



Yugabda 5117
Shaka Samvat 1937
Vikram Samvat 2072
.....
Vol. XXXXIV
No. 2
April - June 2015

HINDU VISHWA

Vishwa Dharma Digest



**Remembering
Swami
Chinmayanand**

A Giant Step for NRIs Ready to Give Back



Also Read

- VHPA Family Camp Mixes Fun with Spirituality
- Hatha Yoga: The Foundation of Physical Health and Meditation
- Hindus and Catholics Initiate Dialogue to Promote Mutual Reverence

U.S \$5.00

Non Profit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Houston, TX
PERMIT NO. 8376

Vishwa Hindu Parishad of America Inc.
P.O. Box 441505
Houston, TX 77244-1505



WORLD HINDU COUNCIL OF AMERICA (VHPA)

National Headquarter:
P. O. Box 441505, Houston, TX 77244-1505

www.vhp-america.org

Tel.: (281)496-5676
office@vhp-america.org

Volume XXXIV

No. 2

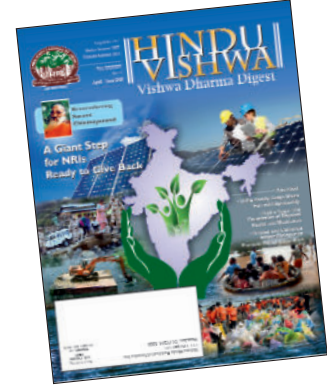
April-June 2015

योऽन्तःसुखोऽन्तरारामस्तथान्तर्ज्योतिरेव यः ।
स योगी ब्रह्मनिर्वाणं ब्रह्मभूतोऽधिगच्छति ॥

भगवद् गीता ५-२४

yo 'ntah-sukho 'ntar-aramas tathantar-jyotir eva yah
sa yogi brahma-nirvanam brahma-bhuta 'dhigacchati - Bhagwad gita 5-24

One who experiences internal happiness with the mind immersed
in the self, and who sees the self within as well; such a one perfecting
the science of uniting the individual consciousness with the ultimate
consciousness, spiritually realizing the ultimate truth attains the
liberation of the ultimate truth.



President	Dr. Abhaya Asthana	508-875-0432	abhayaji@gmail.com
General Secretary	Shree Sanjay Mehta	412-251-9133	mehtasm@gmail.com
Treasurer	Shree Vasav Mehta	770-365-6126	vasavmehta@gmail.com

Vice Presidents

Publications	Shree Shyam Tiwari	770-962-2669	srtiwari@hotmail.com
Seva	Dr. Umesh Shukla	908-240-7720	umeshshukla123@gmail.com
	Shree Girish Gandhi	973-689-5479	karnavati45@gmail.com
Finance	Shree Vimal Sodhani	973-476-3901	vimalsodhani@yahoo.com

Organizing Secretaries

Shree Sanjay Kaul	781-893-4982	sanjaykaul@hotmail.com
-------------------	--------------	------------------------

Editorial Team

Managing Editor:	Shyam Tiwari	srtiwari@hotmail.com
Editor:	Dr. Ashok Sinha	Kosha.Ahnis@gmail.com
		aksinha@sbcglobal.net
Associate Editor:	Surendra Pandey	pandeysn@yahoo.com
Copy Editor:	Sabitha Venugopal	sabitha8081@gmail.com
Assistant Editor:	Rachna Gupta	rgupta242@yahoo.com
Advisors:	Dr. Abhay Asthana	abhayaji@gmail.com
	Dr. Shardananda	prayagraj1952@gmail.com

About the HINDU VISHWA

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

For Advertising inquiries please contact:

Shyam Tiwari at 770.962.2669
or Email - srtiwari@hotmail.com

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

The views expressed in the articles presented in this publication are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the organization, officials, editorial staff or the donors.

© Copyright 2015 World Hindu Council of America (VHPA). All rights reserved. No parts and contents of this publication may be reproduced in any form without the written permission of VHP of America, Inc.

Take a Look Inside ...

THEME

COVER

Editorial - **03**
A Giant Step for
NRIs Ready to
Give Back



NRIs for India When Needed!

08



VHPA Family
Camp Mixes Fun
with Spirituality

04

Finding
Spirituality
in Khajuraho

06



Ekal's
Parinam
Kumbh a
Huge
Success

20



Exploring Identity in the New World

11

Hindu Symbols

12



Hatha Yoga:
The Foundation of
Physical Health
and Meditation

14

Sewa Bharati (Madhya Bharat)
Serving the Indigent

22



Words of Wisdom
Harness the Power of
Introspection

26

Remembering
Swami Chinmayananda

28



Hindus and Catholics
Initiate Dialogue to Promote
Mutual Reverence

31



Global Vision through Sanatana Dharma: **33**



Everyday Equations

35

China to Set up First Yoga College

39

Cover design & page layout by Akshar Vyavsthapan, Mumbai. E-mail: oakswanand@gmail.com

A Giant Step for NRIs Ready to Give Back



In his address at the Madison Square Garden, New York, on September 28, 2014 evening, India's new Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi exhorted the Non-Resident Indians (NRIs) to take a step that many NRIs already have taken, and a large multitude of other NRIs might still contemplate to take. "Many of you must be thinking that now it is high time that we keep one foot here, and the other there," he mused, implying that NRIs could advantageously keep a presence in both their 'Karma-Bhoomi' (USA), and their 'Matri-Bhoomi' (India) - in a certain pragmatic and suitable proportion in time, assets, etc. - for a maximal benefit to themselves as well as to the two lands. Recognizing that the two lands are just some 10,000 miles apart, this surely calls for a not too hard step in terms of transoceanic air-flight, but this, however, can prove to be a giant step in terms of human experience, endeavor, and entrepreneurial skills. With modern means for exchange through Internet, FaceBook, U-tube, etc., though, the residents of the Global Village would likely find such an idea not only pretty manageable, but extra-ordinarily rewarding.

Indeed, such a dual life can be rewarding and gratifying beyond measures for businessmen inclined to be a proactive part of "Make In India" related opportunities, and also for the youth open to the idea of spending a vacation, for technical or cultural interchange. This editorial is meant to convey a special message to various segments of the NRI-population, all the same.

The arena of mutual advantage to enterprising NRIs may be rather widespread, but there are two specific fields or projects in which they can make immense contribution in - sort of 'give back' to India in - First: the Ganga Clean-up project, and, secondly, the solar power project(s).

The Ganga (that is, the river Ganges) Clean-up project calls for technological skills and disciplines ranging from minimizing and managing industrial refuse, so their dumping into Ganga may be eliminated to a maximal degree, to removing the undesirable materials from a large body of polluted water - technical skills including self-sustaining biological means (e.g., suitable algae that consume such materials). There could be application of even tested and novel methods for generating power from the carbon-based pollutants that are likely to be already present, or immersed in the water in the future. Study of pertinent methodologies adopted by USA and other countries for cleaning up large bodies of water (rivers, lakes) would surely be helpful in this connection.

The project(s) for solar power generation though large-scale solar panel farms in Rajasthan desert, for example, or for roof-top solar panels in buildings and residential houses calls for high-efficiency but low-cost, commercially available solar cells. Grand ideas like a solar-power satellite with laser or microwave down-transmission beam may be remote and rather expensive at this juncture; though, in the long range, it remains an attractive concept. Scientists and engineers engaged in solar-cell efficiency optimization - in the Silicon Valley, USA, for example - may find it highly worthwhile to delve into this subject and to pass on useful information to their Indian counterparts and authorities, through proper legal channels.

"Swachh Bharat Mission", "Ganga Clean-up" and green (solar, wind) energy generation are not only Shri Narendra Modi's clarion call to 'Transform India', but also for you to join a "Local Circles"* to contribute in it. ■

*Two ways of
'Give back' to India
★ Ganga clean-up
project
★ Solar power
generation*



*Visit www.localcircles.com and use the Invite Code "EKBHARAT" to join.

VHPA Family Camp Mixes Fun with Spirituality



By Smita Daftardar

Some of the fondest childhood memories most of us carry are of the large family weddings back in India. Adults busy setting things up, kids getting a free run, parents happy that children will get precious "bonding time" with members of their extended family. (In plain English this means kids play and eat as they wish, without parents feeling guilty about it!) A large kitchen bustling with people, lots of food, and celebration in the air. Large after dinner get-togethers, the inevitable ubiquitous Antakshari and those vehement fights over the legitimacy of the chosen song! Well, to get to the point, take the wedding out of this scenario, provide the beautiful setting of a lakeside campsite, and you get a pretty good, if not comprehensive, description of the latest World Hindu Council of America (VHPA), Atlanta Chapter family camp.

The VHPA camp has been an annual tradition for almost 3 decades with a few exceptions. The camp is open to the community, usually running from Friday evening to Sunday afternoon and is managed by a team of dedicated volunteers.

This year, the family camp was held from April 3rd-5th, at the scenic A. H. Stephens State Park in Crawfordville, Ga. The park offers a group camp facility with about 40 cabins divided in four units, a central kitchen and dining hall, several large open fields, equestrian trail and two lakes with boating facility. With 42 families signed up, the group camp was

filled to capacity.

As the campers started arriving by Friday evening, they were registered and allotted cabins by the youth volunteers. A group of volunteers got busy in the large kitchen, getting snacks and dinner ready for all the attendees. As is the tradition with VHPA camps, dinner was preceded by evening prayers. The children took the center stage by singing beautiful bhajans, a proud moment for all of us who strive so hard to blend the two great cultures that we are a part of. After a fresh cooked dinner the campers got to introduce themselves. Friday's events concluded with a highly competitive Antakshari, bringing out a lot of hidden singing talent. Before retiring for the night, the campers were made aware of the camp rules. Also, each unit was assigned duties in rotation to help with the cooking and cleaning for the next two days. While it is not written in stone, the women usually help with

the cooking and the men do the dishes in the large commercial dishwasher. The feedback from the campers has always rated these two activities as a lot of fun! Who knew that these mundane chores could be so





much fun when you were with friends?

Saturday dawned bright and early, with the promise of a fine day. The weather turned out to be at its spring best, ideal for all the outdoor activities planned. The day started with an early morning Yog session. Morning prayers were followed by breakfast and a session on pranayam and meditation conducted by Isha Yoga volunteers who also gave information about the Isha Foundation. Younger kids were engaged in a craft session where they made tie-dye T-shirts, managed by a group of talented volunteers. Teenagers gathered around in the basketball court to have a discussion on what Hindu religion meant to them. While it is hard to get teenagers to talk, let alone on religion and that too, outdoors on a sunny morning, the session turned out to be quite a success, since it pretty much ran on auto-pilot. The kids got to share their knowledge, views and opinions, with some inputs from the grown-ups. The session was meant to help children identify with their culture, respond appropriately to stereotypes and dispel misconceptions about the Hindu way of life. The day continued with sports, ranging from cricket to basketball to Frisbee. Campers enjoyed boating in the lake, walks along the scenic fields and had a good time. Volunteers took turns helping in the kitchen and served fresh and delicious food. An evening session brought all campers together again, the topic of discussion being "*Vasudhaiv Kutumbakam*," the Hindu principle that the entire world is one family. Like a true democracy, the discussion was free flowing, with the virtues of this lofty principle explained, at the same time questioned with reference to preserving our identity in a multi-

cultural society. The take-away from the discussion was that any principle has to be followed, not blindly, but in proper context and with a grain of salt! The next attraction was the Talent Show, which again, was dominated by kids. This time the songs were all American, while the dances were mostly Bollywood. A few enthusiastic grown-ups shared their musical talent, singing melodious Hindi songs. While the day ended, the activities did not, as the organizers had a camp-fire on the schedule. Since the temperature had dropped considerably, this was a welcome thought. The campfire was accompanied by popcorn, jokes by kids and more singing, and continued well past midnight.

Sunday was the last day of camp. The Morning Prayer followed by a heavy brunch marked the end of the camp activities. The campers cleaned up the facility for check-out and prepared to depart, while the kids tried to fit in a last few games with their friends.

The cooperation and team spirit shown by the campers was commendable and the overall feedback was very positive. The happy faces of kids were evidence that they had had a time of their life, much like an extended sleepover! As is true for any large outdoor community event, comprising of about 100 adults and 50 kids, this camp did have a couple of "we could have done this better" moments. It is, however, equally true that these moments tend to always bring out the best in all of us which was obvious in the response from participants. If this was an "Antakshari" we would have fielded the Hindi song

"thode shikve bhee hon, kuchh shikayat bhee ho, to mazaa jeeneka aur bhee aata hai..." ■



By Renu Gupta

The Khajuraho Temples are among the most beautiful medieval monuments in India.

The ornate temples are spectacular pieces of human imagination, creativity, and architecture deriving spiritual peace through eroticism. The Chandela dynasty that ruled between CE 900 and 1130, built these temples at the height of their golden period. Temple building is presumed to be a tradition of Chandella rulers and every ruler built at least one temple in the Khajuraho complex in accordance with the Nagar art style.

The Chandellas tried to disassociate politics from religious and cultural activities. So they established their political capital in Mahoba, and the religious center in Khajuraho which is about 60 kilometers away. A wall enclosed whole Khajuraho complex with eight gates used for entry/exit. It is believed that each gate is flanked by two date palm trees. In Hindi, "*Khajura*" means 'Date' and "*Vahika*" means 'Bearing'. Historically, Khajuraho was also a form of referred as *Jejakhbukti* but the modern name Khajuraho is a form of the ancient name *Khajura-vahika* derived from the date palms. Ironically, there are hardly any signs of *Khajur* (Date) trees in the city today.

The first king of Chandellas the powerful "Chandra Varman" is believed to be the son of Hemwati, a beautiful young woman from Banaras and Chandrama (The moon). The exotic sculptures are representation of

a sacrificial ritual that included among its rites the depiction of erotic figures. Many erotic sculptures represent the love between Hemwati and Chandrama and are intended to wash away the sins

There are an endless series of all kinds of love, expressions and postures, but they do not feel vulgar



of Hemawati.

There were 85 *Mandirs*, of which only 25 are restored or still standing today. For centuries, cattle roamed through the complex and villagers made this piece of art their home to live in with scant regard for the precious art around them. Many statues were damaged during this time. Today it's a famous UNESCO World Heritage site.

Visitors from around the world visit Khajurao to view its exotic sculptures with honeymooners being particularly drawn to this site. Each *Mandir* has four components, representing the four goals (Pursharth) of Life: *Dharma*, *Artha*, *Kama* and *Moksha*. One *Mandir* represents the full life span and total philosophy of Hindu Dharma. Each *Mandir* is situated on platform, which represents the *Artha*.

The outside walls that represent *Kama*, are adorned with the sculptures, some exotic and others are of animals, processions, many different *devi-devtas*, and nature. The statues are amazingly detailed, and depict a full range of expressions. One theme is of a *Nayika* (A woman) putting on eye makeup, cutting her nails, looking into the mirror to see herself and then enticing her lover with her beautiful adorned self. There are an endless series of all kinds of love, expressions and postures, but amazingly they do not feel vulgar. They embody the pureness of spirit with which they were carved a thousand years ago. The erotic sculptures are restricted to the outer walls of the *Mandir* and constitute only a small part of the sculptures.

When you enter the door, you are really entering the *Antahkaran* (inner part) of the *Mandir*. At the entrance,



there are deities representing the Yamuna and the Ganga rivers. They symbolize *abhishek* and purification. There are Jaya and Vijaya the two *Dwar palakas* (the guards). The meaning is that you need to conquer your desires before you enter the *Mandir*. There is *mandap* in the center and then the entrance to the inner sanctum sanctorum or the *Garbh Griha*. This door is very special. It has *Brahma*, *Vishnu* and *Mahesh* on top of the arch and the *Navagrahas*. On the sides it has many deities whom we worship. The *Garbh Griha* represents the *Dharma*.

The top of the *mandir* called the *Shikhar*, represents *Moksha*, the fourth goal of the life. These *shikhars* are very well built and are shaped like a *Kalash*. There are many small *shikhars* on top of the large *shikhar*, which could be because each ruler added one *Shikhar* on top of the original large one.

The symbolisms is that of our body which is also a *Mandir* representing the four goals of life. Our body (*Karmendriyan* and *Gyanendriyan*) represents the *Artha* and *Kama*. As we enter inside our body, the *antahkaran*, the purification process starts. Inside the heart resides the *Aatman*. Our *antahkaran* represents the *Dharma*. Now as we go up we reach the *sahstraar* which represents *Moksha*, the ultimate goal of life.

The whole complex is by itself "*Bhakti*" the *Pancham Purusharth* or the fifth goal. It represents total devotion to God. After all Khajuraho was the spiritual capital of the Chandela dynasty. ■



Each *Mandir* is situated on platform, which represents the *Artha*... When you enter the door, you are really entering the *Antahkaran* (inner part) of the *Mandir*.

About the Author

Renu Gupta,

based in Westchester Ohio, is an accomplished Hindi writer, poet and has published numerous book and articles. She is also the director of Support-A-Child (SAC) program (www.sacusa.org) of VHP of America.

NRIs for



When Needed!

**VHP of America, HAF
& NFIA in America
keep us united and
inspire us to work
both for India and
America.**



By Keshav Patel



Keshavji, I'm Ashok Singhal, President, Vishwa Hindu Parishad, and I am speaking to you from the Haridwar Camp. You know there is a cloud burst disaster in Kedarnath that claimed the lives of many human beings and animals. Volunteers from the VHP and RSS have managed to save many lives and you can hear the survivors in the background. However, in order to house and feed a large group of people, we are in urgent need of funds. Our request to you is that you arrange for immediate funds from the US so that we can buy the necessary supplies." I was however out of town and would only be able to

make some arrangements once I got back, which was three days hence. We of course did not have the luxury of time to wait, for we had hundreds of people depending on us. I hung up the phone and my mind started spinning with various options to raise the much needed funds and have it delivered to Ashokji as soon as possible.

Without delay I picked up the phone again and called a team of friends at Ahmedabad and Surat and requested them to raise one crore rupees each and send it to Hon. Ashokji, VHP at Haridwar. It was not an easy task, but they agreed to do their best as they also understood how desperate the situation was and wanted to do everything in their power to help those in need. I didn't stop there, I also called Mr. Nitinbhai Patel, the Finance Minister of Gujarat state to ask him what the Gujarat Government was going to do to help Kedarnath victims who were mostly pilgrims to the holy site. He politely replied that the Gujarat Government was sending six planes to bring back the pilgrims and arrange a special train to bring the rest of them. Since he indicated that the planes were going to be empty on their way to Dehradun, I suggested it would be of great help if the planes were loaded with food packets and medicine. I also directed the food centers run by the Patel and Jain communities to provide food and be delivered to Ashokji in Haridwar. Minister Nitinbhai agreed to do so with a caveat - the food would be delivered to the Uttarakhand government already providing aid to the survivors.

With the immediate issue tackled, I turned my attention back to the US. I called our generous donor Shri Avdhesh Agrawal and explained the situation to him. He immediately agreed to donate one hundred thousand dollars to the cause. This generous response inspired me to get in touch with other partner organizations like the HMEC of Southern California. I called Shri Mahesh bhatt, Kaushikbhai and Rajubhai Patel of Gayatri Chetana center, Anaheim, Dr. Jayesh Shah President, Jain cultural center, Buena park, B. U.



Patel & Natverbhai of Sanatan Temple, Norwalk, PP Swamiji of BAPS, Chinno Hills and Shri Laxman Koka and Shri Dharmeshbhai Patel of Shri Lakshmi Narayan Mandir, Riverside. I requested they all raise funds for Kedarnath. They agreed but told me they would direct their funds to their respective organizations if they also were ready to join the effort. I agreed with them as our primary aim was to help victims and not seek credit.

I was excited with the positive responses I received from everyone I reached out to. However, given the urgency of the situation, I decided to cut short my trip and return to Los Angeles without attending GOPIO seminar. The organizers were obviously disappointed that I would not be participating in the seminar, but they also understood helping the victims had to be the priority. After returning, we organized a musical program in the Sanatan Mandir to raise fund which got a very good response. Shri Avdheshji donated an additional seventy five thousand dollars to other organizations as well to jump start their efforts to collect funds for the effort.

Many organizations affiliated with the military and the Indian Government came forward to help victims. Param Shakti Peeth (PSP) led by P P Sadhvi Rutambhara Devi - Didi Maa, worked very hard. In spite of ill health of PP Didi Maa she climbed up the hills and down into the valley to the remote villages to help the victims and the needy, where the government could not go. Our volunteers carried food and clothes on their head to help victims. PSP distributed food packets, woolen clothes, woolen rugs, and kitchenware to the poor. PSP is still working there in Guptkashi and Ukhimath areas.

PSP has rented two ruined hotels, one at Guptkashi and another at Ukhimath, renovated them and converted them into hostels for orphan children. More than 150





children are being sheltered there. PSP provides these children with all the necessary food and clothing, pays for their schools fees and supplies, and hired tutors and local widows and women in need as caretakers for these children. The Sanyasinis of PSP also look after the spiritual need and mentor the children by telling stories, teaching them shlokas and bhajans.

PSP has also established twelve training centers in different villages for widows or adult women to train them in various trades like tailoring, handicrafts, and making costume jewelry so that they can supplement their household income and become self-reliant. Professionally qualified teachers from the National Institute of Design (NID) of Ahmedabad are invited to train them. It gives us joy that two girls who were trained as part of this effort have participated in exhibition at NID Ahmedabad during December 2014 and achieved awards for excellent art work. Some students also achieved certificate of Excellency in their schools. The hard work of the PSP has been fruitful. PSP has also bought land to establish Vatsalya Gram in Guptkashi for humanitarian work to continue.

I personally went to Guptkashi and Ukhimath areas in November and December 2014 to personally see the projects that PSP has undertaken for Kedarnath victims. I got the opportunity to meet and talk to villagers in the area and it gives me a great pleasure to say PSP did excellent humanitarian work and is still continuing it for orphan children, widows and poor people in Uttarakhand.

Swami Ramdevji- Bharat Swabhimani (Patanjali Yog Peeth) has also established two centers at Guptkashi and Rudra Prayag areas to help orphan children just like PSP. Param Poojneeey (PP) Morari Bapu had Rama Katha in Los Angeles and raised millions of dollars for the Kedarnath Relief fund. It was a coincidence PP

Morari Bapu came to Guptkashi in November 2014 when I was working there and distributed almost ten crore rupees in much needed funds through the State Government to the poor people of the interior villages.

VHP, RSS, Gayatri Shanti Ashram, Haridwar, BAPS and many other organizations sincerely worked in many different ways to help in the aftermath of the Kedarnath natural disaster. It was as if thousands of helping hands of Visheshwar Bhagawan were actively working to bring back Kedarnath to normal life after showing His destructive form. We worship both forms of Parmeshwar. NRIs like me formed a huge part of the volunteer groups helped during this tragedy as well as in the aftermath of the tsunami that hit Orissa. We may live in foreign countries but our hearts are ever ready to work for India when needed.

The Hon. Prime Minister of India, Shri Narendra Modi has praised this quality of the NRIs in his speech to mark the Pravasi Bharatiya Diwas - 2015 at Gandhinagar. He said, "We are thankful to the NRIs who live in foreign countries but their hearts are



connected with India. In the time of need like Orissa tsunami and Kedarnath cloud burst disasters NRI organizations worked hard and many NRIs came to India to work for victims. I know some of them who come every year to work for their village."

VHP of America, HAF & NFIA in America keep us united and inspire us to work both for India and America. Let us pray Ishwara to help us meet our missions. ■

About the Author

Prof. Keshav Patel, based in Los Angeles, is a Governing Council Member of VHP of America. He has been involved in several other volunteer based organizations and is also Chairman, Historical & Cultural committee, La Palma City.



The question of identity is something every human being ponders about at some point in their life. Some of us are very comfortable defining ourselves within parameters we choose, while others like the great thinkers make it a lifetime quest.

This issue has come to the forefront of my thinking in recent months as the debate rages around hyphenated Americans and identity of immigrants in general. How do I define myself? Am I first and the foremost an immigrant? Will I always be one? Do I believe in *Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam* and say the whole world is my family? Do I need to define myself or do I let society do it for me? And all questions that I'm sure a lot of first generation immigrants ask themselves.

Thinking back to my early years, in as much as I can remember, my identity was not an issue of self-definition. I was defined by the people and society around me. You are the child and grandchild of

as it is embedded in each person's DNA. That defines me as a person of South Asian origin with my skin tone and other identifiers.

Culture and traditions are a matter of choice and comfort. I choose to be a Hindu, practice quasi vegetarianism, speak in my mother tongue when possible, and celebrate the festivals of India just like my family did when I was growing up and value education and hard work.

Here it really helps that the US and India have a lot in common. They are both thriving democracies where a tea vendor or son of a single mom can rise to govern the whole nation. The corner stone of both countries is a live and let live culture that is based on tolerance and appreciation of the value each productive member contributes to society. This gives me the opportunity to practice my Hindu faith, raise my children in a way I deem appropriate and establish traditions that I hope my



someone, you speak a certain language, hail from a certain community and live in a setting. I was secure and confident of my place in that society. Then once I decided to leave the land of my birth and move to a new country, I became a stranger in a strange land, one of the faceless in a crowd of immigrants. As the years went by, and I put down roots, my family and friends grew so that now had a place for myself in the new world, and this is where I find myself today; an Indian American? A Hindu American? An immigrant?

The first thing I realized was one should separate the concept of nationality from culture and ethnic origins. Immigrants who choose to become American citizens do so of their own volition with no pressure exerted on them by this country. So when I raised my right hand and swore allegiance to the US flag I had renounced my Indian citizenship. That is also due to the fact that India, country of my birth, does not allow dual citizenship. So by definition at that point I became an American of Indian origin. There is no room for hyphenation in my nationality. My passport is American and wherever I go in the world from that point of time I am treated as a citizen of the United States of America.

When it comes to ethnic origin, no one can change it

Exploring Identity in the New World

By Sabitha Venugopal

family will carry on long after my life.

Having stated all this, I am back to the same question - who am I? To state logically, I am an American citizen by choice, a Hindu woman, a wife and mother, a daughter and sister, a friend and confidant. Now emotionally, though 'Made in India' still resonates loudly in my heart and psyche, I am not hyphenated in any way and neither am I defined by a stereotype created by narrow minded people.

I can be loosely defined by the company I keep and that which I hold dearest: my Faith, my family, and my friends. You could if needed throw in my love for football; reading, traveling and shiny gifts. I understand that these things are also all transient and defines me in relation to extrinsic things, I am more than the sum of all the parts.

Above all else, I would like to define myself as a good human being with an *Atman* who ultimately seeks *Ishwara*. If not quite there yet, I at least know where I want to be and what I believe should be the goal of such a definition. ■

OM (AUM): The deepest spiritual truth in the Vedas is the omnipresence of divine consciousness. Absolutely nothing in the universe exists separate from the divine. This supreme truth is beyond form and has no name; and is represented in the Vedas by the Sanskrit symbol OM. OM is the most sacred symbol: it is recited before all Vedic mantras; written at the start of any document; and even used as a greeting. The sound OM is composed of three sounds that span the whole vocal apparatus: 'a' from the base; 'u' from the middle; and 'm' from the tip at the lips; combining to form AUM. The fourth element in OM is the silence between successive

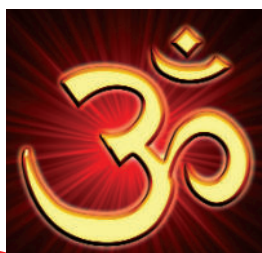
of the sound Om itself has a profound impact on our inner energies, preparing us for meditation.

LOTUS: The Lotus flower is cited widely in Hindu spiritual texts: Gods and Goddesses are frequently depicted holding a lotus or sitting on one; the centers of energy in the human body, known as chakras are symbolized by lotuses at each energy center; the Creator, Brahma, is said to have been born from the lotus that sprang up at the navel center of Narayana, who symbolizes Pure Consciousness.

Why do Hindus accord such importance to the lotus? The ancient Sages who were close observers of nature



Hindu Symbols



By Dr. D. C. Rao

OMs: the silence from which all sounds emerge and into which they all subside.⁶³

The Upanishads explain how OM represents the sum totality of all human experience. Its four elements represent the creation, sustenance and dissolution of the universe and the Pure Existence in which they all happen; they represent the three states of waking, dreaming and deep sleep that span our entire lives and the Pure Awareness through which we experience all these states; they represent earth, space and heaven and the Pure Bliss which transcends all these fields of experience. By reminding us of the omnipresence of the Divine, the chanting of OM can bring our minds to a profound meditative state. And the vibratory quality

saw a lot to learn from the lotus

flower:

★ The lotus grows in ponds that are frequently murky, yet retains its freshness and beauty. Although in water, the leaves of the lotus do not themselves become wet. That is a lesson for all of us to maintain our purity and nobility even when we are mired in the ugliness and chaos that often surrounds us.⁶⁴

★ The petals of the lotus open in the morning when touched by the rays of the sun and close again for the night. True knowledge is like light, and when we recognize our oneness with the eternal, universal consciousness, our Spirit blossoms forth in all its beauty.

★ Bees hover over the lotus attracted by its perfume and the careless bee is trapped in the petals of the lotus when they close for the night. That warns us that being overly immersed in seeking sensory satisfaction in the world can lead to our ruin.65

★ Drops of water tremble on the surface of lotus leaves and are blown off by a passing breeze.

This is a reminder to us of the fragility of our lives which may end at any moment.66

SWASTIKA: The word swastika in Sanskrit means "that which brings good luck and well-being": "su" means "good" and "asti" means "is". It appears in one of the most frequently used mantras of the Rg Veda [1.89.6], the oldest scripture known to man.

The swastika is considered extremely sacred and holy by Hindus, Buddhists and Jains and remains very widely used from ancient times to the present day. The symbol is engraved on sacred objects of worship as well as on doorways of temples and homes. It forms part of religious ceremonies to celebrate weddings, consecrations of new homes, embarking on new ventures or any such auspicious undertaking. It is used to decorate books, vehicles, cash registers in stores and myriad other objects in daily use in many Asian countries, especially India.

Because the swastika has been so widely used for so long, it has been interpreted in a variety of ways:

★ A solar symbol, spreading light in all directions;

63 Mandukya Upanishad 1 and 12.

64 Bhagavad Gita 5.10

65 Vivekachudamani by Shankaracharya: verse 76

66 BhajaGovindam by Shankaracharya: verse 4

Above is part of a larger collection of essays written by Dr. D. C. Rao and published by the Hindu American Foundation. The full e-book is available at <http://hafsite.org/hinduism-101/recommended-reading-hinduism>.

About the Author

Dr. D. C. Rao

retired from the World Bank in 1995 to pursue an intensive adhyatmic education and practice. He is a Trustee at the Chinmaya Mission, Washington D.C.

and actively associated with the Himalayan International Institute of Yoga Science and Philosophy at Honesdale, Pa. He is a member of the Assembly and former President of the Inter Faith Conference of Metropolitan

Washington, where he has contributed to work on Strengthening Teaching About Religion (STAR) for several years. He has degrees from the University of Mumbai, India, Cambridge University, U.K., and a Ph. D. in economics from the University of Pennsylvania, U.S.A.



Chennai Temple Yields more History

The famous Sri Parthasarathy Swamy temple at Triplicane here never ceases to amaze history buffs, it seems. The latest to pique their interest is the discovery of an inscription of the Chola emperor Rajendra I on the northwest corner of the sanctum sanctorum. Adding to the excitement is a mural depicting the Kurukshetra war, a row of horse-drawn chariots and fiercely mustachioed charioteers, all battle-ready, which has come to light as the cement plaster covering it fell off. The mural runs to many meters, but had been inexplicably covered with plaster. The temple is replete with inscriptions of the Pallavas, who

are believed to have built it around AD 600, the Cholas, the Pandyas and the Vijayanagara kings. The latest find came to light

Continued on page 19



Photo: K.V. Srinivasan

A mural depicting the Kurukshetra war uncovered at the temple.

Hatha Yoga:

The Foundation of Physical Health and Meditation

By Abhishek Gaur, MD

The purpose of *Hatha-Yoga* is to use your own physique to attain strength, flexibility, and balance. Regular practice of *Hatha-Yoga* improves the quality of sleep, reduces stress, and imparts a sense of wellbeing. Performed in standing, sitting, and recumbent postures combined with proper breathing, it strengthens one's core physical and mental state.

The physical practice of Yogic postures is referred to as Hatha Yoga, which literally means 'stubborn' (or, persistent) but is also translated as Ha-tha standing for the sun and the moon. In other words, it is a persistent physical practice of balancing or integrating the dual aspects of existence like male-female, hot-cold, ying-yang. With its origin in Bharat or India, Hindus believe that Lord Shiva is himself the founder of Hatha-Yoga. According to the legend, he shared this amazing science with his wife Parvati but a fish secretly heard the whole conversation. The fish became a Siddha (a sage with special powers) named Matsyendranath who subsequently taught it to his disciples.



*Prime Minister of India,
Narendra Modi at UN*

When people talk about Yoga, especially in the west, they usually refer to practicing and learning only this form of Yoga that has become very popular all over the world. Its popularity is expected to grow with the United Nations Organization pronouncing 21 June as the Universal Yoga-Day, following a suggestion by the new Prime Minister of India, Narendra Modi. It must be remembered, however, that according to Maharshi (great sage) Patanjali, who originally propounded the system of Yoga, there are eight integral parts or stages of Yoga, of which Hatha-Yoga (also referred to as Asana) is only one part. The eight stages described in Patanjali Yoga-Sutra are aimed at not only achieving perfect and balanced physical and mental health, but also to be able to

attain "Samadhi", the eighth stage of Yoga, as a way toward God-Realization or Self-Realization.

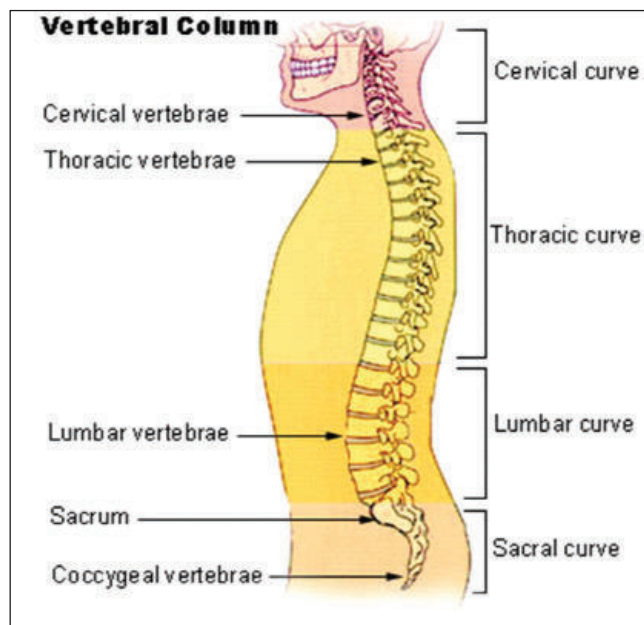
Small children have marvelous flexible in their bodies. It is part of growing up and lack of proper exercise and other negligence of health-factors that, unfortunately, our muscles and ligaments become relatively short and stiff. Flexibility is even more important than sheer strength and for this reason Hatha-Yoga needs to be a part of the daily routine of every child and adult.

The animal kingdom is broadly divided into vertebrate or invertebrate based on the presence or absence, respectively, of the vertebral column. Vertebrates include the fishes, reptiles, amphibians, birds and mammals while invertebrates include worms, insects, crabs etc. The vertebral column is a primary focus of physical evolution from more primitive quadrupeds to monkeys to apes and finally the humans. Virtually every body part is supported by the vertebral column. To complicate matters, the human body is not totally symmetrical. The right-handed individuals are physically more developed on their right-side muscles.

The human body has 206 bones and to each of them are attached to many muscles acting as levers bending at the fulcrums or rotating at the elegant joints. The vertebral column composed of 33 vertebrae is like a flexible tree trunk that supports moving limbs and is therefore subject to constant dynamic and static stresses of motion, weight and changes in posture.

Furthermore, it protects the spinal cord that brings sensory and motor information to and fro the brain through hundreds of nerves that exit through its narrow openings (foramen). Many millennia ago, our ancestors with scientific inclination who founded Yoga, realized that the vertebral column is the main center of physical health. Although all spinal segments, the cervical (neck), thoracic (chest), lumbar (back), sacral/ coccyx (lower back), are very important, the cervical and lumbar are more vulnerable to injury and physical problems due to their relatively high mobility.

Next in importance are the knees, shoulders and hip-joints, in that order. Gravity plays havoc with the knee joints and its cartilage is subject to brutal sheer forces. The health of the knee-joint is perhaps more dependent on the strength of the muscles around it



rather than flexibility. Last, but not least are the smaller joints of the hands, ankles and elbows that need attention as well during an exercise sequence.

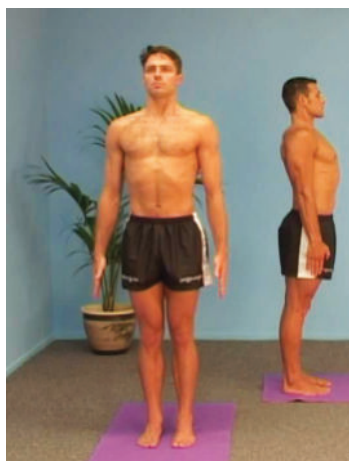
The Hatha-Yoga is comprised of various postures referred to as Asanas. There are 84 classical Asanas described in an earlier Yogic text called *Goraksha Samhita* (10-11th century CE).

Asanas should be performed with at least 4 hours of empty stomach and in a quiet setting. In general, one should not perform the Asanas when feeling tired or sick. The practice of Yoga is about communion with oneself, therefore it is important to connect with one's body.

Every Asana is not suitable for everyone; and entails a different degree of difficulty. The rule of thumb is to avoid any Asana if it is too difficult or painful. One should not try to attain the perfect 'textbook' posture at the cost of discomfort.

Let's go over the basics of the mechanics of a pose (Asana). Broadly, any movement in which the active muscle groups are contracting is called 'flexion' which is opposite of 'extension'. Torsion or twisting motion is essentially a predominantly flexion posture but it is a complex flexion posture. During any Asana, flexion should be accompanied by exhalation, followed by a 'breath-hold' or normal breathing during which the posture is held. The slow return to neutral position is coupled with inhalation. To forget or neglect breathing is to take out the '*Prana*' (life-energy) out of the Asana.

In order to incorporate Yoga into the daily hustle-and-bustle, one needs to practice it every day for, say, at least 48 consecutive days so that it becomes incorporated into the system. After that period, you will long for doing it, and you will feel uncomfortable if you do not complete your daily practice.



Tada Asana

(flexion, extension and torsion), including the three primary phases of respiratory cycle (inhalation, breath-hold and exhalation) and repeats each Asana at-least thrice. It is best to softly close the eyes unless there is fear of losing one's balance. Many practitioners have introduced their modifications or refinements. For example, in Iyengar Yoga, props are used to enhance stretching.

Let's start with the Asanas in the Standing position.



Astavakra Asana

The ideal neutral standing position is to replicate how you would stand with your back against the wall with the back of the head (occiput), rear part of the shoulder (wings of scapulae), bony center of the buttocks (pubis bone), and back of the ankles (calcaneum) touching the wall. Once you develop a muscle memory/imagery of

This is the part that is often given little emphasis by many novice practitioners.

The Asanas are performed in standing, sitting or recumbent (lying) positions, or a combination thereof. An experienced practitioner combines the Asanas from all three positions, and hence from all three types of motions

this posture, use it to your advantage throughout the day while standing or walking. Starting in the neutral position, 'Tada Asana', which is a good way to start off by vertically lengthening your spine and becoming like an arrow pointing to the sky. This Asana is named after Tada, a tall tree with straight trunk which is ubiquitous in the countryside in northern India.

There are Asanas for sideways body-stretch, called *Astavakra Asana*, named after *Astavakra Rishi* (sage) whose body was twisted in eight places. Although this is supposed to be a sideways stretch, you will notice that your range of forward bending improves by at least a couple of inches after performing this Asana.

Next, one may perform the forward bending followed by the so-called Cat-Strech, (*Marjariasana*), Cow-Stretch (*Bitilasana*), and Dog-Stretch (*Adhomukhsvanasana*). Simple as they may look and sound, these are like the core of spine stretching and alignment exercises.

The Warrior-poses (*Virbhadrasana* or its variation) are wonderful for developing a good balance.

Nothing is more demoralizing for any older person than to feel unsteady while walking. When a child is learning to walk the anxiety resides with the parents, but if the child falls, he or she gets up immediately and is ready for another challenge. But for the old, a fall could mean serious injury like a hip-fracture or even worse: bleeding in the head (intra-cranial hemorrhage). The Chinese balance routine Tai-Chi has elements of this aspect of Yoga and is becoming popular in older folks in the United States.

The cerebellum or the bottom globular part of the brain is where the servomechanism for balance resides. Even though the human brain does not have regenerative capacity, it still has enough neuronal



Virbhadrasana



Vrksasana



Marjariasana

Bitilasana

Adhomukhsvanasana

matter and connections that can be activated and trained at any stage in life. Of course, it is better to train it when it is easily trainable, that is while one is young. The pose that has become the poster-child of Yoga- standing on one foot with the other foot planted on the opposite thigh (Tree-pose or *Vrksasana*) is most helpful Asana to achieve balance.

Surya-Namaskar or Sun salutation is called the king of the Asanas performed from the standing position, although it is really a combination of ten component Asanas. Daily early morning practice of Surya-Namaskar is an easy way to get the benefits of Yoga-Asana in a short condensed manner. However, it needs to be conducted slowly and based on one's physical capacity. If not properly performed, it may be harmful. One should also note that it is best to return to a forward bending posture (e.g., *Hastapaadasana*) to realign the



Vajrasana

meditation or '*Dhyana*' (the Sanskrit word from which the Japanese word and the related practice called '*Zen*' has been derived) the lotus-pose *Padmasana* is emphasized. Yet many believe that the best 'neutral' sitting posture is *Vajrasana* (thunderbolt-pose).

In my own practice and experience, one may return to this posture after most sitting-Asanas. To realign the body, one may perform the *Balasana* (bending forward as if in the embryo position) or its variation. For the younger folks, extension from the *Vajrasana* provides unmatched extensor stretch to the cervical and thoracic spine.

There is the well-known sideward twist (torsion) *Ardha Matsyendra* (half-fish) Asana

This Asana named after *Rishi Matsyendra* is also called as the 'beauty asana' as its regular



Ardha Matsyendrasana

body after any other Asana.

The Yogic exercises in sitting position are really the core of Asana practice and the sitting posture for meditation is mentioned in the earliest Yogic text: the *Patanjali Yogasutra* (5th century CE). Although, for

practice leads to a beautiful physique. A modification of this Asana is the *Bhaddwaja Asana*. There are also adaptations / variations of this Asana in sitting and supine



Dhanurasana

positions that are good for beginners. The butterfly-stretch (*Patangasana*) is a most beneficial Asana not only for stretching the muscles in the groin area but



Bhujangasana



Halasana (up) Sarvangasana (left) and Shirishasana (down)



also essential for those preparing Raja-Yoga or meditation. The shoulder or pectoral stretch (*Gomukhasana*) and its variations are great for stretching the upper body.

In general, direct focused Asanas are not recommended for the cervical spine, whether it is flexion, extension, sideways stretch or rotation, as these can easily cause injuries. Some of the postures performed in the recumbent state include *Dhanurasana*.

There is no better extensor stretch for the whole body than *Dhanurasana*, but this Asana has



medium level of difficulty. It is easy to learn and the degree of difficulty is set by the capacity of the body itself. Breathing normally during the process of attaining the posture and then holding the breath are two key aspects in this case. A simplified version, primarily just for the upper trunk, is *Bhujangasana* (the Cobra-pose). This is again a simple and safe Asana. A bonus benefit of this Asana is the strengthening of the muscles of the upper body. The torsion position (*Jathara Parivritti*) is also a simple way to get the benefit of *Ardha-Matsyendrasana* for older people.

In connection with the recumbent positions without the inversion postures, one must mention *Sarvang-Asana* (Perpendicular pose) and *Hala-Asana* (Plough pose).

These are great Asanas for spine-lengthening. In addition, directing all the venous return from the lower body to the heart with the assistance of gravity helps to revitalize all the blood that is in stasis in various corners of the body. Practice of these two Asanas may actually even prevent clots in the veins that are known to cause the life-threatening condition known as pulmonary embolism. *Shirsh-Asana* (Head stand) is another popular Asana. However, for majority of practitioners it is not safe to perform it and it is strongly recommended that it should be performed only under proper supervision and guidance.

The *Shavasana* (Corpse-posture) is well-known as the most relaxing supine position performed at the conclusion of the Asana-routine, or sometimes even as an intermission during a long exercise sequence. Contrary to what

someone might think, *Shavaasana* is not a passive position. In fact, this is the time to consciously relax and connect to your physical body and should be combined with attention to proper breathing. *Shava* is reference to corpse or playing dead. It is also a reminder of our mortality and therefore a potentially transformational experience akin to a meditation exercise or out-of-body experience.

Breath or *Prana* is the life-energy of the practice of Hatha-Yoga and meditation. If you have observed a child breathe when he or she is asleep, you will notice that the baby's tummy goes out with inhalation and it goes down during exhalation. This is called diaphragmatic breathing. Breathing with the chest muscle produces the opposite effect and is conspicuous in young adults trying to keep their bellies inside. The diaphragmatic breathing is relaxing, but the chest-breathing is not. The function of chest breathing is to recruit muscles for stressful situations. During the *Asanas*, it is recommended to use a combination of both types of breathing for the best effect.

In summary, the purpose of *Hatha-Yoga* is to use your own physique to attain strength, flexibility, and balance. Regular practice of *Hatha-Yoga* improves the quality of sleep, reduces stress, and imparts a sense of wellbeing. Performed in standing, sitting, and recumbent postures combined with proper breathing, it strengthens one's core physical and mental state. The benefits extend beyond the physical. Where possible, performed with the eyes closed for better concentration

and for minimizing distractions, one can connect to the body much better. It is important to observe proper breathing and realign the body with an axial flexion posture as described above.

In order to incorporate Yoga into the daily hustle-and-bustle, one needs to practice it every day for, say, at least 48 consecutive days so that it becomes incorporated into the system. After that period, you will long for doing it, and you will feel uncomfortable if you do not complete your daily practice. The practice of *Hatha-Yoga* prepares for the *Pranayama* (breathing-exercises) and the spiritual practice of meditation.

The *Hatha-Yoga Pradipika* written by Swami Swatmarama (15th century CE), a classic and one of the oldest surviving text describing Hatha-Yog, states that the ultimate purpose of the practice is the awakening of *Kundalini* (primal energy located at the base of spine) and attainment of *Samadhi* (deep meditative experience).

Disclaimer: *The Yoga exercises and meditation described are not unequivocally proven to be medically beneficial. It is recommended that individuals consult their physician before performing these exercises.* ■

About the Author

Dr Abhishek Gaur, MD

is a Cardiologist in a private practice in Georgia.

Chennai Temple Yields more History

Continued from page 13 recently while conservation work was taken up ahead of the MahaSamprokshanam at the temple on June 12.

K.V. Srinivasan, a photojournalist with *The Hindu*, who is associated with the temple, located the inscription and reported it to K.T. Narasimhan, consultant archaeologist/conservationist of the Tamil Nadu government. R. Kannan, Additional Chief Secretary, Tourism, Culture and Religious Endowments Department, who is leading the restoration and conservation work, instructed the Archaeology Department to take its estampage.

Eulogy: The fragmentary inscription offers a "prasasthi", or eulogy, of Rajendra I, speaking of the fame of the emperor, who ruled between AD 1012 and 1044, and his conquests of many lands including in Vanavasi (Banavasi) and the present-day Kalaburgi region, both in Karnataka,

and so on. S. Vasanthi, Deputy Superintending Archaeologist, and R. Sivanandam, Assistant Superintending Epigraphist, who took the estampage and identified the inscription, said it had not been published so far. Mr. Kannan has asked the temple officials to remove the plaster covering the mural to expose its entire length. The robust physical features of the horses in the work, seen wherever the pigments are exposed, show the painting belongs to the late Pallava period, Mr. Narasimhan says. ■



The estampage of a Chola inscription newly discovered at the Sri Parthasarathy Swamy temple. Photo: Tamil Nadu Archaeology Department

Source: <http://www.thehindu.com/news/cities/chennai/chennai-temple-yields-more-history/article7291998.ece>



Shri Sushash Chandrajji, shri Mohan Bhagwatji, Ekal's Anand Agarwalaji and others on the dias. (below) Mammoth Crowd of 50,000



Ekal's Parinam Kumbh a Huge Success

By Prakash Waghmare

In the first week of March, 'Parinam Kumbh' (meaning 'assessment') of Ekal Vidyalaya Foundation, was convened at Dhanbad, Jharkhand, the birth place of Ekal, 25 years ago. More than 2,200 delegates from dozen countries came for this unique three day event to witness the transformation Ekal had brought to the overall development of rural masses in India. The goal, in the words of convener Shri Yogendra Tulsyan, was not only to bring in active supporters and partner-organizations of "Eka" under one roof, but also to celebrate and retrospectively take

stock of Ekal's success.

It was also an occasion to pay tribute to Ekal's founder late Shri Madanlalji Agarwala who established first Ekal Vidyalaya in November 1988 in Laidvari tribal village near Dhanbad. As a dedicated Pracharak of Rashtriya Swayam Sevak Sangh (RSS), when he asked the poor farmers how he can be of help to them, they requested him to make at least their children literate, so that they can avoid economic and social subjugation. The seedling that the visionary Madanlalji sowed, quarter century back has now prospered into the

largest literacy, health care and rural development movement in India with supporting chapters in more than a dozen countries. Ekal has now 55,000 schools spread throughout India, including Jammu-Kashmir and Nepal. Through Ekal, around 1.5 Million children are receiving basic education and health care training each year.

The prominent dignitaries who presided over this mega convention were Ekal Chief Shri Shyam Gupta, Chief Minister of Jharkhand Shri Raghuvar Das, VHP leader Shri Ashokji Singhal, Sadhvi Ritambara ji, and ZEE-TV Chairman Shri Subhash Chandra ji. At



Pan-India Ekal Exhibition

alumni groups whose main theme was the empowerment that Ekal had brought to their lives. According to them, this was facilitated, not only by education, and infrastructure of self-reliance that Ekal had provided, but also by its awareness campaign for one's 'right to information' in the face of bureaucratic hurdle. Some of these people are now even playing leadership roles at the district level.

Pinki Karmakar who carried the Olympic torch at London Olympiad and became a national inspiration for the youths few years back, was an Ekal alumnus. There were several testimonials by rural-folks portraying their success at tackling social ills like bonded labor, mass alcoholism, spread of epidemics, migration of youths to urban areas, and rampant corruption in their community.



**Ekal Chief -
Shyamji Gupta**



Ashok Singhalji and Vatsalya gram's Sadhvi Ritambaraji

the mammoth public meeting, attended by over 50,000 people, Shri Ashokji, in his address emphasized that India needs to restore its lost identity and true character on the basis of self-respect and self-reliance. He further added that Ekal was started with this objective by late Shri Madanlalji. Shri Shyam Gupta, while paying an eloquent tribute to Shri Madanlalji Agarwala for his pioneering efforts to spread literacy, gave an overview of the ecliptic progress Ekal had made to uplift forgotten masses in the villages.

Didi Maa Sadhvi Ritambara ji touched on the difficulties faced by the Volunteers and compared them with ever-loyal Hanuman Sena.

The chief guest for this occasion was RSS Chief, Shri Mohan Bhagwat. In his address to the delegates, Shri Mohan ji challenged them to explore possibilities where, 'Ekal' as a rural support-vehicle, could be taken further with changing times and in a favorable political climate.

There were several presentations by various Ekal

Ekal Vidyalaya Foundation of USA, has played a very significant role in the expansion, progress and success of Ekal Abhiyan (Ekal-India) for more than two decades. Ekal, as it is known today, started out as a 'One-Teacher School Project' in India as well as in USA. For last few years, Ekal-USA has been raising 4-5 Million U.S. Dollars through its fund-raising concerts, all over USA.

Kindly visit www.ekal.org for the latest information. Your generous support for this worthy cause is highly appreciated. ■

IGNORANCE IS THE MOTHER OF ALL THE EVIL AND ALL THE MISERY WE SEE. LET MEN HAVE LIGHT, LET THEM BE PURE AND SPIRITUALLY STRONG AND EDUCATED, THEN ALONE WILL MISERY CEASE IN THE WORLD, NOT BEFORE.

- SWAMI VIVEKANANDA



The all-round sustainable development of the nation depends upon comprehensive and integrated progress of all the segments of its society, specially the backward and deprived ones. The strength of the society also lies in an equitable harmonious social fabric based upon its cultural ethos and values.

With this perspective in view Sewa Bharati was founded by a devoted social worker and senior Pracharak Shri Vishnu Kumar, a science scholar from Bangalore in a slum in Delhi teaching 4-5 kids.

It works especially among the economically weaker and socially backward sections and the tribal and such other communities in India to make them self-reliant and participant in the development of the nation. It

generates in them a feeling of confidence and self-esteem. It also strives towards creating an environment of harmony and social equity in the society.

In order to achieve these objectives Sewa Bharati organizes several educational, vocational, healthcare and socio-cultural programs for these communities.

To create cultural linkages with Indians abroad Sewa Bharati promotes their association with its activities.

The strength of Sewa Bharati is its character. It is a people's program run by dedicated men and women from the community who devote their time, energy and money to this noble cause. They come from all sections of society- medical, teaching, banking, bureaucracy, business, industry.

Sewa Bharati (Madhya Bharat)

Serving the Indigent





Anand Dham Bhopal -With Senior citizens after medical check up

A small group of dedicated full time workers assist them in managing the activities of the organization.

Sewa Bharati has all India jurisdiction. For the purpose of efficiency and convenience different areas/states have their own Sewa Bharati organizations- all registered separately. Earlier Madhya Pradesh was one unit. Now the state of Madhya Pradesh has 3 separate Sewa Bharati units- Madhya Bharat, Mahakoshal and Malwa.

Sewa Bharati's (Madhya Bharat) headquarter is at Bhopal. It is a non-governmental and non-profit organization registered under the M.P. SOCIETY REGISTRIKARAN ADHINIYAM, 1973 since 9th October 1990.

2015 is the silver jubilee year of Sewa Bharati (Madhya Bharat)

It undertakes various activities for tribal and slum dwellers in urban areas.

It has established schools, hostels, vocational units, healthcare centers, cultural centers, and runs women and children empowerment programs in various areas.

Sewa Bharati carries out the following type of activities:

Social security

Sewa Bharati has undertaken programs

for three sections of community needing assistance – Abandoned infants, Senior citizens and special need children.

Matrichhaya: Home for abandoned infants

It provides a home to homeless infants – abandoned, lost, disowned, and orphaned babies.

People leave babies (even 2-3 days old) in the cradle kept outside the home (Matrichhaya), ring the bell and disappear. In some cases abandoned children are brought by a third party or Police or Maternity homes and Hospitals.

All such children get the mother's care (Matrichhaya) of the foster mothers till they are adopted by eligible childless couples.

An elaborate process of adoption is followed as per the Government guidelines.

Bhopal center was started in 1997. So far 254 children (100 male and 154 female) have been given on adoption. Recently a girl child has been adopted by a Spanish couple.

On an average 10 to 15 children are nurtured in Matrichhaya. Another unit of Matrichhaya has been started in Gwalior recently.



Parents of Seharia boys of Shivpuri hostel



Smt. Asha Shukla with mothers of Seharia boys of Dabra

Ananddham: Home for senior citizens

Senior citizens are provided free decent home surroundings with facilities of shelter, nutritious food, healthcare, socio-spiritual-cultural activities. There are on an average 25-30 beneficiaries.

Gandhi Ashram: Home for differently abled and special needs children

During 2013-14 session there were 25 children in the hostel. They receive free education, boarding and lodging.

Educational

Sewa Bharati has established schools, hostels and Sanskar Kendra.

Sewa Vidya Mandir Bhopal: Higher Secondary School for children of slum and tribal areas imparting value based education.

It has 474 students (280 boys and 194 girls) mostly from schedule classes and tribes. (2013-14 session)

Residential tribal middle school for tribals in Dabra (147 Seharia community students), Salaiya (Dindori)

Hostels for tribal girls and boys in Gwalior (84 boys), Guna (55 Seharia girls), Bhopal (46 boys), Shivpuri (55 Seharia boys) and Kusumdeeh, Mandla (39 Baiga girls)

- ★ Sanskaar Kendra (146) in slum areas
- ★ Coaching centers and Balwadis
- ★ Healthcare
- ★ Mobile dispensary
- ★ Physiotherapy center in Anand Dham Bhopal
- ★ Neurotherapy center in Anand Dham Bhopal
- ★ Distribution of low cost food to poor patients and their attendants in hospitals

★ Vocational training

★ Computer training:

Bhopal center is recognized by National Open University and Makhanlal Chaturvedi Patrakarita University.

★ Typing training center Bhopal recognized by Government of Madhya Pradesh

★ Tailoring/embroidery training: A certificate of proficiency is issued by Government of Madhya Pradesh.

★ Self-help groups for women (212)

Other socio-cultural activities

A number of socio-cultural programs are organized on various occasions to promote national integration, social and cultural harmony.

Special programs for teenager youth: Nivedita Bharati for girls and Kishor Bharati for boys. Motivational and character building programs

Students of social work come to Anand dham for their research work.

Administration and Management

General body:

Sewa Bharati has its own constitution. It provides for a General body comprising of Patrons, life members, ordinary members and honorary members. It



The more we come out and do good to others, the more our hearts will be purified, and God will be in them.

- Swami Vivekananda

meets at least once a year to review the working of the organization.

Management committee:

A management committee consisting of 13 members is responsible for the day to day functioning of the organization. The members are elected from the general body. It has a tenure of 3 years. It has a President, 3 Vice Presidents, Secretary, Joint Secretary, Treasurer and 6 members. There is dedicated staff for administration, financial management, and internal audit.

Project management

Sewa Bharati is a people's program. As mentioned

above it is running several projects spread over many districts. Every project like Matrichhaya, Anand dham, School, Hostel has its own management committee along with project staff. The committee members are from the local community. The committee looks after the administrative and financial management of the project.

Bhopal city has been geographically divided into 3 zones (mandals) covering 220 out of about 545 slum localities (Sewa basti). Each has its own management committee.

They have their own bank account. They undertake various socio-cultural programs, run vocational and counselling centers and sanskar Kendra. Special programs are organized for youth, both girls and boys.

Women have a special role in the efficient implementation of our programs. A separate women wing “Mahila mandal” for each mandal has been formed.

Associates

Following organizations are associated with our programs:

- ❖ Sewa International
- ❖ Kendriya Sewa Bharati Delhi
- ❖ Vivekanand Kendra, Kanyakumari
- ❖ Chinmaya Mission
- ❖ Gayatri Parivar
- ❖ Help Age India
- ❖ Ram krishna Ashram

The programs undertaken by Sewa Bharati have started showing an impact on the community. Children coming from these communities living in the hostels and those receiving value based education in the schools have not only imbibed high moral values themselves but also impacted their families, villages and the community on the whole. There are instances where the child has forced the parents to give up drinking and gambling. They take up plantation, Nashabandi, cleanliness, sports and cultural programs



Tribal boys Hostel Bhopal

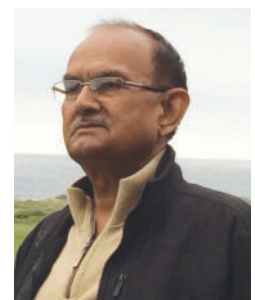
during summer breaks. Our children are really engines of social change. The general environment, the quality of life and level of awareness in their community is gradually but surely improving.

Come join us in accomplishing our vision of creating a socially harmonious cohesive self-reliant society cherishing the ideals of Indian cultural values of equity, love and universal brotherhood through Sewa, Sanskaar and Samrasata. ■

Sewa Bharti (Madhya Bharat) Bhopal
Swami Ramtirth Nagar, Opp. Maida Mill,
Hoshangabad Road, Bhopal- 462 011
Tel- 0755, 2559597
<http://sewabhartimadhyabharat.in/>

About the Author

Dr. Mahendra Kumar Shukla,
Vice President, Sewa Bharati
(Madhya Bharat) Bhopal, retired
as the Director General of Police
(MP) and also served as director,
National Police Academy,
Hyderabad. He along with his
wife **Smt. Asha Shukla ji** worked
extensively for Ekal Vidyalaya
before working for Sewa Bharati. He may be contacted
via email mahendra.shukla@gmail.com





The word 'introspection' is derived from the Latin word 'introspicere' which means 'to look within'. We look at ourselves daily in the mirror and try our utmost to get rid of the slightest blemish, the tiniest pimple and the most imperceptible imperfection. But we don't think of doing the same for our mind and character. The idea of taking an objective look at our inner self is a foreign one for most people.

The greatest power we are blessed with is that of introspection. At the end of the day there should be some time devoted to inner reflection. Questions should be asked:

- ★ What thoughts did I think throughout the day?
- ★ Did I talk about people or about ideas?
- ★ How many mistakes did I make in word and deed?
- ★ What part of my personality do I need to work on?
- ★ How much time did I devote to God?
- ★ What did I do that was right?

By Siddheshwari Devi (Didi ji)

★ What did I do that was wrong?

Without introspection there is no opportunity for us to change and grow. Then we will live the humorous caption which reads, *"Those of you who think you know everything are very annoying to those of us who really do."*

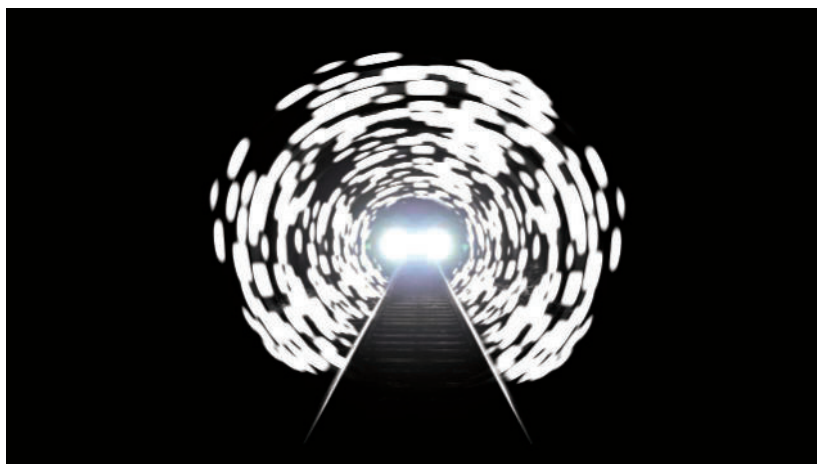
The reality is that there is so much we do not know and so much we need to learn. The learning process begins with moments of introspection which provide us the necessary time to think about our strengths and weaknesses and to reflect on the correct course of action to take. Harness the power of introspection.

Appreciate Your Life

The fact that we are human should not be taken for granted. There are only 6.5 billion of us living on the planet earth. By itself, this sounds like a large number



Introspection
is the greatest
power we are
blessed with.



but not when you consider that there are so many other creatures in comparison. For instance, scientists discovered 10,000 microscopic creatures living inside a rotting apple. If you dig up the earth in your yard, you will find thousands of creatures living below the ground. Millions of tiny creatures die every day simply because we are walking, talking and breathing. We should feel extremely grateful to God for granting us the precious human form.

What makes our life so precious? The human mind is so elevated that in contrast to other creatures, humans can think of greater concepts than just eating, sleeping, fearing and mating. While the lower creatures simply exist, human beings have the option to live significantly. Only a human can even think of pursuing the ultimate truth. We are the only children of God who are given the capacity to reflect on who we are and what the purpose of our life is.

Unlike other creatures, we are held accountable for our actions. This is because we have the intelligence to know what is right and what is wrong. God has given us clear guidelines, instructions and commandments. These are the do's and don'ts. Every action of ours bears a reaction. Good actions beget good results; bad actions, bad. He who is given the highest privilege is also entrusted with a heavy responsibility. The greatest responsibility we have is to make continuous progress on the spiritual path.

If we do not acquire the highest knowledge and instead focus only on eating, drinking and sleeping, we forfeit the right to be called human.

Four kinds of people

We see many types of people living in the world, and every individual is a unique child of God. Yet, all the people of the world can be generally divided into four categories.

■ Firstly, there are those who are both materialistically well-off and spiritually inclined. You will not find too many in this category.

■ Secondly, there are those who are neither spiritually inclined nor do they possess any material wealth. There are very few in this category also.

■ Thirdly, there are those who possess great material wealth and are completely devoid of spirituality. It is generally seen that possession of abundant material wealth causes arrogance, making the wealthy one feel that there is no need for God in life.

■ Fourthly, there are those who are deprived of material wealth but are spiritually inclined. This is quite natural, because when an individual has no worldly possessions to be proud of, he generally turns towards God. But for an opulent individual to be interested in spiritual matters is a rare occurrence. However, there is an exception to every rule.

The exceptions are individuals who have already accumulated 95% spiritual power in their previous births, and have had to take birth in order to acquire the remaining 5%. It is only such fortunate souls who remain unattached to the world even while being in the possession of material wealth. Likewise, there are also those who remain indifferent to God even in the absence of material possessions. This is again unnatural, because the lack of material property generally turns a person to God, even if it is just to beg Him for material possessions. ■

Visit www.radhamadhavsociety.org

Email: s_didi@radhamadhavsociety.org

Remembering

Swami Chinmayananda

By Maria Wirth



Swami Chinmayananda's 100th birthday is on 8th May. He was born in Ernakulam in Kerala in 1916. Those who had the good fortune to meet the Swami in person, surely treasure his memory. He was a towering personality, who stood up for the Hindu tradition once he had realized its worth. He was a man on a mission - the mission to acquaint his countrymen, especially the English educated class, with the profound insights of the ancient Rishis, which were in danger of being forgotten. He started a revival of Hindu Dharma in independent India by translating the ancient knowledge into a modern idiom and teaching it all over the country and even abroad.

Swami Chinmayananda was the ideal person to do this, as he knew from own experience the mindset of the 'modern', English educated Indian who wrongly believes he has no use for his heritage, mainly because he does not know it.

Balakrishna Menon, as he was called, was born into a pious household, but he himself was not inclined

towards religion or spirituality. Nobody guessed he would become a Sanyasi. He was the proverbial left liberal youth, got involved in the freedom struggle and studied literature, law and journalism. His first job was with the National Herald newspaper. He wanted to make a story on the so called holy men in Rishikesh. In 1947, he reached Swami Shivananda's ashram - not to learn from him, but to find out how these sadhus and swamis manage to bluff people. He planned to expose them.

However, things took a different turn. Obviously, Balakrishna Menon was greatly impressed by what transpired between Swami Shivananda and him, because two years later on Maha Shivaratri, he was back in Rishikesh and took Sanyas. He became Swami Chinmayananda.

From Rishikesh the new Sanyasi went to Tapovan Maharaj in Uttarkashi deep in the Himalaya, and studied Vedanta as his disciple.

Discipleship, however, was not always easy, once

he even packed his bags determined to leave. His guru had accused him of having torn his cloth while washing it. Chinmayananda had denied it. Yet from that time onwards, Tapovan Maharaj called him 'liar', often in front of others. Chinmayananda felt hurt and decided to leave, never to come back. An older ashramite saw him packing and explained him that the accusation was just one of the guru's ways to hit at his ego, which was in his best interest. Chinmayananda got the point and stayed on.

When he saw his guru the next time, the guru laughed, "Why are you so touchy when I call you a liar? Aren't we all liars as long as we don't know the truth? Do you know the truth already?"

After several years with his teacher, Swami Chinmayananda felt the urge to share his insights into Vedanta - by now convinced that the happiness all look for cannot be found where it is generally sought. Everyone searches outside among other persons and things, while it is hidden deep inside.

In the early 1950s, he left the Himalayas for the dusty, hot plains and started teaching his fellow countrymen mainly about the Bhagavad-Gita and the Upanishads as even after Independence the education system inexplicably ignored those great Indian texts. The modern Indians had no idea that India once was the cradle of civilization. Even the most popular of India's sacred texts, the Bhagavad Gita, was hardly known anymore, nor the Upanishads which form the last part of the sacred Vedas and deal with profound philosophy.

Until his death in August 1993, Swami Chinmayananda hardly took off for a single day from his tight schedule. After reaching a town, that very same evening, he started his weeklong Jnana Yajna, as the camps were called. The Chinmaya Mission he founded still exists, and trained Vedanta teachers still take classes all over the country.

I attended several of his camps, including a course in his retreat center in Siddhabari and am grateful for that. Swami Chinmayananda was an exemplary teacher - clear, convincing and with a lot of humor. On one of his Jnana Yajnas (it was his 389th camp in 1984 in



Chinmaya Vidyalaya, Pallavur, Kerala

Trichy) I took notes and wrote a long article for a German magazine. Later I gave its English translation to him. Swami Chinmayananda read through it and acknowledged that I had conveyed the teaching well, "but", he added gravely and then broke into a smile "your English is very German."

Since my memory of that camp in Trichy is still fresh in my mind thanks to this article, I will provide a glimpse of it:

A big tent had been put up for the camp. Chants from the Bhagavad-Gita were played in the background from stalls where cassettes and books were sold. About thousand people gathered at dusk, sitting on rugs on the floor.

When Swami Chinmayananda entered the stage, people welcomed him with heartfelt clapping. He looked stately, was tall, had long hair and a long white beard, sparkling and a little mischievous eyes and a roaring laughter. He was completely at ease and made us truly enjoy the class with his great sense of humor.

"Do you know the essence of Vedanta?" he asked in a booming voice and himself gave the answer, "The essence is: Undress and embrace" he thundered. People were nonplussed. He chuckled and explained, "Undress body, mind and intellect. What remains is automatically in intimate embrace with OM, the pure awareness."

All our sufferings stem from identifying with our body, mind and intellect, or in other words, with our thoughts and feelings, he claimed and gave an illustration: "You go and watch a movie. The persons



on the screen experience happiness and suffering. You also experience happiness and suffering. Why? Because you identify with those figures. You sit in the theatre and cry into your handkerchief. And you even pay for it!"

It was easy to stay attentive for the two hours. He kept asking us not to believe him but to use our reason and common sense well, and analyze the human situation intelligently. For example, ask yourself:

"Man has body, mind and intellect. If he has body, mind and intellect, who is he? Certainly a good question! Usually a question we have never asked ourselves. Amazing!"

He gave the analogy of electricity: "If you believe only what you see, each light bulb surely shines all by itself, since some shine brightly and others dimly and some red and some green. Does it not follow each light bulb has its own, independent light?"

Yet whoever inquires more deeply, will laugh at such ignorance. He knows electricity is solely responsible for the light in all bulbs (and even for the sound from loudspeakers). The different colors and forms of the bulbs account for the variety in the lights, yet would there be any light without electricity? No!

Similarly, we should not take the sense perception that we all are 'obviously' separate at face value and enquire who we really are. What makes our body, mind and intelligence function? What mysterious power makes us feel alive as the subject, as "I"? Is it the same pure awareness which is responsible for the 'light' in all of us?" Yes, it is.

Swami Chinmayananda, too, like all sages, advised us to direct our attention inwards to essence that alone is absolutely true. He advised to meditate on mysterious OM and to develop love for it. He himself must have done it for innumerable hours in those long years in the Himalayan ashram of his guru. And he may have tapped into the source of all energy, love and joy which gave him the strength and enthusiasm to continue till the very end with his mission to make his countrymen see sense.

A bulb won't be able to discover the electricity in itself, yet we humans can discover pure awareness, as we are already aware. We only need to drop the content of awareness to discover pure awareness which is our real and blissful nature.

The more we become aware of our real nature, the less we will be attached to the world. Desires will automatically become less. They simply drop off. The

world does not bind anymore. Love and joy are not sought outside anymore. They are felt right here inside. Meditation and bhakti become natural.

Swami Chinmayananda gave again an example in his typical, humorous style, how a drastic change in attitude comes about naturally when the time is ripe:

"One day, the elder brother calls his younger brother, shows him all his toys and tells him, 'it is all yours. If you don't want it, throw it away.' The younger one is convinced that his elder brother, unfortunately, has gone mad. Yet the elder one is not bothered. He has discovered a better toy, and knows it is better. The little brother cannot see it as long as he is so small. One day he will understand..."

On the last evening, it became obvious the Swami had done us a great service. Long queues formed, and slowly and silently moved in an almost sacred atmosphere to the carton put up near the dais for envelopes with donations. We were grateful for the many valuable insights he had prompted us to have.

Now we only need to take them to heart. If we do, we can live life in a meaningful and fulfilling way - in tune with the eternal Dharma that flourished in India since ancient times. It is through people who live according to Dharma it flourishes. ■

About the Author

Maria Wirth

is a German and came to India for a holiday after finishing her psychology studies at Hamburg University. She visited the Ardh Kumbha Mela in Haridwar in April 1980 where she met Sri Anandamayi Ma



and Devaraha Baba, two renowned saints. With their blessing she continued to live in India and dived into India's spiritual tradition, sharing her insights with German readers through articles and books. For long, she was convinced that every Indian knows and treasures his great heritage. However, when in recent years, she noticed that there seemed to be a concerted effort to prevent Indians (and the world) from knowing how valuable this ancient Indian heritage is, she started to point out the unique value of Indian tradition.

She may be contacted via email mariawirth12@gmail.com

Source: <https://mariawirthblog.wordpress.com/2015/05/04/remembering-swami-chinmayananda/>



Hindus and Catholics Initiate Dialogue to Promote Mutual Reverence

Senior representatives of the Roman Catholic church, including the Vatican and the Arlington, Virginia diocese, and leaders of the Hindu American community came together at the Durga Hindu Temple of Fairfax, Virginia on May 23, 2015, for an extended public dialogue. The topic of the dialogue was **Hindu and Catholic Traditions Together: Theological Reasons for Mutual Respect and Reverence.**

Leaders of the Catholic Church included His Eminence Cardinal Jean-Louis Tauran, President of the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue at the Vatican and Most Reverend Bishop Paul S. Loverde of the Catholic Diocese of Arlington. Srman Anuttama Dasa, former Governing Body Chairman of the International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON), and Dr. Abhaya Asthana, President, World Hindu Council of America (VHPA) were among Hindu

leaders on the dais. Keynote speeches that stirred the audience were given by Dr. Francis Clooney, Director of the Center for the Study of World Religions and Professor of Comparative Theology at Harvard University and by Dr. Anantanand Rambachan, a well-known scholar of the *Advaita* tradition of Hinduism and Professor of Religion at St Olaf College, Minnesota.

The Secretariat for Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs (SEIA) of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), represented by the Associate Director, Dr. Anthony Cirelli, was responsible for inviting H.E. Cardinal Jean-Louis Tauran and received with joy his message that this day "marks an important moment in the history of interreligious dialogue between Hindus and Catholics in the United States." With these words by the Cardinal, the USCCB looks forward to future collaboration and dialogue with the U.S. Hindu community.

"As members of two faith communities that are so much a part of the American fabric, this coming together to share commonalities and even sensitive



areas where we may have different views and experiences, is only the beginning of a continuing conversation we plan to have over the coming months and years," said Sant Gupta, one of the lead organizers of the event, "Such a dialogue is of crucial importance today when too often, we know so little about our neighbors' values, beliefs and ways of worship."

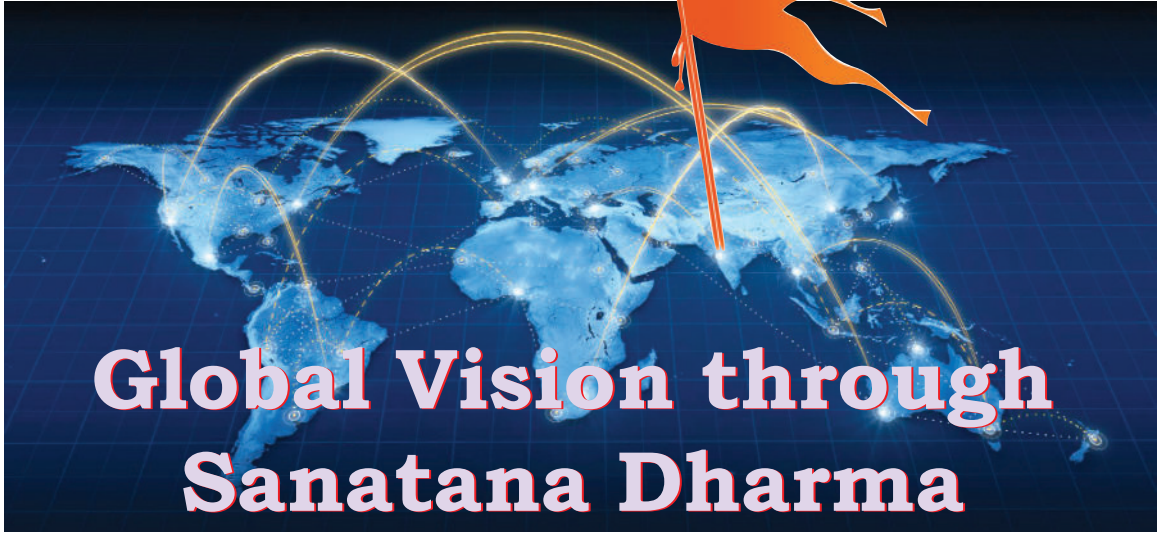
The meeting was inaugurated by the lighting of diya or auspicious lamp by Dr. Siva Subramanian, and Suhag Shukla, Executive Director of the Hindu American Foundation, one of the co-sponsors of the event, offered an invocation and prayer. After the

speeches, a tour of the temple was organized providing a better understanding of Hindu worship and practices, beginning with the central murti of the Durga, the Mother Goddess. Distinguished guests were honored, and a vote of thanks was given by Ms. Mythili Bachu, recipient of Bridge Builders Award 2015 by IFCMW. A commemorative brochure was distributed that highlighted the speeches and the basic tenets of each belief.

"We identified many areas that affect both of our communities, from school textbook reform to religious worker visas, and from predatory proselytization to religious liberty, where our voices are stronger together," said Shukla after the event. "We got to know our counterparts in our respective faith communities and built a strong foundation upon which our friendship will prosper." ■



The Durga Temple website (www.durgatemple.org) will host the videos, photos and speeches and other material relating to the event. To learn more about this event and to discuss follow on events, contact -- Sant Gupta: Phone: 703-980-7487 (M); e-mail: santguptava@gmail.com



(Universal Vision of Hinduism)

Introduction:

An answer to the question "What can provide global vision for future?" is Sanatana Dharma. "Sanatana" means perennial and "Dharma" means the principles or laws that hold and protect everything in the universe. Although there have been major global developments in science, technology, information etc. still they are unable to provide global vision. However, Sanatana Dharma deals with existence and life sustaining the flow of time and thus comprehensively includes all aspects of life. The Santana Dharma, which is at the root of Hinduism, refers to the vision and way of life based on the Vedas (*Shruti*). Then there is infinitely large Vedic literature such as *Smritis* (codes and guidelines), *Itihasas* (historical master pieces namely Ramayana and Mahabharata) and many other scriptures. Thus the literature of Sanatana Dharma is an integrated literature that deals with all levels and aspects of life including science, arts, medicine, sociology, philosophy etc.

Sanatana Dharma, based on the vast Vedic literature, shows the way for knowledge, joy and peace. In the words of a yogi-seer, Sriranga Sadguru, "It is the view of the rishis of Bharata (India) that spiritual enlightenment is the ultimate goal of life. That is the attainment of ultimate joy (*Ananda*). That is liberation (*Mukti*). Spiritual knowledge (*Jnana*) merges one into the ultimate source of perennial existence (*Atman*), as a river merges into an ocean. The rishis having attained this goal have brought forth the knowledge in science

By Dr. M. G. Prasad

and arts (*Vijnana and Kalaa*) keeping in line with their roots in spiritual knowledge (*Jnana*). For this reason, an in-depth sincere study of knowledge in science and arts, at any stage of manifestation, will lead the seeker into the attainment of the ultimate goal of spiritual knowledge"

Individual and Family Life

The universe is a collection of humans as well as animals and plants. In addition to sentient beings, we have nature composed of five elements. It is common experience human life has the most advanced ability to use the innate reflective intelligence. The last several hundred years have seen tremendous development in scientific understanding of physical universe, global communication, mass production and consumerism etc. However, the intrinsic characteristics such as love, anger, jealousy, hatred etc. of human beings haven't changed. There has been an increasing difficulty to deal with critical issues of human society such as poverty, terrorism, hunger

॥ वसुधैव कुटुम्बकम् ॥

etc. In the contemporary world an individual has to deal with both local and global aspects of life. In order to achieve harmony in life, an individual has to carry out actions in local domain in tune with the global perspective. Sanatana Dharma provides the global perspective by providing the vision of a global family emphasizing inter-dependence is essential for global peace and harmony. On an individual basis, Sanatana

Dharma provides the vision of four-fold goal (for every human being) namely *dharma* (value based education), *artha* (rightly earned wealth), *kama* (righteous desire) and *moksha* (ultimate joy and peace). The literature such as Ramayana provides Rama as the role model. Ramayana written by *rishi* Valmiki, the lives of Rama and Sita, for example, illustrate the eternal principles in action. Sri Rama has shown the human ideals in several roles such as son, brother, disciple, friend, husband, father, warrior, king (administrator), statesman, etc. Sita has shown the complementary roles. The actions and decisions taken by Sri Rama and Sita resonate with the fundamental values of human life achieving harmony between local and global perspectives, hence the saying "Rama is the manifestation of Dharma". In Vedic literature several personalities exemplify Sanatana Dharma. In familial environment at home the children should be taught values by practice, the exposure to Vedic literature need to be given to ensure children grow with strength.

Society and Institutions:

It is the individuals who make up the society and public and private institutions. As the society and institutions are the collective being of individuals, they play an important role in development of individuals as well as fostering the global vision. As any individual's action directly or indirectly affects the other individuals in the society, the vision and activities of the institutions is important in fostering the harmony in the global level. The four-fold goal of an individual can be seen for an institution also. Institutions should have certain core value based guidelines. Institutions should balance the profit objective with responsibility to the society to provide a certain level of happiness to its members as well as the society. The public institutions such as temples, community organizations play a significant role in helping both the individuals and society. The various aspects of a temple such as religious, educational, cultural, humanitarian etc. should collectively and harmoniously contribute to the society. Community organizations play role in the social and cultural aspects of the society to increase the social awareness and responsibility.

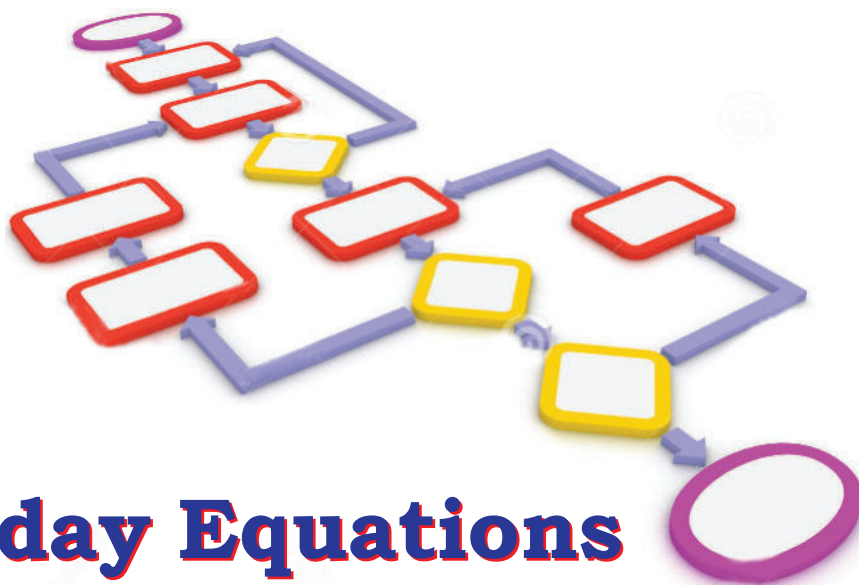
Society and Harmony

In order for a society or an institution to work in harmony and peace, people have to work in harmony. Various roles people play in a society contribute to the overall success of the common goal namely joy and peace. If all the limbs are healthy, we say the person is healthy. When it is spoken of *Rama Rajya* (kingdom of Rama's rule) it means the society was functioning in

harmony. Even in the recent historic times (320 BCE) of Chanakya and Chandragupta, such a harmony and grandeur of society has been recorded by foreign travelers such as Megasthenes. The concept and practice of social justice is very much important part of Sanatana Dharma. Chanakya or Kautilya in *Arthashastra* deals with social justice. Ancient *Smriti* texts of great *rishis* such as Narada, Yajñvalkyā, Parashara, etc. provide the structure based on the Vedas. In the view of yogi-seer Swami Ranga Priya, "Kautilya's Arthashastra can be used as a manual in showing how to balance mundane (materialistic) and the transcendental (spiritual)". Another historic example is Vijayanagar Empire in grandeur for about 330 years during 1336-1666 CE documented by several foreign travelers such as Domingo Paes.

The Vedic basis of the society is to bring harmony at all levels namely individual, family, society and nature. The knowledge of a person was given the highest respect. Spiritual knowledge (realization of God) is the highest level of knowledge and everyone is equally eligible for it. Every profession is equally respected in the Vedic view of Sanatana Dharma. The very basis of classification of work in a society is to maintain the harmony in society. Spiritual equality of all human beings is emphasized in the Vedic literature. The Vedic prayers are of collective nature, we can see in mantras such as Gayatri mantra, shanti mantras, etc. The very idea of "*Vasudhaiva kutumbakam*" (the whole world is one family) is based on harmony.

Thus we can see the basic features of Sanatana Dharma encompasses individual as well as global perspectives. Ancient *rishis* said "*svadesha bhuvanatrāyam*" meaning "my land includes not only this earth but also higher spaces such as bhuvaha and suvaha". However, the emphasis of Sanatana Dharma is the achievement of unperturbed spiritual state of peace and joy at individual level as the goal. When every individual tries to achieve this spiritual state, the society and world of such individuals will result in harmony and peace. In the view of yogi-seer Sriranga Sadguru, "The Bharata (India) is the land where massive effort was carried out to discover Dharma. Hence, Bharata is the land and abode of Dharma". However, Dharma can be recognized anywhere in the universe, for it is the universal principle. Various literatures of Bharata have brought out the basis of dharma in describing the life and living. Hence in the long history of Bharata, unity in diversity, tolerance and peace have remained as the core characteristics of the society. *Continued on page 38*



Everyday Equations

By M. D. Srinivas

Ancient Indian mathematicians reveled in discovering efficacious algorithms for diverse problems

The word algorithm, which is commonly used for any systematic procedure of computation, has an interesting history. It derives from the medieval word 'algorism', which referred to the process of doing arithmetic by means of Indian numerals (the so called "Hindu-Arabic numerals") following the Indian methods of calculation based on the decimal place value system.

The word algorism itself is a corruption of the name of the Central Asian mathematician al Khwarizmi (c 825) whose book on the Indian method of reckoning (Hisab al Hind) was the source from which the Indian methods of calculation reached the western world. The 'algorists' in medieval Europe, who computed by algorism were at a great advantage compared to those who used the abacus or any other system of numeration such as the Roman system. The situation has been aptly described by the renowned 18th century French mathematician Pierre Simon de Laplace as follows.

"It is India that gave us the ingenious method of expressing all numbers by means of 10 symbols, each symbol receiving a value of position as well as an absolute value; a profound and important idea which appears so simple to us now that we ignore its true merit. But its very simplicity and the great ease which it has lent to all computations put our arithmetic in the first rank of useful inventions; and we shall appreciate the grandeur of this achievement the more when we remember that it escaped the genius of Archimedes and Apollonius, two of the greatest men produced by antiquity."

The term "mathematics" is derived from the Greek word "*mathema*" which means knowledge or learning. The Indian term for this discipline is "*ganita*" which means calculation or computation. Indian mathematics, *ganita*, is quintessentially a science of computation. Indian mathematical texts are not just a collection of propositions or theorems about mathematical entities, they are more in the nature of a compendia of systematic and efficient procedures for computation (with numbers, geometrical figures and algebraic symbols standing for a class of mathematical objects and so on) as applicable to diverse problems. Thus, a majority of the sutras or verses of a classical Indian mathematical text are in the form of prescriptions or rules - they are referred to by the traditional commentators as *vidhi*, *prakriya* or *orkarana-sutras* - rules that characterize systematic procedures.

This approach is not special to mathematics alone, but common to most Indian knowledge systems - the *sastras*. The canonical texts of different disciplines in Indian tradition present rules which are generally called sutras or lakshanas. Most of these rules serve to characterize systematic procedures (referred to variously as *vidhi*, *kriya* or *prakriya*, *sadhana*, *karmaor parikarma*, *karana* etc.) which are designed to accomplish specific ends. In this way, the Indian sastras are always rooted in vyavahara or practical applications.

This approach of Indian sastras allows them to have a great degree of flexibility in devising multiple approaches to the solutions of problems and not get bogged down by any dogma of inviolability of the

fundamental truths posited or derived in any specific theoretical formulation employed in the discipline concerned. While the canonical texts of Indian sastras clearly assert the validity and the efficacy of the various procedures enunciated in them, they also simultaneously emphasize that these procedures are only *upaya*, or means for accomplishing specific ends, and there are no other restrictions which need to be imposed on them. The texts also declare that one is free to take recourse to any other set of systematic procedures, if they are equally efficacious in accomplishing the given ends.

It is the algorithmic approach that distinguishes the ancient Indian texts of geometry, the *Sulvasutras* (prior to 800 BCE), which deal with the construction of *yajna-vedis* (altars). While *Sulvasutras* do contain the earliest available statement of the so-called Pythagoras theorem - they state it in the form "the square made by the diagonal of a rectangle is equal to the sum of the squares made by its sides" - the main purpose of the *Sulvasutras* is to describe systematic procedures for constructing and transforming geometrical figures using a *rajju* (rope) and *sanku* (pole).

It has been remarked that the Indian scientific tradition has been profoundly influenced by the methodology of the *Ashtadhyayi* of Panini (prior to 500 BCE), in the same way the Greco-European tradition is said to have been influenced by the methodology of the *Elements* of Euclid. The *Ashtadhyayi* of Panini is a truly generative grammar in the modern sense that it is a collection of some 4,000 rules using which it is possible to derive every valid utterance of the Sanskrit language starting from a collection of primitive elements such as *dhatus* (verb-roots) and *pratyayas* (suffixes). Panini does not present any set of propositions or truths about language, but gives us an expert system so to say, which enables us to derive (and also analyze) all the valid utterances of Sanskrit language, an achievement which is as yet unparalleled in the grammatical tradition of any of the world languages. Many of the techniques used in Panini's grammar - his abstract symbolism, use of the zero-morpheme (*lopa*), ideas of rule ordering and recursion - seem to have had significant impact on the development of Indian mathematics. They have also influenced developments in modern linguistics and computer science.

The ancient text of Sanskrit prosody, the *Chandahsastra* of Pingala (c 300 BCE) presents algorithms for converting a number to its binary form and vice versa. In Sanskrit prosody, any *pada* (line or foot) of a verse is analyzed as a sequence of *guru* (long)



and *laghu* (short) syllables, so that *Pingala* could essentially characterize it as a binary sequence. *Pingala* also gives an efficient algorithm for finding the *n*-th power of a number, which involves only around $\log_2(n)$ operations of squaring and multiplications (in contrast to the standard method which involves *n* multiplications), and was, therefore, adopted by all the later Indian mathematicians.

Pingala's work also contains a cryptic sutra, which has been explained by later commentators, such as Halayudha (c 900 CE), as a rule for the computation of binomial coefficients using a tabular form, *Meru*, which is a version of the famous Pascal triangle. *Pingala's* work set the stage for subsequent developments in combinatorics, which were initiated in texts of prosody and music and were formulated in a general mathematical setting by later mathematicians, Mahaviracharya (c 850), Bhaskaracharya II (b 1114) and especially Narayana Pandita (c 1356).

In ancient times, *ganita* formed an important part of the science of astronomy (*jyotisha*). The *Aryabhatiya* (c 499 CE) of Aryabhata is a great classical work which summarized the entire subject of mathematical astronomy in 121 aphoristic verses, of which the section on mathematics, *Ganitapada*, comprised just 32 verses. We can see that, by that time, Indian mathematicians had systematized most of the basic procedures of arithmetic (such as place value system, the standard algorithms for square-roots and cube-roots), algebra (solution of linear and quadratic equations), geometry (standard properties of planar and solid figures), commercial mathematics (rule of three, calculation of interest) and trigonometry, that are generally taught in schools today - and many more that are more advanced (such as the *kuttaka* method of solving linear indeterminate equations and computation of sine-tables) which are of importance in astronomy.

Several detailed commentaries (*bhashyas*) were

written on the cryptic verses of Aryabhatiya, of which the most important ones are those of Bhaskara I (c 629 CE) and the great Kerala astronomer Nilakantha Somayaji (c 1444-1544). The commentary of Bhaskara I provides detailed explanations (along with examples) for the various results and procedures given in Aryabhatiya. The Aryabhatiya-bhashya of Nilakantha presents detailed demonstrations (*upapatti*, *yukti*). Occasionally, Nilakantha also discusses some important refinements or modifications.

We may cite, for instance, Nilakantha's discussion of the more accurate table of sines (due to Madhava), and more importantly, his famous dictum based on the latitudinal motion of the planets Mercury and Venus, that: "The earth is not circumscribed by their orbits (the orbits of Mercury and Venus), the earth is always outside of them." This led Nilakantha to formulate a modified planetary model according to which the five planets Mercury, Venus, Mars, Jupiter and Saturn go around the mean sun, which in turn goes around the earth. This was nearly a hundred years prior to a similar model being proposed by Tycho Brahe in Europe.

We shall not go into the contributions of the long tradition of illustrious astronomers and mathematicians who followed Aryabhata - and the tradition continued to flourish till the 19th century. We instead present some illustrations to show how the algorithmic approach of the Indian mathematicians led them to discover optimal and efficacious algorithms for diverse problems. The most famous example is, of course, the Chakravala algorithm for the solution of the quadratic indeterminate equation (the so called Pell's equation): $X^2 - DY^2 = 1$.

Here, D is a given positive integer which is not a square and the problem is to solve for X, Y in integers. This problem (called *vargaprakriti*) was first explicitly posed by Brahmagupta in his *Brahmasphutasiddhanta* (c 628 CE), though the ancient *Sulvasutras* seem to have used the solution $X=577, Y=408$ for the case $D=2$, to get the rational approximation $577/408$ for the square-root of 2. Brahmagupta also gave a rule of composition (called *bhavana*) which allows one to obtain an infinite number of solutions once a particular solution is found.

The *Chakravala* method for solving the above



equation has been presented in the famous textbook of algebra, *Bijaganita*, of Bhaskaracharya (b 1114), though it is now known that the algorithm also appears in an earlier work by Acharya Jayadeva (prior to c 1050).

Bhaskara used this method to solve the equation: $X^2 - 61Y^2 = 1$, and showed that the smallest solution is given by $X=1766319049$ and $Y=226153980$. What is intriguing is that the same example was posed as a challenge by the famous French mathematician, Pierre de Fermat, in February 1657 to his colleagues in France.

He later posed this and other *vargaprakriti* equations (with different values of D) as a challenge to British mathematicians. To cut the story short, British mathematicians Wallace and Brouncker did come up with a method of solution, which was later systematized as an algorithm, based on the so-called regular continued fraction development of the square-root of D , by Euler and Lagrange in the 1770s.

In 1929, A A Krishnaswamy Ayyangar showed that the *Chakravala* algorithm corresponds to a so-called semi-regular continued fraction expansion and is also optimal in the sense that it takes much fewer steps to arrive at the solution than the Euler-Lagrange method. It is now known that on the average the Euler-Lagrange method takes about 40 per cent more number of steps than the *Chakravala*.

Finally, we make a brief mention of the infinite series for π (the ratio of the circumference to the diameter of a circle) discovered by Sangamagrama Madhava (c 1380-1460), founder of the Kerala School of Astronomy. For instance, Madhava presents the following series (the so-called Gregory-Leibniz series rediscovered in the 1670s): $\pi/4 = 1 - 1/3 + 1/5 - 1/7 + \dots$

However, Madhava is not content with merely

enunciating this elegant result, as it is not of any use in actually calculating the value of Pi. Summing say 50 terms in this series does not give a value of Pi accurate even to two decimal places. The famous verses of Madhava which present the above series also go on to give a set of end-correction terms which can be used to obtain better approximations. Using only 50 terms of the above series, with the accurate end-correction term of Madhava, leads to a value of Pi accurate to 11 decimal places. Madhava also used these correction terms to transform the above series into more rapidly convergent versions. Systematic proofs of all the infinite series discovered by Madhava and their transformations may be found in the famous Malayalam work *Ganitayuktibhasha* (c 1530) of Jyeshthadeva.

The great astronomer Nilakantha was a third

generation disciple of Madhava and the tradition of Kerala School continued (albeit at a modest level due to the greatly disturbed political situation of Kerala after the 1550s) till early 19th century. However, a century later, the algorithmic approach of Indian mathematics was in evidence again in the work of another great mathematician, Srinivasa Ramanujan (1888-1920), who seems to have been a worthy successor of Madhava in his extraordinary felicity to work with infinite series and their transformations. ■

About the Author

MD Srinivas

is the chairman of Centre for Policy Studies, Chennai.

Source: <http://www.mydigitalfc.com/indian-knowledge-series/everyday-equations-188>

Global Vision through Sanatana Dharma

Continued from page 34 The word "Bharata" itself means "Bha - Spiritual Light" and "Rata - engaged in the search of that spiritual light". A *Veda mantra* gives a clarion call as "*Uttishtata! Maa Svapta! Agnimic chadvam Bhaarataha*" Which means "Oh! People engaged in the search of Spiritual Light, Arise, Do not sleep, Aspire and seek the Paramatman (Spiritual fire)"

Sanatana Dharma through its Veda and Vedic literature empower us to aspire, seek and achieve the highest level of knowledge. It provides not only the vision and mission, but also the structured approach through its various paths. The knowledge and practice of *Vaidika samskaras* and *karmas* play an important role in the development of *Atma gunas* (namely compassion; forgiveness; absence of envy; purity in mind; speech and body; absence of exertion, auspiciousness, absence of wretchedness and non-coveting). It is through these *atma gunas* one achieves God realization. These *atmagunas* could also be developed by various other means - through arts, science, social service, etc. These *atma gunas* are global in nature and form the foundation of Sanatana Dharma. Thus Sanatana Dharma provides universally applicable global vision and a structured approach and the followers of Sanatana Dharma need to work together for the common cause of bringing peace and harmony at all level.

Concluding Remarks:

Sanatana Dharma based on its vast resource of

literatures can provide a global vision. It emphasizes the knowledge and harmony at an individual level, for individuals make families, societies, nations and the world. Yoga is a contribution of Sanatana Dharma to every individual towards his or her spiritual development. In this age of technology, any misguided decision could be a disaster at the mass scale. It is everyone's responsibility to acquire global vision and Sanatana Dharma can provide that vision. ■

About the Author

M.G Prasad

is a spiritual disciple of yogi-seer Sriranga Sadguru Karnataka, India. He is chairperson of the education committee, Hindu Temple and Cultural Society, Bridgewater, New Jersey, USA. He is a member of the board of Society of Indian Academics in America. He has authored four books related to Hinduism. He lectures on Hinduism at schools, universities, temples and churches. He represents Hinduism at many inter-faith symposia. He is a professor of mechanical engineering at Stevens Institute of Technology, Hoboken, New Jersey.



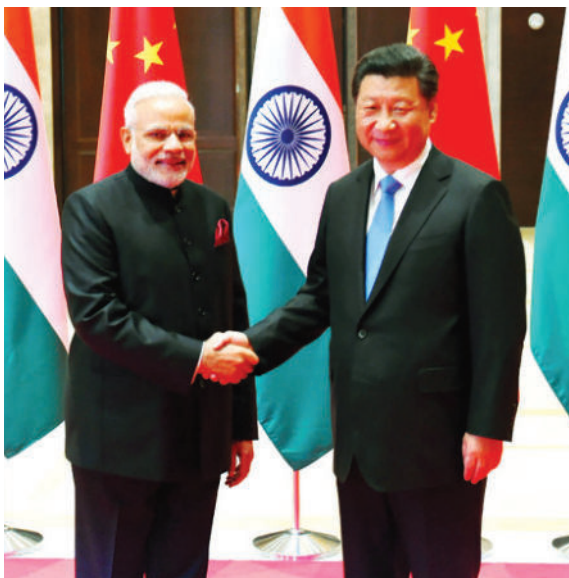
Further details of his activities can be found at the website: www.taranga.us



China to Set up First Yoga College

By: Indo-Asian News Service | Beijing |

The first yoga college in China is to be set up at the Yunnan University of Nationalities, a media report said. The college is expected to spread Indian culture in China and plans to begin student admissions in September, China Daily reported.



Prime minister Narendra Modi's recent visit to China paved the way for Yoga college

During Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to China from May 14 to 16, the Yunnan University of Nationalities and the Indian Council for Cultural Relations signed a cooperation memorandum for the yoga college on May 15. The memorandum was listed in the China-India joint statement.

The yoga college will invite yoga masters from India to preside over courses at different levels of difficulty. Other than yoga practice, there are also courses on Indian culture and philosophy.

All students who enroll in the college will have the chance to study at the Morarji Desai National Institute of Yoga, located in the Indian capital of New Delhi and those who qualify will be granted international yoga training certificates.

The yoga college is designed to provide a platform for China and India to improve cooperation and understanding in areas of culture and education. It is also aimed at helping carry out the strategy of the Bangladesh, China, India and Myanmar (BCIM) Economic Corridor. ■

Source: <http://indianexpress.com/article/good-news/china-to-set-up-first-yoga-college/>



Vishwa Hindu Parishad of America, Inc. (World Hindu Council of America)

National Office: P.O. Box 611, Iselin, NJ 08830 Tax ID# 51-0156325
Tel: 732-744-0851 Email: office@vhp-america.org 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 for becoming a member is 18 years)

Membership Desired: (select one)

☐ Patron \$1000

☐ Life Membership \$500

☐ Primary Membership, Five years \$100

☐ Primary Membership, Three years \$70

☐ Primary Membership, One year \$25

Please accept my Additional Contribution of \$ _____ for

☐ General Use ☐ Seva in USA ☐ Seva in Bharat ☐ Support A child

☐ Youth Development Programs ☐ Publications ☐ Media Outreach and PR

☐ Liaison with Hindu Mandirs & Hindu Institutions ☐ Hindu Awareness Yatra

I would like to be part of the mission to sustain and strengthen Hindu Dharma and traditions.
I believe in, practice and/or respect the spiritual and religious principles and practices having
roots in Bharat (India).

Signature _____

Date _____

Check No. _____ (Check Payable to VHPA) OR Charge it to a credit card

(Name and address must match with that on the credit card, for using the credit card.)

Credit Card Name: ☐ VISA ☐ MASTER CARD ☐ DISCOVER

□ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □

□ □ □ □

Credit Card Number

Month Year

Expiration Date

Signature _____

Date _____

Mail to: VHPA, PO Box 441505, Houston, TX 77244-1505 Contact Tel.: 732-744-0851

OR

Become member using your credit card on our website: www.vhp-america.org

Institutional Membership is available; First year dues are \$201 (\$90 Initiation fee + \$111 membership).

Call 732-744-0851 or email to office@vhp-america.org for application form and more information.