in the power corridors of various cities as the force behind city council resolutions against the CAA law, targeting India falsely for a humane legislation for persecuted refugees.

The caste ordinance in Seattle is viewed as an even larger attempt to embed anti-Indian American legislation that would divide the South Asian community and lead to ethnic profiling.

This caste ordinance would not only divide our community, but it would also invite legal complications for the city, as has been seen in universities in

Rhode Island and California and in the Cisco caste discrimination case.

Furthermore, caste as a category is not clearly defined in the U.S. Constitution, which is one of the reasons why the Santa Clara Human Rights Commission in California dropped the caste resolution in August of 2022. Current provisions in the U.S. legal system are sufficient to address all forms of discrimination. Adding caste as a category is, therefore redundant.

It is also worth noting that the CISCO case is still pending – with much of the information being contested as fabricated[2] — and the Seattle Caste ordinance makes the mistake of quoting the allegations in the CISCO Caste case as facts. The head of the CRD, Kevin Kish, is currently being sued for the unconstitutional nature and targeting of Hindus in the Cisco case and the anomalies, and many have called out the fabrications and ethical violations involved in it. Quoting these disputed and unproven allegations in the legislation is highly misleading and unethical.

The data used to support the ordinance is faulty, unscientific, and seven years old. It uses largely unscientific survey results from Equality Labs — an openly Hinduphobic organization — instead of a more recent report by the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace[3], which showed that caste discrimination in the U.S. is low and not statistically significant.

From a social and sociological point, Caste is neither a Hindu nor Indian word nor is it English. It is a Portuguese word of Iberian origin and has a horrific history of oppression with Herbert Risley's scientific racism attached to it. Hindus have en masse suffered due to the imposition of colonial identities like 'Caste' and 'Dalit' upon them in the late 1800s and early 1900s.

In fact, the attempt to define caste as Hindu and as a rigid hierarchical system "embedded in Hinduism" is itself a constitutional violation of Hindu-American rights. Attempting to define religion is prohibited by our constitution and is a violation of the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment.

The appointment of a special body by the city to understand and interpret the nuances of caste, assign caste groups, and create a hierarchy to monitor caste-based discrimination would be a violation of the Establishment Clause which prevents the government from interpreting religion. Seattle cannot interpret religion or violate the fundamental rights of immigrant South Asians, Indians, or Hindus. Furthermore, it is not clear how Seattle would handle individuals who identify as Hindu, but also as atheists. This raises serious questions about the rights of immigrants from South Asia, Indians, and Hindus to self-determination and their fundamental rights as American citizens.

Perhaps the most blaring issue with the caste ordinance is that it does not reference the 2020 report by the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, conducted in collaboration with the John Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies and the

University of Pennsylvania which demonstrates that Caste discrimination in the U.S. is so low that it is not statistically quantifiable and projectable. Furthermore, nearly half of the Hindu Americans surveyed did not answer the caste section of the survey, and less than half of those who answered said they did not know their caste identity. Finally, it is notable that caste discrimination was the least concerning to the sample studied, rendering it statistically insignificant.

This caste ordinance opens colonial wounds and depends on faulty and fabricated surveys and unproven caste cases to attempt to define Hinduism with ulterior motives. Articles that claim to address inherent and endemic discrimination in Hindu social structures are silent about other religions yet argue that Hindus have no right to call out Hinduphobia.

It is crucial for the American Hindu diaspora community to come together to resist this gaslighting of Hindus and oppose vehemently this dangerous and biased ordinance that will divide the South Asian community and violate our First Amendment rights as Americans.

If there is "liberty and justice for all," this caste ordinance must not be allowed to pass.

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About the Author



Richa Gautam is a senior research scholar and associate in indigenous ethnography at the Center of Indic Studies at Indus University. She is a consumer research and business analyst who divides her time between field studies, advocacy efforts, and conducting surveys and research for her clients. She actively works in the field of diversity, inclusiveness, and minority rights as well as decolonial practices as Founder and Director at Cares Global.

Source: <https://hindudvesha.org/seattle-caste-ordinance-divisive-discriminatory-and-violation-of-first-amendment-rights/>



A-B-C of MORALS and VALUES (Continued)

By Siddheshwari Devi (Didi Ji)

S is for Simplicity. We often complicate very simple matters and manage to confuse ourselves and others. Wise ones work towards simplifying life. Albert Einstein once said, "If you can't explain it to a six-year-old, you don't understand it yourself." A genius is not one who complicates things; a genius is one who simplifies everything.

When faced with a seemingly unsurmountable task, break it down into sections. Make the task less daunting by simplifying it. You will see a clearer picture emerging. Rather than trying to accomplish a difficult mission quickly, work on it every day for a week and get it done. Simple!

Many people today are embracing minimalism. Not finding fulfillment living in a big home filled with things, they yearn for a simple life in a tiny home with bare essentials.

Simplicity is the ornament of an individual. Being part and parcel of God who is infinitely simple we have a natural attraction for simplicity.

T is for Tolerance. Tolerance is the mark of a confident and mature person. Such a person does not take insults personally, for he knows who he is. Taking criticism in stride he does not fall to pieces when insulted or misunderstood. He knows that others' opinions of him do not shape him.

To become more tolerant, you must not only be confident in yourself, but also give others benefit of the doubt. Respect others and think good of them. Instead of losing your temper, try to find out where the other person is coming from. Empathize with others. Take the spotlight away from yourself and shine it on others. Be mindful of the challenges they are facing in life.

Trees teach us tolerance in that they provide sweet fruits to those who pelt stones at them. We should learn also to be tolerant toward others.

U is for Uplifting. Some people lift you up by being encouraging and inspiring. Their words and gestures lift your spirits and make you believe in yourself. You may be feeling gloomy but they will pull you out of the darkness until you can see the light. These people may not be teaching in a school or college, but they are natural teachers. They may not be heading a corporation, but they are natural leaders. There is a very strong possibility that you have been affected by such a person in your life.

The best way to show gratitude to a person who has uplifted you is to uplift others. Instill hope in a grieving heart. Put a smile on the face of someone who has nothing to smile about. There are challenges in life that at times seem unsurmountable. We are living in a self-serving, self-obsessed, rush-rush society where people are trying to tear others down so that they may get ahead. In all



this haste, it's easy for a person to slip and fall. Be the one who steps away from the rat race and lifts the one who has fallen.

Vis for Vow. The word almost seems archaic. The concept of 'taking a vow' also sounds very old; almost ancient. However, taking a vow to do something is neither archaic, nor ancient. The meaning of the word applies to our daily life, even in the 21st century. You can take a vow even if you are not entering a monastery or getting married.

When you take a vow to accomplish a task, you promise yourself to put all your energy into getting that work done. When you take a vow to change something about yourself, you should apply all your mental power in making that transformation happen.

Success in any aspect of life depends on taking a vow and working towards fulfilling it.

Wis for Welcoming. Some people have a way of making you feel at ease in their home, their group, and in new surroundings. They look you in the eye and genuinely pay attention to what you are saying. They sit and talk with you when no one is talking to you. Being with them makes you feel valued. It seems that for these people there are no strangers.

The world is a marketplace. We come here for a short time and while here, we meet many people. Let's not forget that we are children of the same Father. We must try to see God, our Father, within everyone we meet. Decide within your own heart that you will make everyone you meet feel welcome in your presence. Genuinely try to feel the divinity within every person.

Will you feel like an impostor? Yes, but for only a short while. As time passes, you will internally feel the way you are acting externally.

Xis for Xenagogue, meaning, a guide. If you wish to live a fruitful life you must allow yourself to be led by a spiritual guide; a Guru, a saint. A scholar once approached a saint and said to him, "I wish to have a spiritual experience." The saint said, "Go outside and stand there for one hour." "But it's raining outside." "Yes, yes, I know. Go outside and stand in the rain." Feeling

extremely foolish, the scholar did as he was told. He stood in the rain for an hour and then went inside. The Guru smiled and asked, "How do you feel?" The scholar said, "Like a fool." "Very good, very good," said the saint. You have had your very first experience."

For a guide to give you direction in life, you must first accept your ignorance. Then a divine xenagogue will lead you out of confusion and into the abode of knowledge.

Yis for Youthful. You don't have to be young or look young to be youthful. If you are receptive to new and fresh ideas; if you are willing to accept that there is more than one way of doing things, and if you are excited about learning even at not-such-a-young age, you are youthful.

With the passing of years, we tend to get settled in our way of thinking. Our opinions become inflexible, and we dare anyone to change us. This is quite unfortunate because then we stop learning and growing. The mind becomes a stagnant pond instead of a flowing river. People seem annoying and we become proper curmudgeons.

Mind you; being youthful requires a good dose of humility. A humble person can accept others' ideas and appreciate them. People of all ages – children, preteens, teens, adults – have great ideas and these ideas are the best resources we have. Being youthful keeps the mind open and receptive to these ideas.

Zis for Zeal. Don't be jealous. Be zealous. Being zealous carries a slightly negative connotation in people's minds, but here it is being used in a very positive and desirable manner. Zeal is passion. To be happy in material as well as spiritual life, you need passion. If you are going to be a hairdresser, put all your passion into working with hair. If you are cooking a meal, become passionate about the food you are preparing. If you are meditating, be an ardent meditator. Meditate with a passion.

When you feel bored and aimless, check your zeal level. It must be low. It is time to reset the mental mode to ENJOY. Enjoy your surroundings. Enjoy your house. Enjoy your backyard and your front yard. If you are lacking zeal, the work you do every day is just a boring chore. Doing that work will give you no joy whatsoever. Life will become dreary. Add a good amount of zeal into that chore, and the same work becomes a pleasure.



VHPA - Executive Board (EB)

Name	Title	
Ajay Shah	President	shahajay@gmail.com
Amitabh Mittal	General Secretary	avmittal@vhp-america.org
Tejal Shah	Jt. General Secretary	tshahnj@hotmail.com
Renu Gupta	Vice President Support A Child	renurajvanshigupta@gmail.com
Sanjay Kaul	VP Hindu Diaspora Outreach	sanjaykaul@hotmail.com
Shyam Tiwari	VP Publications	srtiwari@hotmail.com
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Jai Bansal	VP Education	jaigb0@gmail.com
Rakhi Israni	Legal Counsel	rakhi@exceltest.com

VHPA - Extended EB with Special Invitees

Name	Title	
Umesh Shukla	VP Hindu Mandir Relations	umeshshukla123@gmail.com
Anit Gupta	Assistant Treasurer	anitgupta@gmail.com
Dhaval Joshipura	VP Membership	djosh58@gmail.com
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
Manju Tiwari	National Bal Vihar Network	msrtiwari@gmail.com
Neelam Jaiswal	Hindu Women's Network	neelamjswl@gmail.com



(World Hindu Council of America)

National Office: 200 New Bond Street, Sugar Grove, IL 60554-9171 Tax ID#51-0156325

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

VHPA MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION FORM

(Fields marked with * cannot be left blank)

Salutation	*First Name	M.I.	*Last Name
------------	-------------	------	------------

Spouse's Name: _____ Street/P.O. Box No.: _____

*City _____ *State _____ *Zip Code: _____

*Home Telephone _____ *Email Address _____

Cell Phone _____ Work Telephone _____

*Age Group 18-35 ☐ 36-50 ☐ 51-65 ☐ 65 ☐ (*Minimum age of becoming member is 18 years*)

Membership Desired: (Select One)☐ Associate / Student / General☐ Life Membership - \$ 1,000.00

☐ Primary (10 Year Membership) - \$ 500.00

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I would like to be a part of the VHPA mission to sustain and strengthen Hindu Dharma and traditions. I believe in, practice, and /or respect the spirituals and religious principles having roots in Bharat. I will not partake in any activities deemed harmful, which may negatively affect VHPA organization or its mission.

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Date _____

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Credit Card Name: ☐ VISA ☐ MASTER CARD ☐ DISCOVER

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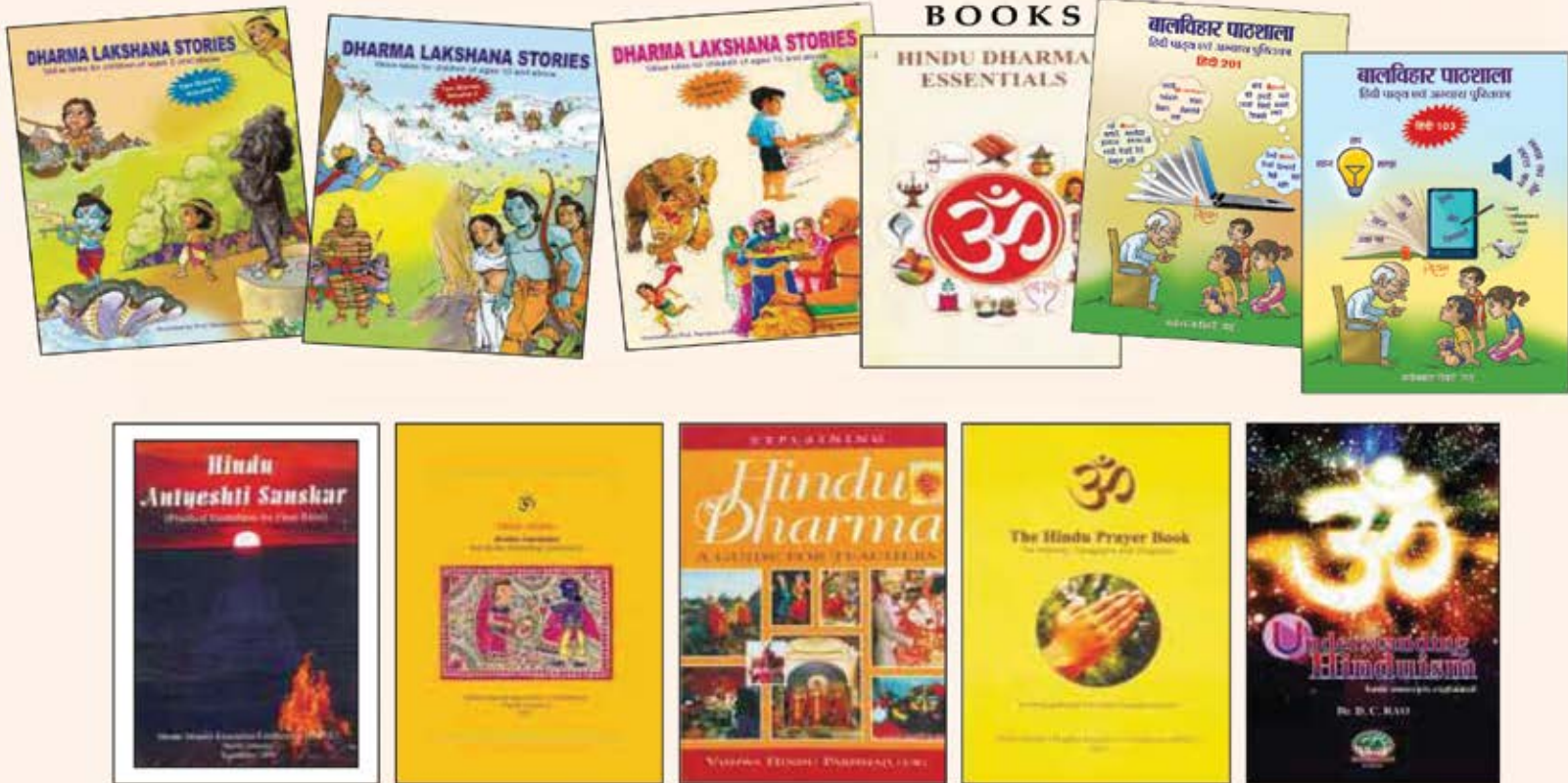
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ॐ असतो मा सद् गमय । तमसो मा ज्योतिर्गमय । मृत्योर्मांमृतम् गमय ।।

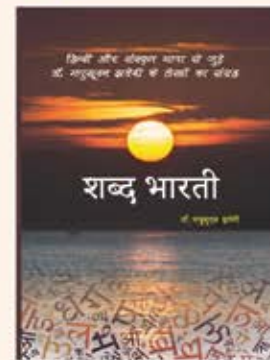
Om, Asato Maa Sad Gamaya; Tamaso Maa Jyotir Gamaya Mrityor Maa Amritam Gamaya

ॐ शांतिः शांतिः शांतिः

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