



Yugabda 5117
Shaka Samvat 1937
Vikram Samvat 2072
.....
Vol. XXXXIV
No. 3
July - September 2015

HINDU VISHWA

Vishwa Dharma Digest

Who is the Top Yogi?

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

Also Read

- OM the Symbol of Total Reality
- The Scope of Scriptures
- Can Vedic Dharma Bring Peace to the World?
- Is Bhagwan For Those Who Are Not For Themselves?



धर्मो रक्षति रक्षितः

Yugabda 5117
Shaka Samvat 1937
Vikram Samvat 2072
.....
Vol. XXXXIV
No. 3
July - September 2015

HINDU VISHWA

Vishwa Dharma Digest

Who is the Top Yogi?

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

Also Read

- OM the Symbol of Total Reality
- The Scope of Scriptures
- Can Vedic Dharma Bring Peace to the World?
- Is Bhagwan For Those Who Are Not For Themselves?

WORLD HINDU COUNCIL OF AMERICA (VHPA)

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

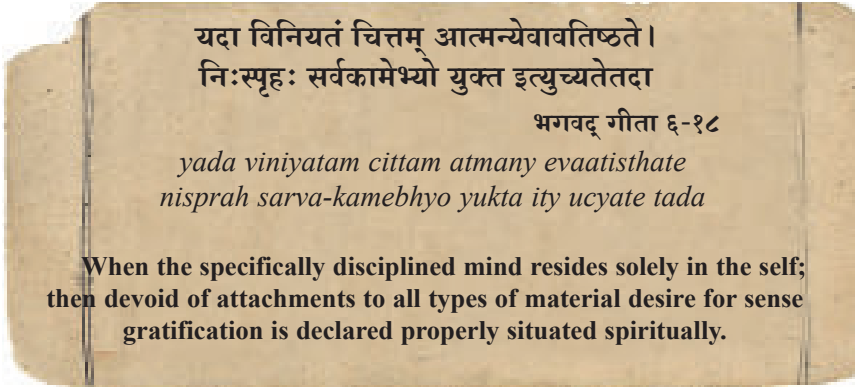
www.vhp-america.org

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

Volume XXXIV

No. 3

July-September 2015



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.Ahnsis@gmail.com
		aksinha@sbcglobal.net
Associate Editor:	Surendra Pandey	pandeyns@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 ...

A matter of difference - Editorial 03



OM
the Symbol
of Total
Reality

04



**The Scope of
Scriptures**

18

Who
is the
Top Yogi?

06



**Southborough Bal Vihar Celebrates
17th Annual Day**

22

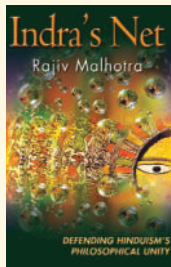
**Is Bhagwan For Those Who Are
Not For Themselves?**

24



**University of Kashmir's
Sanskrit Department Struggles
to Find Students**

25



**Fundamentalist
Cleric Throws
Plagiarism Bull
at American Author**

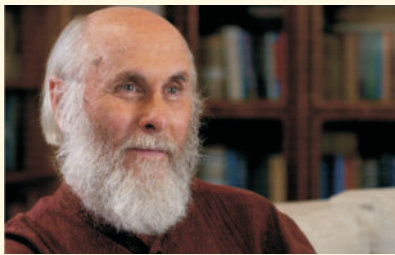
09



26

**Dharma and Heritage Focused at 37th
Vivekananda Family Camp**

28



**Anti-Hindu
Attitudes
in American
Academia
Need to Be
Questioned**

11

**माँ की साधना
हिंदी कविता**

32



**Communities Work Together to Raise Over
\$20,000 for Homeless Children!**

33

**Can Vedic Dharma
Bring Peace to the World?**

34



Where Do I Fit In?

16

**Muslims
in Nepal
Demand
a Hindu State**

17

**Jains Walk to Protest
Ban on Fast-To-Death
Ritual**

37

**PM releases digital
version of
Ramcharitmanas**

39

**Startalk Balvihar
Hindi Camp
Showcases
Incredible
Eco-friendly India**

12



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

A MATTER OF DIFFERENCE



We develop respect for someone for his or her personal and leadership qualities; strength of character, unflinching adherence to Truth; and achievement in any field of human endeavor and excellence. With a sense of respect in our hearts we actually feel elated ourselves.

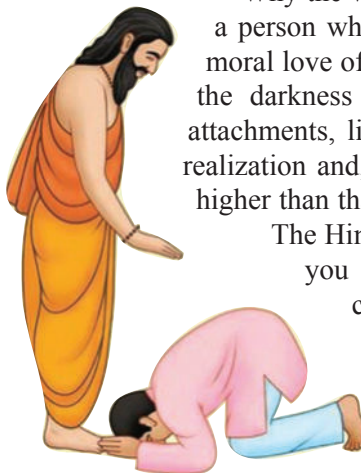
Hindu scriptures teach us to respect our mother, our father, our teacher, our guest, as much as a god:

MatriDevoBhav; मातृ देवो भव,
PitriDevoBhav; पितृ देवो भव,
Acharya DevoBhav; आचार्य देवो भव,
AtithiDevoBhav! अतिथी देवो भव!

(Taittiriya Upanishad, Shikshavalli 1.20)

What if there is a paradoxical situation - when there may be a dilemma because of some serious shortcoming in the above 'Patras' (characters) deserving our intrinsic respect by virtue of our relationship?

You respect them regardless! This is not a narrow injunction to be weighed against free option subject to incidental judgment or choice - it is a universal principle to be upheld and adhered to unconditionally.



Why the word "Aacharya" above, and not "Guru?" There may be a difference! Aacharya is a person who imparts education not for convenience or benefit of the recipient, but for the moral love of the giver of education or skill. 'Guru', on the other hand, is the one who dispels the darkness of the mind of the disciple: inborn darkness due to 'Saansarik' (worldly) attachments, limitations borne out of ego, shackles of ignorance that close the door on self-realization and, thereby, God-Realization. The spiritual and moral position of a Guru is much higher than that of an Aacharya; for "*GururBrahma, Gurur Vishnu, GururDevoMaheshwara.*"

The Hindu scriptures warn to keep away from evil deeds and evil characters; and for that you have to have a degree of judgment and consciousness for evaluation of circumstances and personage. Hindu Dharma emphasizes the Law of Karma for reward or punishment by the Divine Providence. The inherent rationality of a system of logical predestination and the exercise of a free will form the bedrock of Hindu belief in goodness in this life and subsequent lives. These principles are absolutely absent from many world religions. Hindu Dharma and associated faith systems rely on complete Inclusiveness: a general sense of respect for

other religions as alternative paths to reach the same destination, with individual freedom, in a sort of spiritual democracy. Some religions are rigidly exclusive, with a limited vision of their religion being 'the only way,' trying to convert non-adherents by force, monetary allurements, fraud or coercion, under the utterly false argument of attaining a seat in heaven instead of burning in the hell fire till salvation, the next kingdom, or Judgment Day.

Without a shred of disrespect, purely on rational ground, it can be said that many religions have far more ground to cover to catch up with the vision of God, Life, and basic humanity irrespective of the sectarian belief system, final judgment, and universal justice. ■

OM The Symbol of Total Reality



By Umesh Gulati, Ph.D.

Human knowledge in various fields has been greatly advanced by the invention and use of symbols. Language itself is a collection of symbols. Quantities and numbers become simplified when expressed through symbols. When the Indian sages realized the Absolute and the Unconditioned in the unity of Brahman (ultimate Reality, God) and Atman (Soul or Self), they felt the need for adequate symbols to communicate so incommunicable a truth. No single personal God of the various religions, or any physical symbol could serve as a symbol for a Reality that is at once Personal and Impersonal, immanent and transcendent.

No particular sound of the alphabet, either as a consonant or a vowel, could serve as an adequate symbol of Brahman, which is the unity of all existence, or the Existence Absolute. The universal that is Brahman-not Brahmin, which is a caste, cannot be expressed adequately through anyone particular; it can be expressed by something that possesses the characteristics of the universal. In their search they came across the sound symbol Om, and discovered that of all the sounds, it possessed the quality of universality. Om or Aum is composed of the sounds of the three letters:

- ★ akaara,
- ★ ukaara, and

★ makaara

of the Sanskrit vocabulary corresponding to A, U, M of the English vocabulary. 'A', pronounced as the letter 'o' in the word 'come', is the first vowel and letter of the Sanskrit alphabet; as the first of the guttural sounds, it is the very first sound that one can utter. As the last of the labial sounds that involves the closing of the lips, 'm' is the last sound that can be produced by anyone; and 'u', pronounced in the word 'full', is the sound produced by rolling the breath over the whole of the tongue. Hence the combination of these three sounds into Om is also a combination of all sounds that man can possibly utter, and therefore it includes all the words in any language; as such Om also stands for Knowledge Absolute, and is fit to be a symbol of Brahman in its immanent aspect, which is Atman.

Om in its uttered form finally merges into its unuttered form; every uttered sound merges into the silence of the soundless. This soundless (amatra) aspect of Om is the symbol of Brahman in its transcendental aspect, beyond time, space, and causality, and is indicated by the 'bindu' or dot in the crescent over the syllable Om as written in Sanskrit and shown below:

The Om, as the unity of all sounds to which all matter and energy are reduced in their primordial form, is therefore a fit symbol for Atman or Brahman, which

OM or PRANAV

OM is the Akshara or the imperishable syllable. Om is the Universe and this is the exposition of OM. The past, the present, and the future - all that was, all that is, all that will be, is OM. Likewise all else that may exist beyond the bounds of time, that too is OM.

- Mandukya Upanishad



is the unity of all existence. Indeed the ancient Indian sages said that this whole universe is nothing but Om in its two aspects: manifested and un-manifested. That is why the Hindus accord the highest reverence and worship to Om and treat it as the holiest symbol or 'pratika', of divinity; they call it 'nadaBrahman' or Brahman in the form of sound. Aside from Hinduism, other religions that emanated from India, Buddhism, Jainism and Sikhism, too, accept it as the holiest word. Its nearest equivalent in the West is the Logos or the Word. St. John's Gospel majestically expounds it (1.1):

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

The Hindu scriptures also express the truth of the Atman as revealed in the three states: of waking, dream, and dreamless sleep. They identify each of the three letters of Om (or AUM) with the Atman as revealed in each of these three states, and the soundless aspect of Om with the Atman revealed in the transcendental state. The Atman as the unity of the experiences and the experienced is the totality of all existence, and Om is its symbol. In short, the one syllable word, Om, is nothing but the ultimate unconditional or Impersonal Reality, which is Brahman; Om is also the conditioned or Personal Reality, which is called God in various religions.

Since Om represents total Reality, both Impersonal-Personal, Hindus are enjoined to perform all acts of worship, giving gifts, and doing austerities and sacrifices (yajna) as enjoined in the scriptures, by always uttering 'Om' at the beginning. Most of their mantras also begin with the word Om. Even those who are fond of doing yoga exercises also begin their routine by uttering this word.

The rationale of this is that Om representing the Absolute Reality, which is pure and perfect, by uttering this word we purify our thoughts, words and struggles,

thereby perfecting all our actions. One of India's great saints of the nineteenth century, Sri Ramakrishna said very eloquently: A zero has no value; you put ten zeroes, it doesn't add anything. But, put a digit '1' before the zeroes, then everything shines. Every new zero then contributes to the value. So he said, put God (Om) first and then everything that you do becomes meaningful.

In other words, the actions that we perform with our limited finite bodies and finite minds are naturally imperfect because they tend to have selfish motives like earning name, fame, wealth and even heaven, behind them. However, if in the beginning we think of the Absolute, the Lord, we can perfect our finite imperfect acts. Just as all our virtuous actions are imperfect, the so-called sinful actions are much more so. In fact, a virtuous act and a sinful act differ only in degree not in kind. Therefore, the sages enjoin that by repeating this word, Om, we can convert all sinful acts into virtuous acts, and all virtuous acts into perfectly virtuous ones. Finally, and for the same reason, the Hindus also end their prayer, and hence we also end this piece, by chanting:

Om, Shanti, Shanti, Shanti
[Om, Peace, Peace, Peace!]

About the Author

Umesh Gulati, Ph.D., Professor Emeritus

Shri Gulati, based in Durham, NC, is a Vedantist, and a devotee of Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda. He has regularly published articles in *Vedanta Kesari* from Chennai and *Prabuddhabharata* from Kolkata, and also in *Vedanta* magazine from England. Lately he also published articles in *Marg* magazine. After receiving Ph.D. in Economics from the University of Virginia in 1967, he joined East Carolina University in Greenville, NC the same year and retired in 1999.



Who is the Top Yogi?

By Sushim Mukerji

Who is the Top Yogi? What are their qualifications? The Gita has a surprising twist for an answer. Firstly, a yogi is the one who practices yoga. What is yoga? Why is yoga necessary?

To understand yoga let us get back to the purpose of the Gita. The sole purpose of the Gita was to set a broken man (Arjun) upright so that he could get back to action with full vigor. At the end of the sermon the broken man said that his depression was cured, and that he was ready to take up the challenges of life wholeheartedly.

The central theme of the Gita is how to live gracefully in spite of life's daunting challenges. Distractions come in the form of hope and despair, profit and loss, love and hate, infatuation and resentment, attachment and aversion. These distractions have a way of raising the spirits at one moment and robbing them the next, leaving the person confused, torn, dispirited and finally depressed.

The Gita recognizes the powerful effect of

depression in life. The Gita assures us that there is a way to elegant living where one leads an active life, faces daily pressures, and yet keeps spirits high and leads a stress free life. Most of the Gita's teaching is in unfolding secret of work that allows a striver to remain stress free while undertaking daunting tasks.

The secret of work as elaborated in the Gita revolves around non-attachment. There is plenty of scope for misunderstanding non-attachment. Non-attachment is not meant to make one run away from life and lead an inactive existence. On the other hand, experience has shown, if we are non-attached to our jobs we would not waste our energy in defending criticisms, and put our full attention on the job at hand.

That is not all. Over the generations people made the mistake of equating non-attachment to loveless aloofness. Common people felt that by practicing non-attachment they would do disservice to their own family. After all, how could parents remain unconcerned about the welfare of their children? Thus

the common people left matters of non-attachment to the sanyasis (monks). Sanyasis, on the other hand, believed that non-attachment meant remaining unconcerned to the society. Thus for generations monks ignored human sufferings. Societal problems arising out of crime, discrimination, prejudice, depression or personal tragedies meant little to majority of monks. Many monks, practitioners of non-attachment and students of the Gita themselves, felt that their duties lay in meditation, prayers and preaching only.

Non-attachment does not mean disinterested. The Gita asks us to get engaged with the world headlong. If you are a householder, keep yourself engaged in the world. If you are a monk, you too should keep yourself engaged with the world. The keyword is unattached, not aloofness. Now we see the difficulty. When a devotee is asked to be non-attached his first reaction would be to disengage. If I am to be unattached to my children I am to sever my connections with them. If I am to be unattached to money I should stop earning money. If I am to be unattached to the society I should leave the society in favor of solitude, perhaps to a deserted hilltop. But the Gita observed that when a person shuts his outer senses his mind hovers around the objects of senses (Gita Chapter 3, Verse 6). People may think that he has become a saint by turning away from common lures, but his desires may still remain intact, though temporarily subdued. Experience has shown that when the conditions change all pent up desires rush out in torrents. So, forcing the mind not to see, not to touch or not to hear the objects of desire will not help us toward non-attachment.

Having said so, it must be said that the Gita does more than just set a broken person upright for the moment and put him back on business. The Gita sets its sight on the permanent solution, so that the broken person would be cured for life. This happens with spiritual enlightenment. But the path toward spiritual attainment is through non-attachment.

Non-attachment is achieved through yoga. In Gita the Lord defined yoga in unique ways. First He said that equanimity of mind (Samat-vam yoga uchchate-Gita 2.48) is yoga. The Mind is to be prepared so as not to be disturbed by ups and downs of life. Two verses down, He said that yoga is the art of work. A person well versed in yoga wastes no energy unnecessarily, always produces superior output, yet works apparently effortlessly. This could be compared to the case of a world class Olympic swimmer who swims seemingly

effortlessly ahead of others without splashing water. When thinking is clear, methodology of work is worked out skillfully; no one has to waste time in second guessing or arguing. The Lord called this unperturbed nature of mind as yoga. This is a new definition. Conventional thinking defines a yogi in terms of certain narrow activities and outward appearances of a practitioner. Gita, on the other hand, defined yogi in terms of attitude. An athlete could be a yogi, so can a busy executive, so can a person meditating all alone in a mountain cave. Gita transforms our world view.

The Lord continues elaborating on yogis in Chapter 6 of Gita. He talks about yogis who keep on working without any selfish motive. He talks about withdrawing sensory urges. This is not the end. In Chapter 6 the Lord stresses on practicing meditation by living in solitude (Gita 6.10). How to practice meditation to be a yogi? Establish a seat in a clean spot, not too high not too low, subdue the action of mind, and keep the body erect, gaze at the tip of the nose only. A yogi does not eat too much nor too little, does not sleep too much nor too little. The mind of the yogi has to be as undisturbed as an unflickered lamp (Gita Chapter 6, verse 10-19). These are difficult endeavor for an aspiring yogi. But let us face it; people expect such stern instructions from a guru, definitely from the Lord who demands the best from the devotees.

Finally Gita is ready to define the top yogi. The Lord lets out the secret (Gita Chapter 6, Verse 32). His answer was elegantly simple. He said, that person is the top yogi who treats everyone as himself (herself). To emphasize the point He continued, the top yogi would treat other people's happiness as his (or her) own happiness and other people's unhappiness as his (or her) own unhappiness. Then only he (or she) is the top yogi. Let us pause a moment to ponder this statement. When does a person become supremely happy with the happiness of others? When does a person grievously mourn for others? He (she) does it only when he (she) can unselfishly love others without any expectation of return. The Lord is talking about

Yoga is the art of work. A person well versed in yoga wastes no energy unnecessarily, always produces superior output, yet works apparently effortlessly.



THE TOP YOGI IS A PERSON WHO TREATS OTHER`S HAPPINESS AND SORROWS AS HIS OWN

unmitigated love. This kind of love is seen from parents for their own children, at least when they are very young.

The import of this teaching is breath taking. Remember, in Gita the teacher is extraordinary, and His teachings are transformative. So, when He finally defined the top yogi He defined him with qualities no one saw coming. There was no talk about seating style, breathing discipline or eating/ sleeping habits. The

person does not have to fit the accepted norms at all. What becomes important for the top yogi is where his (or her) heart lies. Does he become totally engaged with the happiness and unhappiness of a complete stranger? Does he delightedly call everyone in the neighborhood without a trace of envy to announce the good fortune of his neighbor? Does he pour his heart out when he learns from a stranger that he lost a child? If so, according to the Gita, he is the top yogi. He reached the acme of spiritual realization.

The disciplines for sitting postures, eating restrictions, breathing schedules appears to be meant for ordinary earthlings who have to strive hard to gain access to the knowledge of Atma (Self). Our mind is so entrenched in the physical world that we believe we have to perform certain disciplined action to gain something. We find it difficult to accept that knowledge of atmais not a gain, but a realization of our own true nature. The Lord knows our limitations, and so He prescribes certain actions that, if done earnestly, could lead us to realization. But for those who dare to become super-yogis, the Lord skips His prescription of disciplined action. Those yogis do not have to do anything physical. Let them pour their ever flowing heart out. That is all. Non-attachment in the final analysis is unmitigated and spontaneous ever engaging love for all.

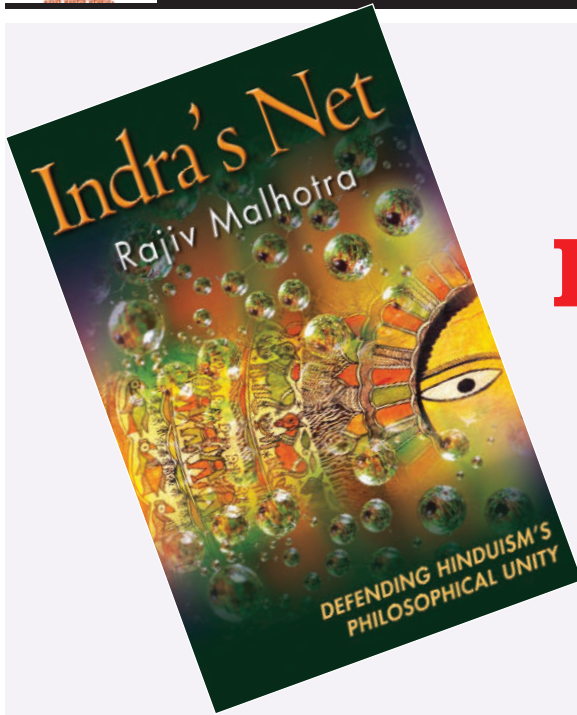
Jai Gita. What teaching! Throw away the rule books. No need to recite flowery slokas (verses). No preaching on morality. Open your heart, and catch the tune of immortality from every footstep, from every voice. Then you are a yogi. Nay, you are on top of all yogis. This is the Gita. The greatest teaching ever delivered.

NOTE: The author used masculine gender to mean both genders for easier flow of language.

About the Author

Shri Sushim Mukerji,

Is a longtime worker of VHP of America, is based in Delaware and has held several responsibilities in VHPA.



Fundamentalist Cleric Throws Plagiarism Bull at American Author

By Narayanan Komerath

Editor's Note: *Rajiv Malhotra, author of several books, was recently targeted by some vested interests and fraudulently accused of "plagiarism" in his latest book Indra's Net. Below is an abridged version of the article by Prof. Komerath, please visit the source for the complete article.*

1. The Mugging

It sounded serious at first glance. The Indian media clamored in chorus that a 'renowned historian' [1] from a renowned University had accused an American writer in public of plagiarism, that Greatest of Sins. A Petition had called for an American publisher to withdraw two books already published, both rapidly rising in readership and impact. The 'less mainstream' media, which I have learned to check to find the truth and a bit of intelligence these days, was a bit less adulatory [2]. It was eerily reminiscent of thirteen years ago[3] when the humble couple who ran a charitable organization were accused in a hyena-pack attack by the same general entities of being 'fronts' for 'hate' and 'genocide'. And that was what made me:LOL

I know of Harper Collins for one reason. They published "To Kill a Mockingbird" [4] - a novel graphically exposing the struggle for justice in the racist-terrorized American Deep South of the 1950s. Surely took enormous guts. Surely they must have faced strong letters, threats of boycott and much worse then - maybe dolts in bedsheets burning crosses on the company lawn? Papal Bulls? Inquisitions? They stood their ground. The book won a Pulitzer Prize and

became a world-famous movie. Today, the Harper Collins Company faces a much less scary storm of Open Letters and Allegations from the same general quarters. I hope their executives are at least 10% of the strength and integrity and insight of their predecessors. Today the issue is equally about the struggle of a simple people to get justice - and the hate attacks from the Established Authorities to continue slavery and oppression.

2. The Assault

One Mr. Richard Fox Young had sent an Open Letter and posted the same on the Internet, accusing Mr. Rajiv Malhotra, author of 'Indra's Net'[5] among a quartet of excellent books, of 'plagiarizing' the work of one Mr. Nicholson. The cleric listed a few instances where passages from Malhotra's book looked similar to those from something written by Nicholas. He claimed that these were not properly referenced, some even missing (horror of horrors!) quotation marks. And what did Mr. Nicholson think of all this? He claimed on a blog site[6] to be 'pained' that 'his' work had been thus used, and even 'distorted' (meaning to ignorant me, not being the same words or meaning as he intended). While generous with abuse, sneering and irresponsible allegations, it offered no specific points. Overall it sounded rather shrill and maturity-challenged, raising some concerns about the standards for PhDs in this area, let alone promotion to Associate Professor at SUNY[7] 9 years off his PhD. Mr. Nicholson's biosketch at SUNY does show over 10

papers including 2 books with a new India-based publishing outfit. In real university departments, this might merit serious consideration for a fresh-PhD assistant professor post. A section titled "Publisher Permanent Black Adds" is, well, interesting. Readers can judge for yourselves, this is the Internet.

There is no evidence that all this came after other efforts had failed. Anytime someone finds insufficient attribution, one writes politely and privately first to the author and publisher seeking correction, since one is always mindful that one too is human, and makes errors. This is a curious point, and begs the question of intent on the part of the accusers.

3. The Riposte

Mr. Malhotra's riposte [8] was swift and pointed. He pointed out that

a. He had indeed used Mr. Nicholson's work, as was evident: he had referenced him 30 (thirty) times in the book. Many if not most of those were in quotes; in other places, as reading clarity demanded, quotes were omitted but the source was clear to any intelligent reader. Perhaps there were a couple of places where quotes should be added, thanks for pointing that out, corrections were welcome and incorporated into the next printing of each book.

b. The usual practice for any such offended reader was to contact the author and point to the need for correction, and he was surprised at the absence of any such effort.

c. He wondered whether he had cited Nicholson far too often [8], and whether those were indeed the original ideas and work of Nicholson. He politely but publicly asked Nicholson to provide some evidence of actual original work.

4. Independent Assessment: Point-By-Point Rebuttal

Knowledgeable readers did their own independent review and assessment of all the charges. The wonder of the Internet is that we do not have to assess that based on their credentials, race, color, age, gender or national origin: we can look at the evidence directly at this website [9]. In the technical parlance with which I am familiar, this is called a 'point-by-point rebuttal'. Complete. With evidence and logic. No shrillness needed or appropriate. In the street parlance with which I am also familiar, this would be called a 'butt-kicking' or, in less genteel terms, an "ass-whupping". It leaves little doubt that the allegations of plagiarism are without merit, and indeed, they are utterly incompetent and malicious.

Satyam Eva Jayate! ■

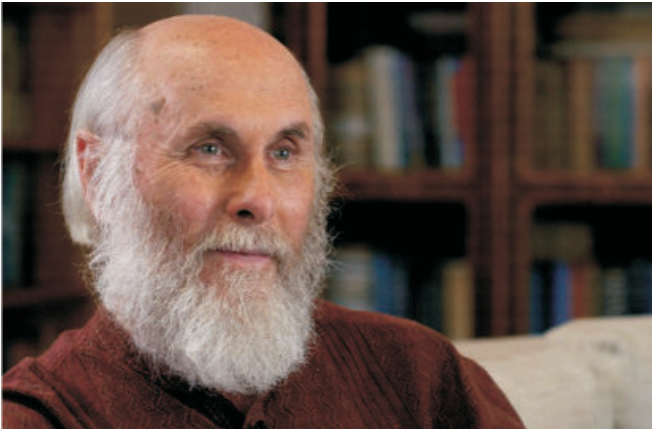
References:

- [1] Historian Richard Fox Young Accuses Writer Rajeev Malhotra of Plagiarism. *In.com*, July 7, 2015. <https://in.newshub.org/historian-richard-fox-young-accuses-writer-rajeev-malhotra-plagiarism-17530702.html>
- [2] Dey, Atanu, "Circular Firing Squad of Flying Attack Monkeys Target Rajiv Malhotra". July 17, 2015. <http://www.deeshaa.org/2015/07/17/circular-firing-squad-of-flying-attack-monkeys-target-rajiv-malhotra/>
- [3] Komerath, N., "Yesterday Once More: a FOIL Primer". Chapter 4 in Rajan, R. and Kak, K., Ed., "NGOs, Activists & Foreign Funds: Anti-National Industry". *Vigil Public Opinion Forum*, Chennai, 2006, p. 81-99.
- [4] Lee, Harper, "To Kill a Mockingbird". Harper-Collins Publishers, 1960.
- [5] Malhotra, Rajiv, "Indra's Net: Defending Hinduism's Philosophical Unity". Harper Collins, 2015. ISBN-13: 978-9351362449. <http://www.amazon.com/Indras-Net-Defending-Hinduism-Philosophical/dp/9351362442>
- [6] Nicholson, Andrew J. "Upset about Rajiv Malhotra's plagiarism, even more upset about distortions of my work". *Scroll.in*, July 17, 2015. <http://scroll.in/article/742022/upset-about-rajiv-malhotras-plagiarism-even-more-upset-about-distortions-of-my-work>. Also published as Advani, Rukum, with the same title and content at <http://permanent-black.blogspot.com/>
- [7] Andrew J. Nicholson. Associate Professor of Asian and Asian American Studies. Bishembaranath & Sheela Mattoo Center for India Studies, State University of New York. Viewed July 19, 2015. <http://www.stonybrook.edu/commcms/india/people/faculty.html>
- [8] Malhotra, R. "Dear Andrew Nicholson..". Rajiv Malhotra responds to Andrew Nicholson. July 18, 2015. <http://swarajyamag.com/culture/dear-andrew-nicholson/>
- [9] Independent Readers and Reviewers: "Rebuttal of false allegations against Hindu scholarship: A review of allegations of plagiarism in: *Breaking India: Western Interventions in Dravidian and Dalit Faultlines*, by Rajiv Malhotra (RM), Aravindan Neelakandan (AN), (Amaryllis, 2011), and A review of allegations of plagiarism in: *Indra's Net: Defending Hinduism's Philosophical Unity*, by Rajiv Malhotra (HarperCollins, 2014)" <https://traditionresponds.wordpress.com/>
Source: <https://narayanankomerath.wordpress.com/2015/07/19/fundamentalist-cleric-throws-plagiarism-bull-at-american-author/>

About the Author

Prof. Narayanan Komerath,
based in Atlanta, GA, a Professor at Daniel Guggenheim School of Aerospace Engineering at Georgia Institute of Technology, is a prolific writer and regularly writes on contemporary issues on his blog. <https://narayanankomerath.wordpress.com/>

Anti-Hindu Attitudes in American Academia Need to Be Questioned



By Vamadeva Shastri (Dr. David Frawley)

Western academia has had an almost uncritical control of Hindu studies, unlike that of any other religion. There are few practicing Hindus in academic positions in the West, and those that exist rarely challenge the dominant discourse openly in front of their peers. Indians seem to be encouraged if they are Marxists or Non-Hindus. This is very different than Christianity, Judaism and Islam that have many practicing members in the ranks of academic teachers in the West, who openly defend their faith.

Western academics can denigrate Hinduism in often unkind terms, yet feel that Hindus should not be allowed to criticize them in return, as if they should be immune from scrutiny by the Hindu community.

There is a new battle over Hindu studies and what Hinduism means in a global context, particularly since India now has what is regarded as a more pro-Hindu government. The popularity of Hindu based movements worldwide like the many different Yoga groups, Vedanta and Ayurveda are part of this issue. While Hinduism is being denigrated at an academic level as backward and superstitious, Hindu based ideas are at the forefront of much of the new spiritual, healing and ecological thought in the world.

Current views of Hinduism that predominate in academia follow colonial, missionary, Marxist and Freudian perspectives that have largely been discredited in other fields and which most Americans would not embrace. There are rarely any dharmic, yogic, Vedantic or Hindu perspectives taken up in so-called Hindu

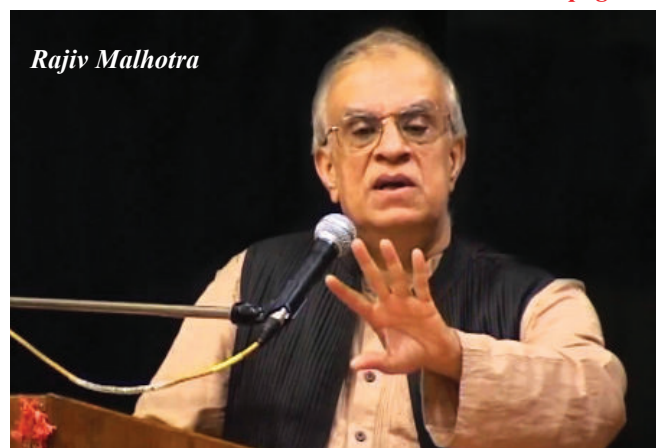
studies. Hindus today - like Blacks and the Native Americans up to recent times - find that academic views of their culture and history are controlled by outside groups with vested interests that seem biased against them. Rajiv Malhotra is well-known as someone who has challenged these academic distortions in a bold and uncompromising manner. This has made certain academics feel threatened. He has revealed the distortions in their thinking, which previously went unquestioned.

The latest attack against him comes from a Christian evangelist named Richard Fox Young teaching at a large American seminary. He makes spurious and unsubstantiated allegations against Rajiv Malhotra of plagiarism relative to Malhotra's book *Indra's Net*. Generally the charge of plagiarism occurs when one author copies another author's ideas as if these were his own. Charges of plagiarism usually occur when the person plagiarized is not mentioned.

However, Andrew Nicholson (whose work Young claims was plagiarized) is mentioned in Malhotra's book a number of times. Clearly, Malhotra is not trying to hide the fact that he has brought Nicholson's ideas into his discussion, but his discussion goes far beyond Nicholson.

Young's charge revolves around a minor issue about Malhotra not "fully" citing the references to Nicholson, not that Malhotra's ideas in

Continued on page 11



Rajiv Malhotra



By Smita Daftardar

Balvihar Hindi School, an educational program of the World Hindu Council of America (VHPA), Atlanta, recently concluded the 12 day STARTALK Summer Hindi language Camp. The camp was inaugurated by the Consul General of India Shri Nagesh Singh and Consul Shri R Srinivasan. This is the fifth year that Balvihar has held this prestigious federally funded program. Federal funds are allotted to eligible organizations through a highly competitive vetting process and the Balvihar Team has been awarded the grant every time they have applied for it. The objective of the camp is to teach Hindi language to students through a variety of fun activities that create opportunities for students to speak the language while interacting with their peers. Teachers go through several training sessions that help them design lessons to keep the students active, engaged and interested. The program caters to students in middle and high school; knowledge of Hindi or Indian origin is not a requirement.

It is a well-established fact that language and culture are closely intertwined; learning one without a healthy dose of the other tends to lead to ineffective learning. The Balvihar STARTALK Hindi Camp thoughtfully integrates Indian culture and traditions into the language curriculum, presenting India's rich heritage and its promising future. This year, the theme of the camp was "Incredible Eco-friendly India". Campers explored various eco-friendly traditions, arts, and crafts of India, as well as innovations in technology that reduce pollution and utilize renewable resources. Over the course of the 12 day camp, the students made "virtual" trips to four different states of India. During each of these virtual trips, STARTALK campers used the newly acquired information to complete various in-class activities. These activities ranged from arts-crafts to language games to debates and discussions on social and environmental issues. Apart from class room sessions, campers

Startalk Balvihar Hindi Camp Showcases Incredible Eco-friendly India



took part in different clubs, sports and Yog sessions. The clubs were especially popular with kids since they got to do a variety of activities. In the Craft Club they created art work related to different regions of India, appreciating the use of natural materials in these ancient traditions. In the Environmental Science Club the students had the choice to make a house or a houseboat with recycled material and install solar panels to provide lighting. In the Culinary Arts Club they made delicious and healthy snacks such as sprouted moong daal chaat, going through the entire process of soaking, sprouting and then making the chaat. They also made chai masala, mango lassi and neebu ka sharbat. The kids had a lot of fun grinding spices with pestle-mortars, cutting onions and tomatoes with plastic knives, and happily tucked in the food items they prepared. These club activities used



the principle of "learn by doing" to introduce the campers to a lot of practical Hindi; everyday language and vocabulary used around the house and in the kitchen. Another club that had students really practice their Hindi speaking was the Daily News Club. Each

day, a different group of students interviewed the rest of the participants about the day's activities; what they did, what they liked or disliked and why. These interviews were recorded and played as morning news during breakfast the next day.

The first destination in the 12 day experience was Orissa, where the campers saw the world famous Rath Yatra and learnt about the "largest kitchen in the world" where more than 500 chefs prepared mahaprasad for the devotees. Especially noted was the fact that this food was prepared in earthen pots and served in the eco-friendly pattals and donas (plates and bowls) made from leaves. The kids were shown how these plates and bowls were manufactured at a large scale. Orissa is especially famous for several ancient art forms, and students got to know about two of them, Patta-Chitra and Pipili work. The Patta-Chitra uses almost all plant based ingredients to make the medium as well as the colors. After this virtual visit to Orissa, students made pattals and donas with leaves. During club time, they created their own pieces of patta-chitra and pipili-work. It was a great sight to see the boys and girls carefully learning to thread the needle and sew one piece of cloth on another for the Pipili Work.

The next stop in was Uttar Pradesh, where kids were introduced to the legend behind the Maha Kumbh Mela. They explored the tent city and various amenities built especially for pilgrims attending the Maha Kumbh in the holy city of Prayag. While the novice language learners learnt some basic vocabulary related to the Mela, the more proficient speakers discussed the eco-friendly arrangements made for the pilgrims and came up with suggestions on how to reduce the pollution of the city and the Ganga River



during this mammoth gathering of devotees. Campers also learnt about the environmental friendly tradition of using Suraahii and Matka for cooling water. Since the Balvihar STARTALK camp strives to include STEM in the language curriculum, the students were explained the process of cooling water in earthen pots using scientific terms in Hindi. Uttar Pradesh is famous for the bangle industry in Firozabad, so the next topic covered was the process of making glass bangles. The bangle measures were used as a fun way to introduce Hindi numbers and measurement terms. Here, children also learnt about the difficulties faced by workers in the bangle industry and discussed ways to improve their standard of living. In an effort to take the learning beyond the academic setting, the STARTALK directives encourage that students be taken on field trips that connect their learning to the real world. This year, the campers visited the Folk Pottery Museum of Northeast Georgia. Here they were shown the actual pottery making process and tried their hand at making flowers and other objects with clay.

From Uttar Pradesh, the virtual tour moved on to Rajasthan, where Teej celebrations were in full swing! The campers learnt about the desert state of Rajasthan; its climate and its rich culture and really enjoyed wearing the traditional "Pagadii" and greeted everyone with an enthusiastic "Ghani Khamma" for the next few days! Mehndi is an integral part of Teej celebrations so kids were made familiar with the decorative as well as the medicinal benefits of the Mehndi plant. In an attempt to have kids polish their speaking skills, they were asked to compare Mehndi with the modern tattooing. The kids had a lively and hilarious debate when they role played as teenagers and parents; the teenagers arguing with their parents about getting a tattoo, and the parents trying to convince them about the benefits of the herbal henna.

This was a great way to get the kids really speaking Hindi; they collaborated with each other, came up with arguments and tried their best to get their point across, all in Hindi and without any prompting from any adult! While in Rajasthan, campers also learnt about the traditional mode of transport, the Camel Cart. They were shown the famous block printing art, which uses vegetable based colors. They got to make greeting cards using authentic blocks and fresh vegetable colors made from ground beetroot, spinach, turmeric etc. Next, they explored the upcoming Solar Energy Industry in the region. They saw how the solar powered water pumps have brought prosperity to the villages of Rajasthan and reduced pollution from diesel pumps. The students were then given the task of writing a short skit promoting the use of solar water pumps and then presenting it. These activities, designed for students with higher proficiency in Hindi, helped improve writing as well as presentational speaking.

The last stop of this colorful journey was Kerala, "God's Own Country". The campers were shown the traditional welcoming ceremony of Kerala after which they explored the rich landscape; the beautiful houseboats plying in the waterways, the rolling hills and forests, and pristine beaches. They compared the various modes of transport available and explored the eco-friendly houseboats manufactured entirely with natural materials and powered with solar energy. Campers were shown the spice farms of Munnar, and were given samples of some of the commonly used spices to handle and even taste. They were shown the process of making tea-powder from the tea leaves. Kerala is famous in the world for medical tourism and campers were introduced to the various Ayurvedic treatments offered in Kerala and compared traditional and modern medical practices. As a hands-on activity,

students made a herbal face pack for their moms and packed it in eco-friendly packaging, complete with ingredients, directions for use and even their own brand name! Students were assigned the role of "brand ambassadors" for eco-friendly products of India and came up with some really good slogans and posters promoting these products.

On the last day of the camp, all campers participated in a cultural show, a mix of short plays written and directed by students, and some beautiful dances. Throughout the camp, the Teachers and Teaching Assistants (TAs) assumed the role of facilitators rather than leaders. The cultural show was a testimony of the success of this strategy, since the students were very vocal on the stage and quite spontaneous! The show was enjoyed equally by the participants and the family members sitting in the audience. The camp concluded with an exhibition displaying all the projects made by students. The campers proudly presented the variety of artwork, the solar houses and houseboats and the posters and booklets they made showcasing all that they had learnt. The chai-masala that was made in the Culinary Art club added special flavor to the afternoon tea.

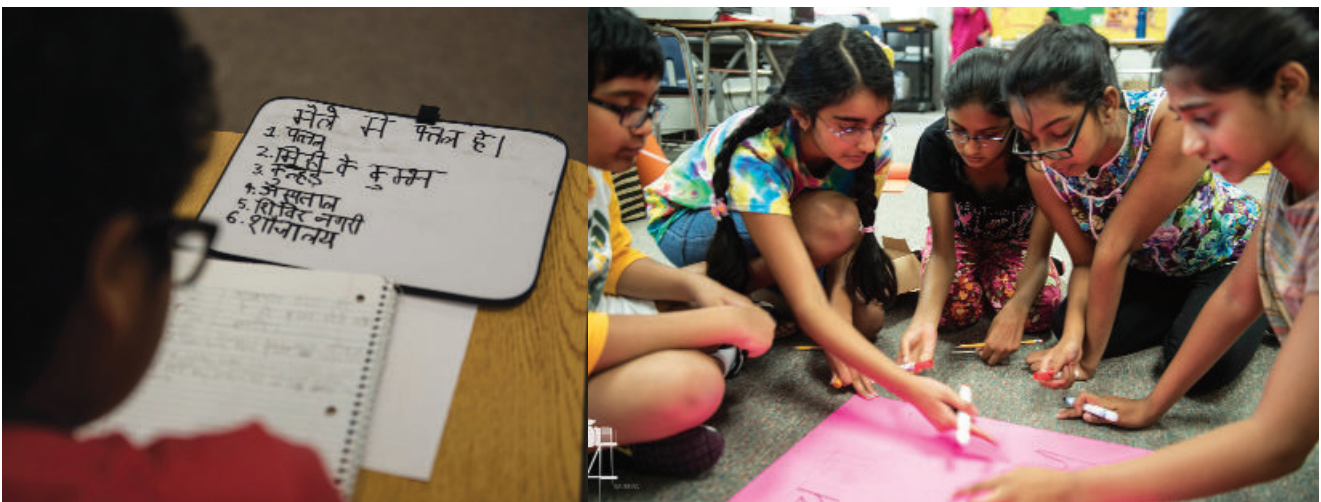
The STARTALK camp uses the "Total Immersion" concept to teach foreign language, creating an environment of the target language and culture, so that the learner absorbs the language with every action, in the classroom, during mealtime, all the way to the gym. Balvihar Hindi camp follows this concept in its true spirit. The team of teachers, TAs and volunteers decorated the hall ways and classrooms with posters about India, Hindi newspaper articles, calendars, maps etc. Students played Indian sports like kabaddi and

teachers took care to wear traditional Indian attire during the camp. All posted signs were in Hindi and the food served for lunch was from different regions of India. The campers got to eat traditional Indian food from all the four states they visited.



This pizza loving Indian American generation actually relishing all Indian food was an achievement in itself; we are all too familiar with the daily struggle of making kids eat Indian food at home. While part of the credit goes to the completely Desi world created by the camp team, part of it also goes to the delicious food catered by restaurants Mumbai Masala, Kerala Kitchen, Chinese Dhaba and Curry in a Hurry!

To make this camp a success, a dedicated team of teachers and volunteers worked tirelessly for several months. During the camp, the young college grads working as TAs served as great role models for the students. Under the leadership of camp director Manju Tiwariji, food coordinator Sneha Mehtaji and with the support of VHPA Atlanta Chapter President Kusum Khuranaji, the camp successfully met all its targets and earned an "Outstanding" rating from the federal team of observers. Likewise, the feedback from parents was overwhelmingly positive. The campers were speaking in Hindi a lot more and thoroughly enjoying the camp. The activity based learning was appreciated by parents and kids alike and the response was extremely heartening to the entire Balvihar STARTALK team. Balvihar is quite certain that in future they will continue to bring such enriching programs to the Metro Atlanta community. Balvihar is committed to do their bit in promoting the Hindi language and fostering pride in the Indian Heritage. ■



Where Do I Fit In?

**An ode to all those second-generation kids
who have no idea who to be.**

By Varsha Iyer

In the late 1980's, my parents moved from India to Georgia, USA. It wasn't the easiest move; they both had sacrificed their lives to start a new one together in a place they hardly knew. My mom had cried every night for the first few months because she was away from everything familiar to her. She said she didn't feel at home because America was a stranger to her. She had no friends, no family, and because of this, she held her culture and her traditions close to her heart. She performed every religious ceremony when the days arrived, she cooked Indian food every day for breakfast, lunch, and dinner, and she wore traditional Indian clothes all the time.

When I was born, it was no different. I grew up speaking Tamil as my first language. (Tamil is the language of the Tamils, spoken in India principally in Tamil Nadu state and in Sri Lanka on the north and east coasts.) I ate Indian food almost all the time. When I wasn't playing with Barbie dolls, I was playing dress up in my Indian clothes. It was a much simpler time. I was so mesmerized by what was in front of me that I didn't go out of my way to explore the other cultures and traditions out there.

As soon as I started school, I was surrounded by children who weren't second-generation immigrants. It didn't take a long time for me to understand that the atmosphere was completely different. In school, we listened to English songs, not Indian music. We ate pizza, not Idlis (steamed cake of rice, a common meal among South Indians). We spoke in American accents, not Indian. It was an awkward transition for me. I would go to school, act one way, and then come back home to be someone else. And just like that, I was caught between two cultures. Who was I? Where did I fit in?

At a young age, I was forced to deal with this conflict. An 8-year-old yearning to fit in at her school,

so she does what she has to do. An 8-year-old who's taught to be "a traditional Tamil girl" suddenly transforms into "an Americanized brown girl." It was difficult, to say the least. I found myself wanting to fit in rather than show off my culture. Without realizing what I had become, I suddenly had the name "white-washed." This word is something I'm positive many second-generation immigrants will understand. It meant that I was leaving behind my culture to assimilate to white Western culture. I was everything I shouldn't have been. But I was stuck between a rock and a hard place. Who was I if America didn't accept me because of my Indian culture? Who was I if I neglected my Indian culture to be someone who I'm not?

This constant back-and-forth internal battle will never be won. I am Indian...but I'm also American. I have traditions to uphold, but I also have new traditions to start. I have to be proud of my culture, yet realize it is different when you live in a place where another culture is idealized. There are so many different, tiny aspects to it that it doesn't seem right to just pick a side. I've grown up in both settings, and I've learned how to be myself in both. So, here I am: proud to be Indian but still very American. I'm somewhere caught in the middle, waiting to fit in. ■

About the Author



Varsha Iyer,
based in Atlanta, is currently studying as a Journalism major and hope to be a writer for a well-known magazine in the near future. Writing fuels her passion for issues and subjects that need more attention and she would love to contribute to changing the world even if it's just with a few words.

Muslims in Nepal Demand a Hindu State

In an unusual move, Muslims in Nepal have backed the ongoing campaign for reinstating the country's erstwhile Hindu identity, saying they are more "secure" under a Hindu state than under a secular Constitution.

"It is to protect Islam. I have opened my mouth demanding that Nepal be declared a Hindu state in order to protect my own religion," said Amjad Ali, chairman of the Rapti Muslim Society, who is also involved in the protest programs demanding a Hindu state in Nepal.

CPN-UML CA member Anarkali Miya said she has personally experienced missionaries trying to influence people from other faiths to follow Christianity. "I believe Nepal should not adopt secularism. It will only create more problems in future," Miya said.

Udbudhin Fru, chairman of Muslim Mukti Morcha affiliated to the UCPN (Maoist), also admitted the growing influence of Christianity in Nepal.

"Turning the country secular is nothing but a design to break the longstanding unity among Muslims and Hindus. So there is no alternative to reinstating the country's old Hindu State identity in order to allow fellow citizens to live with religious tolerance," Babu Khan Pathan, chairperson of the Rastrabadi Muslim Manch Nepalgunj, was quoted as saying by The Himalayan Times.

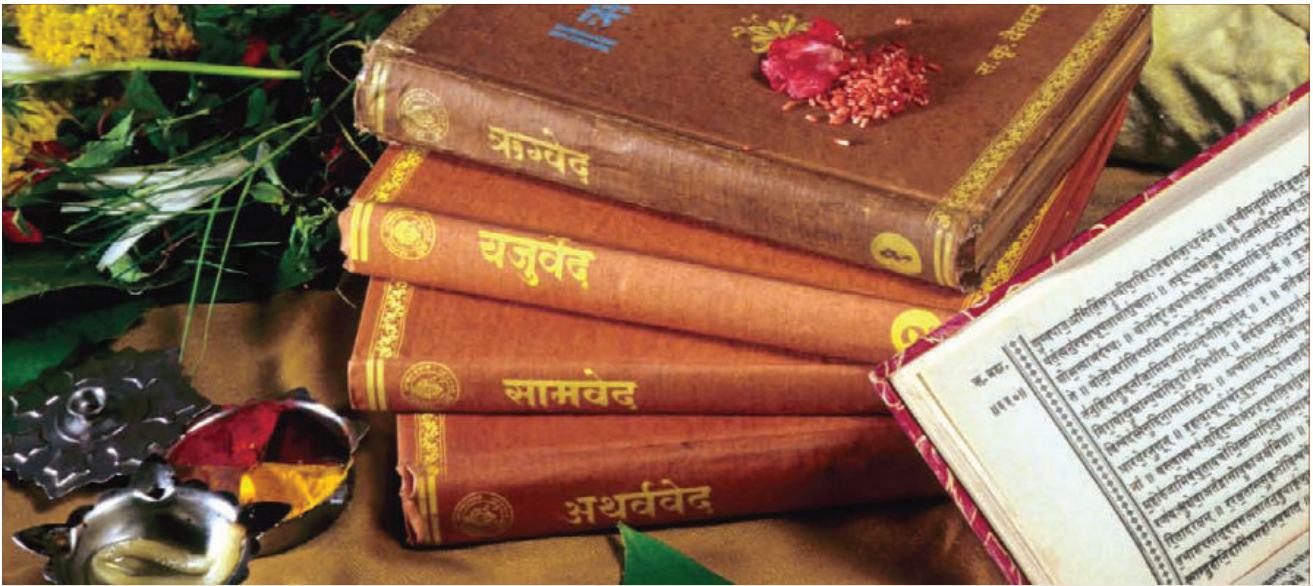
"We don't need a secular identity, but want to see the country called Hindu State as this ensures safety and security for all," Pathan added and claimed that around 80 per cent of Muslims in Banke are in favor of Hindu State identity.

Rastriya Prajatantra Party Nepal, a pro-monarchy party and some other pro-Hindu organizations have also been campaigning for reconverting Nepal to a Hindu state as the country plans to adopt a new constitution.

The constitution writing process had proved to be a cumbersome work for Nepal's ruling and opposition parties. For the last eight years, they have been vigorously arguing their differences over crucial issues including secularism and federalism. ■

Source: <http://www.deccanherald.com/content/494893/muslims-nepal-demand-hindu-state.html>





The Scope of Scriptures

By Dr. D. C. Rao

Hinduism is defined by a search for the universal and timeless Truth and specific guidance on how to connect with a Supreme Being that is beyond comprehension by the human mind. The direct experience of numerous sages is recorded in scriptures unfold a variety of paths to the Truth. Thus, "Scripture" in Hinduism refers to a large body of literature rather than a single text. Since spiritual seekers have varying levels of understanding, scriptural messages are presented in a variety of ways to provide direct access to all seekers. The scriptures inspire and support the efforts of all seekers to evolve spiritually. Thus while some scriptures emphasize philosophy, others are replete with stories, while yet others emphasize techniques for spiritual practice. Besides dealing with the transcendental, the scriptures' emphasis on integrating spiritual practice with daily life leads to their reflections on morals, sciences, and the arts. Not surprisingly, Hindus revere and study numerous texts as scripture.

Hindu scriptures are classified broadly into two categories: *Shruti* and *Smriti*. The word *Shruti* literally means "heard," and consists of truths that ancient sages realized in their meditation. For many centuries they were transmitted orally, which is another reason why

they are known as "heard." The term *Shrutiis* applied to the *Vedas*, including the *Upanishads* that constitute the fourth and final part of the *Vedas*. These texts are revered as "revealed" and are the foundation of all of Hinduism. Rigorous disciplines were devised for chanting of the *Shruti* texts to ensure their accurate preservation in the oral tradition.

The second category of scripture is *Smriti* that literally means "memory," i.e. texts that are designed to help us "remember" the teachings of *Shruti*. Other than *Vedas* and *Upanishads*, all scriptural texts are loosely classified as *Smriti*. Teachings in *Smriti* texts are meant to be read and interpreted in the light of changing circumstances over time. The specific statements in *Smriti* texts do not carry the same weight as *Shruti*. Any conflict in teachings between *Smriti* and *Shrutiis* to be resolved in favor of *Shruti*.

While there is general agreement that the *Vedas* are well over three thousand years old, there is little agreement on just how old they are. Evidence is scarce and estimates of their age vary widely, from 1200 BCE to some thousands of years earlier. Similar disagreements are found on dating other ancient scriptures, which were preserved orally for a long time before they were written.

The *Vedas* and *Upanishads* are composed in an ancient form of Sanskrit; the *Puranas* and most of the other older scriptures are in classical Sanskrit; and texts composed in the last millennium are sometimes in the various regional languages.

Vedas: The word veda means "knowledge." There are four Vedas: Rig, Sama, Yajur and Atharva, of which the Rig (Rk, Rg) Veda is the oldest. It has over 10,000 mantras that deal with a wide range of topics. Superficially, they are seen as hymns to the forces of nature and liturgy for ceremonial rituals; but a deeper study reveals teachings on metaphysical and philosophical issues.

Upanishads: Contain extensive exploration of transcendental truths and methods of Self-realization. There are more than a hundred Upanishads of which between ten and fourteen are regarded as major. No individuals claim to have authored the Upanishads. Although there are differences in detail among the Upanishads, their philosophical content is remarkably consistent and forms the basis of *Vedanta*. The *Upanishads*, along with the *Bhagavad Gita* and *Brahma Sutras*, constitute the primary basis for the practice of *Jnana Yoga*, the path of knowledge.

Vedangas: There are a number of auxiliary texts known collectively as Vedanga and classified as Smriti. They cover a range of topics: oral chanting of scripture (*Shiksha*), grammar (*vyakarana*), prosody (*chhandas*), etymology (*nirukta*), astronomy (*jyotisha*), and obligatory rituals (*kalpa*).

Puranas: Stories in texts known as the *Puranas* bridge the gap between the ancient *Shruti* scriptures and common people. The teachings in the *Puranas* are completely in harmony with the teachings of the *Vedas* and *Upanishads* but are greatly simplified and made more interesting. There are eighteen major *Puranas* and many minor ones that have compiled stories and narratives over many centuries, mainly during the first millennium CE.

Each *Purana* tells stories around a principal character, either a God or a Sage. They cover a wide range of topics, both sacred and secular such as the manifestations of God, including the avatars i.e. the forms in which God has appeared on earth, teachings on *dharma*, *karma*, death and rebirth, the use of mantras and other religious observances, the significance of sacred sites for pilgrimages, the importance of service, genealogies of kings and sages, cosmology, ayurveda and astrology. Modern Hindu beliefs and religious practices are derived mainly from



the *Puranas*. Many consider *Srimad Bhagavatam* as being the most important *Purana*. It deals with the many *avatars* of Vishnu and provides a philosophical basis for the *Vaishnava* devotional traditions in Hinduism, particularly those centering on the worship of Lord Krishna. *Puranas* contain two of the more important scriptures in the *Shakti* tradition: the *Durga Saptashati*, also known as *Devi Mahatmyam*, extols the divine Mother's victories over evil forces; and *Lalita Sahasra nama*, the thousand names of the Divine Mother, provides an esoteric understanding of the Supreme Being in Her feminine form.

Ramayana is the single most popular scripture in all of Hinduism and has had an enormous impact in many dimensions of life in India and parts of Southeast Asia. It is traditionally classed as an *Itihasa*, history, and tells the life story of a noble prince, Lord Rama, who is an *avatar* of Lord Vishnu. He suffers exile and many hardships while destroying powerful demons before



Ramayana is the single most popular scripture in all of Hinduism

returning to rule his kingdom for a very long time. This epic story portrays several characters who embody ideal qualities and conduct. Among them are Rama himself as the ideal in every way: as prince, as king, as son, as husband, as brother, as friend and as enemy; Sita as the ideal wife and emblem of strong womanhood; Hanuman as the ideal friend and servant of Rama; Lakshmana and Bharata as devoted brothers.

There are numerous versions of the Ramayana, of which the most well-known are those by the original author, the Sage Valmiki, and the poet-saint Tulsidas. These texts are recited by devoted Hindus at home and in devotional gatherings; are consulted for guidance on life; form the basis for dances and dramatic presentations; and are popular children's stories. *Aditya Hridaya Stotram* is a popular prayer that originates in the Ramayana.

Mahabharata is also a historical epic. It is the longest text the world has known, seven times the combined length of Homer's Iliad and Odyssey. Against the background of an extended conflict between Kauravas and Pandavas, the Mahabharata is a treasure house of stories and discourses on the practice of Dharma. As a scripture, its primary messages are the importance of always upholding Dharma, the need for complete devotion to God and the utter futility of war. Embedded in the Mahabharata are two texts of special scriptural significance: the Bhagavad Gita and Vishnu Sahasranama. The Vishnu Sahasranama, the thousand names of Lord Vishnu, is one of the most important

prayers used in the *Vaishnava* tradition.

The Bhagavad Gita is a primary scripture for all Hindus in modern times. Although it is a tiny part of the Mahabharata and hence technically classed as a *Smriti* text, it is traditionally accorded the rank of an *Upanishad*. It presents Lord Krishna's teachings to the warrior Arjuna and is a profound guide to living a spiritual life while being engaged in the world. The text outlines the various paths of Yoga, summarizes *Upanishadic* teachings on spiritual topics and offers succinct advice on how to lead a spiritually fulfilling life.

Dharma Shastras are a class of texts that explain how *Dharma* is maintained in daily life. They deal in great detail with a wide range of topics: responsibilities of each *varna*, temperament, and *ashrama*, stage of life; rituals; civil and criminal law; dietary rules, injunctions on festivals, pilgrimages, charity, forbidden actions; types of sinful actions and required expiation; design of temples etc. Since these texts are part of the *Smriti*, not *Shruti*, their teachings are subject to reinterpretation to suit differences in time and place. Hence there are numerous texts composed by various authors over many centuries. The *Manu Smriti* is one of earliest texts but is still regarded as most authoritative.

Darshana Shastras are philosophical texts that are studied as part of *Jnana Yoga*, the path of knowledge. The subject matter of these texts is the relationship between God, the individual and the phenomenal world, including theories of creation. There are six schools of philosophy in Hinduism with differing views on these subjects. Each of them has a primary



Mahabharata is the longest text the world has known, seven times the combined length of Homer's Iliad and Odyssey.

text, generally in the form of *Sutras*, aphorisms. Two of these are still widely studied by Hindus: the *Brahma Sutras* by Sage Vyasa and *Yoga Sutras* by Sage Patanjali. *Agama Shastra* sare ancient and numerous, including many that have been lost over the centuries. They deal with practical aspects of devotion and worship, including personal and temple rituals, purificatory injunctions and esoteric practices such as the use of *mantras*, *yantras* and *nyasas*. They define many of the common practices now followed by observant Hindus in the worship of Vishnu, Shiva or Shakti, the Divine Mother. Tantric texts are part of this category. Some texts such as *Rama Raksha Stotram*, *Saundarya lahari*, and *Shiva Mahimna Stotram* are popular and used widely in the worship of Rama, Shakti and Shiva respectively.

Bhakti Texts:

From popular saints known as Alwars and Nayanars in the 7th BCE into contemporary times, the teachings, poems and songs composed by many saints in regional languages have been a major source of inspiration. Their messages of devotion, dharma and spiritual practice were conveyed in simple language by innumerable teachers and singers to all parts of India and beyond. The plethora of scriptures is not as

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.

bewildering as might appear at first sight. Most Hindus receive their religious education from family traditions and discourses by spiritual leaders. Individual Hindus follow the prayers and teachings of the denomination to which they belong and possibly the more specific oral instructions of a Guru. Few access directly the *Vedas* and *Upanishads* that provide the foundation for all other scriptures in Hinduism. The stories from the Puranas and epics and songs composed by saints are the voice of the scriptures for all. ■

Anti-Hindu Attitudes in American Academia Need to Be Questioned

Continued from page 11 the book should have been credited to Nicholson. The proof that Young's charges are frivolous is that Malhotra's book would not change much if all the references to Nicholson were removed, which is what Malhotra has announced he is doing in the next print run. That should be enough to end the discussion.

This attack on Malhotra reflects long term academic distortions in the field of Hindu studies. As someone who has written in the Vedic and Hindu field for over thirty years, I have found such insensitive attitudes towards Hindu scholars common in certain circles, which generally write on Hinduism without respecting or deeply studying Hindu traditions.

Malhotra is being targeted as representing the new Hindu challenge to academia that the Hindu community has been placing in recent decades. Malhotra one of the most prominent modern Hindu thinkers who have criticized current academic studies and accordingly been denigrated by academia.

While Americans today have learned to respect the Hindu-American community - which is one of the most affluent and educated minority groups in the country - they would be surprised to know that much of American academia, which is supposed to represent tolerance, still treats them in a demeaning manner. It is important that all well-wishers of Hinduism and its great traditions stand behind Malhotra. A Hindu point of view must be allowed, even if it may be critical of accepted academic ideas, which as these currently stand can hardly be called considerate of any Hindu point of view. ■

About the Author



Dr. David Frawley (Pandit Vamadeva Shastri)
D. Litt., author of several books, is a western born teacher or guru in the Vedic tradition. In India, Vamadeva is recognized as a Vedacharya (Vedic teacher), and includes in his scope of studies Ayurveda, Yoga, Vedanta and Vedic astrology, as well as the ancient Vedic teachings going back to the oldest Rigveda. Vamadeva is a recipient of the prestigious Padma Bhushan award, one of the highest civilian awards granted by the government of India, "for distinguished service of a higher order to the nation," honoring his work and writings as a Vedic teacher, which he received in March 2015. Source: <http://vedanet.com/2015/08/26/anti-hindu-attitudes-in-american-academia-need-to-be-questioned/>

Southborough **Bal Vihar** Celebrates 17th Annual Day

VHPA Bal Vihar of Southborough, MA held its 17th Annual Day celebrations on Sunday, June 21st, 2015. Families and friends of the Bal Vihar assembled at Sadhu Vaswani Center in Dracut, MA for the function. Since it was the first International Yoga Day, the day began with yoga asanas and Pranayam. After that, everyone performed the Saraswati Puja, led by the senior Hindu Dharma group, composed of the older children of the BalVihar. They recited all the mantras with perfect pronunciation and intonation. The children and their families sat calmly as they chanted the name of Saraswati Devi 108 times in unison.

By Asha Shetty

After the Aarti and prasad, it was time for lunch. The mothers of the Bal Vihar children had prepared a variety of mouth-watering dishes and scrumptious desserts, which were consumed in an instant. Everyone agreed that there was nothing better than Mom's cooking.

After lunch, friends and family gathered again to watch a talent show showcasing the many diverse talents of the BalVihar children. The performances included dances in Kathak, Bharat Natyam and Kuchipudi styles, songs in classical Hindustani and Carnatic music, a Punjabi wedding dance, small skits by the senior students on social challenges such as peer pressure, distractions, and good habits. These were based on their classroom discussions. The program ended with a rendition of the Indian national anthem played on the flute, as the audience sang along.

The day ended with the much-awaited Awards ceremony. The children received awards and trophies based on their performance in various fields such as Hindi, Hindu Dharma, Shlokas, and Geet, which they had learned throughout the year. There was an award for Best Attendance, which many felt should





and develop pride in their Hindu identity. Hindi language instruction as well as cultural activities promote both the physical and spiritual well-being of the child. The program is designed to foster specific values in the children, including developing awareness of our obligations to society, creating a sense of belonging to a global family, and developing leadership qualities and a spirit of volunteering. It is open to children 4 years and above. Activities include: Devanagiri class, Yoga and Indian

have gone to the parents who brought the children regularly and on time. Report cards, and the first ever Bal Vihar yearbooks were also given out. The awards were presented by Jaya Asthana, the director of the Southborough BalVihar. After that, since it was also Father's Day that day, everyone enjoyed a delicious chocolate cake in honor of the occasion.

Bal Vihar provides an opportunity for our children to discover their cultural bond with Bharat

games, stories, prayers and shlokas, inspirational songs, poems, bhajans, plays, crafts, celebration of festivals and birthdays. The Bal Vihar is a weekly 2 hour program. There are three branches, in Southboro, Lexington and Newton. ■

*For more information please contact
Jaya Asthana at jasthana@hotmail.com*



Is Bhagwan For Those Who Are Not For Themselves?

By Bhav Jain

The proverb "God Helps Those Who Help Themselves" actually originated in Ancient Greece, and it is inspired from both The Panchatantra and Aesop's Fables.

Our society is infused with many kinds of individuals: poor and impoverished, hard-working middle class, and wealthy philanthropists. However, it may appear that we all share a common connection with *Bhagwan*, not dictated by social standing or wealth. From this the question arises: is *Bhagwan* truly for all individuals - those who are simply begging (rich or poor); those who are trying to put food on the table with a minimum wage job vs those who are billionaires; those who have an ascetic life vs luxurious life?

Hinduism teaches us that God indeed is for all of the above and more. However, those who follow God's direction morally and perform their dharma without worrying about the results achieve an evolved life, and consequently positive karma.

Let us take a look at some examples from our Vedas to elaborate this point. In the Mahabharata, Sri Krishna provided the direction to the Pandavas because they had good intentions and wanted to follow the path of dharma. Also, they sought God's advice. On the other hand, the Kauravas refused to follow the path of dharma and didn't welcome advice, even from their own well-wishers such as Bhishma Pitamah and Dronacharya. Consequently, success and positive karma eluded them, despite having all the means - army and wealth.

Another fine aspect is that Arjuna was willing to give up the kingdom and leave the battlefield to

prevent sorrow and suffering of his kith and kin. At this crucial juncture, Lord Krishna advised him that fighting for the right cause is his dharma and ultimate duty, which must be performed. Being helpless or afraid was not an option!

Similarly, in the Ramayana, Ravana, despite being the epitome of knowledge and power, could not succeed against the two princes in exile because of his misguided conscience. Ravana had the blessings of several Gods prior to his leaving the path of dharma. He also disrespected and drove away his brother, Vibhishana, who in the form of God provided him good counsel. Clearly, nothing could keep him from meeting bad

Karma.

At times it may seem that people with bad intentions and wrong dharma are winning in life; but it is ephemeral and it usually turns out, "Picture abhibaakihai!"

Lance Armstrong won several Olympic Medals and appeared invincible. But because he achieved these through wrong means, bad karma struck him. Inevitably, God could not help him. In the Capitalistic society, for instance, America, it is very easy for us to be swayed away by greed and power, taking God for granted. It is easy to acquire wealth through wrong means or without good hard work. But we must remember that God's blessings stay with those who stay with themselves in action and thought. Technological advancement and human upliftment are all due to hard work. In our day to day lives, we must be governed by positive thoughts and actions to have God's blessings.

In conclusion, God is for everyone, and he guides all equally (poor or rich, good or bad), but only people with positive intentions, actions, and good conscience are able to leverage the guidance towards an evolved life and achieve good Karma. ■

About the Author

Bhav Jain

is a ninth grade student at Franklin Regional and Hindu Jain School. He is very passionate about public speaking on Leadership, Innovation and Emotional Intelligence. He also enjoys swimming, tennis, dancing, and playing the piano and trumpet.



University of Kashmir's Sanskrit Department Struggles to Find Students

By Hakeem Irfan

SRINAGAR: From outside, this two-storey building at Hazratbal in Srinagar looks desolate. But there are four professors and six nonteaching staff working in there, focusing on a total of eight students. At a time when millions of students are jostling for admissions in colleges and universities across the country, the Sanskrit department of the University of Kashmir is still waiting for its first applicant for last two years.

"No student has filled the admission form this year, even though we don't conduct entrance test for the course," said an official of admission section at the university. That has been the story of this department ever since militancy erupted in the Valley in 1990, changing the social situation in the state overnight as Kashmiri Pandits fled in droves.

Started with fanfare in 1983, the department became defunct in 1990. With improving political situation, the department was revived in 2001, but it struggled to find students. Few students enrolled since

2001. In 2013, four students - all from Jammu - enrolled for the main Sanskrit MA course, which has a sanctioned capacity of 20 students. But in 2014 and 2015 the department could not attract a single MA student.

"We are trying hard to create awareness about Sanskrit language, but things are not happening," Prof Zohra Afzal, head of the department, told ET. Prof S Razdan, the senior most faculty member, has three books, six translation works and 26 research papers to her credit.

The department conducted several national and international conferences and workshops during 2007-12, attracting language luminaries and philosophers from across the world. However, it has not been able to attract students.

A technical reason could be that no college in the valley teaches Sanskrit language at the under graduate level. But then, Kashmir is seen as a home of Sanskrit language and literature. ■

Source: http://articles.economictimes.indiatimes.com/2015-06-24/news/63783130_1_four-students-kashmiri-pandits-eight-students

Shri Eknath ji Ranade (19 November, 1914 to 22 August 1982)

Spirit behind Vivekanand Rock Memorial & Vivekanand Kendra

Shri Eknath Ranade was born at a village in Amaravati District of Maharashtra. He was shifted to Nagpur for school education where he first attended a Sangh Shakha & met Dr. Hedgewar in 1926. That became a turning point in his life. After his matriculation, he wanted to become a Sangh Pracharak but was advised by Dr. Hedgewar to finish his graduation first. In his college days he took up the works of Swami Vivekananda. And

thereby, he first learnt about the life, works and vision of Swami Vivekananda. After graduation he became full time sangh Pracharak. He shouldered various responsibilities as a pracharak & went on to become Sarkaryavah in 1956. In 1963, destiny took him to the purpose for which he was born. He was requested by Guruji Golwalkar to take up the cause of establishing the Vivekananda Rock Memorial. Rest is history...





Don't go by first impressions

At one time or another in life each one of us has allowed first impressions to taint our judgment about others. First impressions can often be wrong, as proven by the following true story. A disciple of my guru invited one of his friends to visit the great Master. The friend paid a visit. Just as he entered the room, he



heard my Master saying to a devotee, "Bring Madira (alcohol) from the cupboard." The first time visitor was incensed. What kind of a guru is this! He drinks. He made up his mind at once that this was not the right place for him. As he recounted to his friend what he had heard, he was embarrassed to learn that the great Master was referring not to alcohol but to a book he has written 'Prem Ras Madira,' (Nectar of Divine Love). Rather than refer to the entire title he often refers to it as Madira which literally means 'alcohol'.

Based on appearance, words, sounds and what we hear or read about them we tend to form opinions and judgments of others without even meeting them. Not going by first impressions is unnatural for us, but we must resist the urge to do so. Try this! Look closely at the photos of some famous personalities such as Abraham Lincoln, Winston Churchill and Mahatma Gandhi. Admit it! If you didn't know they were famous

By Siddheshwari Devi (Didi ji)

you would have generally dismissed them as ordinary folks or less than ordinary.

First impressions should not become lasting impressions.

Put garbage where it belongs

Wherever you go, you see garbage bins. You place your trash in these waste receptacles. Curiously, we see a great variety of trash displayed in book stores, fast food places, restaurants, video arcades, movie theaters and other such places. No doubt, the garbage in these places looks very nice. The packaging is superb. However, garbage is garbage.

When it comes to food, we find hundreds of items with beautiful packaging but harmful ingredients. Completely ignoring what went into making it, we boldly ask for the cola by name. Would we ever ask for '15 teaspoons of sugar and high fructose corn syrup'? Of course not! But we are okay with it if it is packaged in a well-designed aluminum can. We would not ask



for 'bleached flour with all the wholesome ingredients removed.' We certainly would not order food, saying, "I would like a meal that will clog my arteries and put me at a high risk for a heart attack." But we do exactly this, choosing to ignore what we put into our mouth.

In entertainment, garbage comes in the form of video games that encourage shooting and killing. It also comes in the form of books and magazines with material harmful to the development of a healthy mind. Again, we would not willingly order a movie that harms the mind and introduces violent thoughts. However, we do not hesitate to rent, purchase or view it if the packaging is right and the advertising is effective.

Be mindful of what you eat, drink, read and watch. If it is wholesome, accept it. If it is junk, walk away from it. No matter how it looks on the outside, garbage is garbage.

Understand the Value of 'NO'



My mother is fond of telling stories about how stubborn I was as a child. Many times I challenged the decisions made by her. For instance, I would insist on choosing my own clothes to wear. Sad to say, my choice was the worst possible choice anyone could make. On the occasion of Holi (festival of colors) one year, I was determined to wear my very expensive white dress. My mother would have none of that. However, I cried and cried until I got my way. Needless to say, the pretty white dress had to be dyed dark blue after the eventful day.

That is not to say that I always had my way. Many times my mother would say 'no'. I would yearn and plead. She would not budge. I would throw tantrums and start to cry. In the end, I would mostly end up doing what she wanted me to.

It was only when I became an adult that I realized the value of those 'no's'. With all those 'no's', my mother was shaping my character. I later realized that she was not atypical. Like all mothers, she was determined to do what was in my best interest.

A worldly mother has to say 'no' to many demands of her children so that they may reap benefits in the future. We can only imagine what a tough task our divine mother has at her hands! Our divine mother knows us inside out; she knows exactly what we need and what we do not need. She alone knows what will help us or hinder us on the path leading to our final destination. Every time she denies a request and every time she turns a deaf ear to our desires, she does so because she loves us and wants the best for us. She continues to work in our best interest. ■

Visit www.radhamadhavsociety.org
Email: s_didi@radhamadhavsociety.org

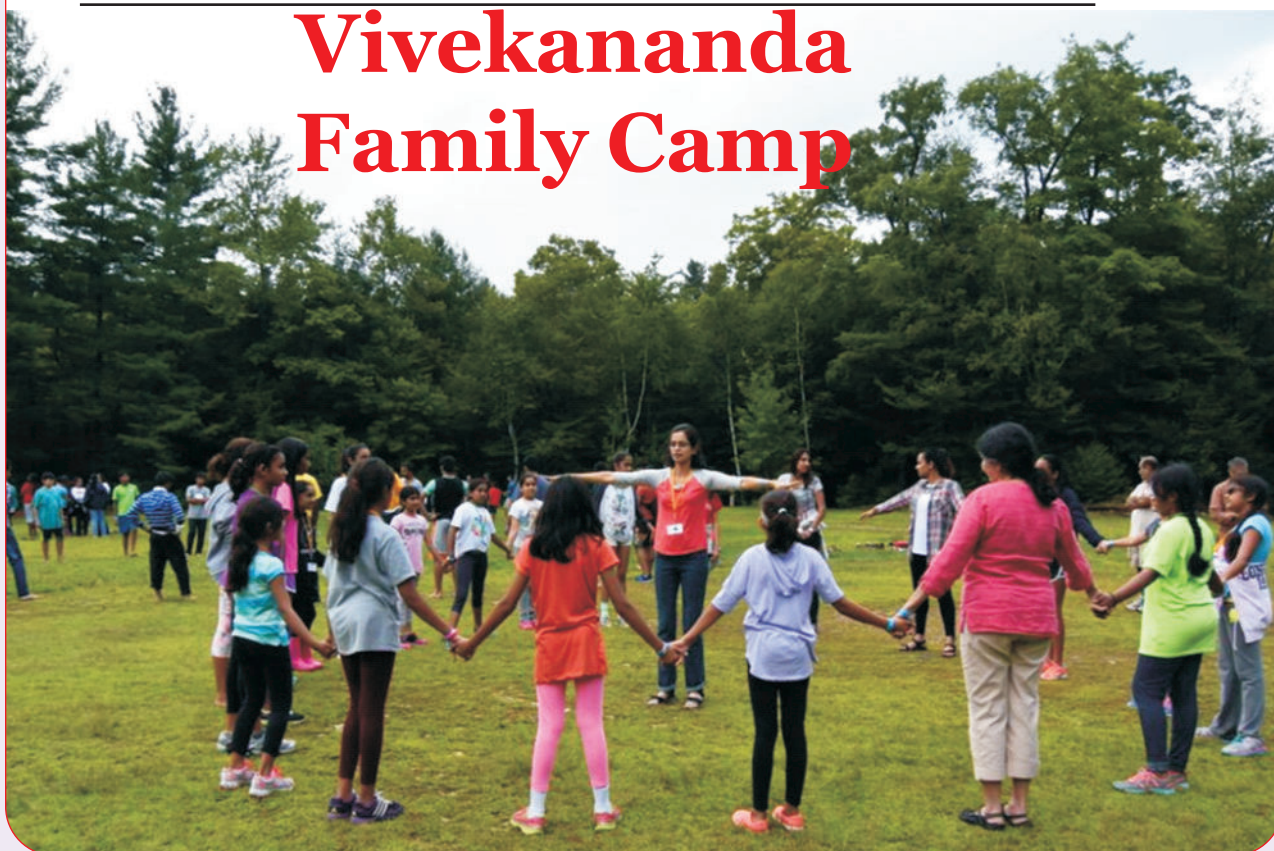
Shri Eknath ji Ranade - Spirit behind Vivekanand Rock Memorial & Vivekanand Kendra



"An aggregate or a congregation of men does not make a nation, nor do the geographical area and duration of time qualify a society to be known as a nation. A government formed on such a basis can be called a state, but not a nation. It is common goal or mission that makes a nation. All the constituents strive collectively for something noble. Service with spiritual orientation results in man-making which invariably and inseparably connected with nation building." It is the core of all the thoughts behind Vivekananda Kendra.

Dharma and Heritage Focused at 37th

Vivekananda Family Camp



The week of August 9, 2015 through August 15, 2015 brought the 37th year of Vivekananda Family Camp to the beautiful foothills of the Berkshire Mountains in Tolland, Massachusetts. Foregoing some of the conveniences of modern life such as the internet, TV, and air conditioning, Hindu children and their families gathered for 7 days to learn about and live Sanatana Dharma.

The first Camp was organized by Vishwa Hindu Parishad (World Hindu Council) of America (VHPA) 37 years ago in Rhode Island. Over the subsequent years, Camps have been organized all over the nation including New Jersey, Georgia, Pennsylvania, Texas, Washington DC, and Indiana. The Massachusetts Camp attracts attendees from all over the Northeast U.S. and beyond including Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and



Pennsylvania.

Each year, there is a theme around which the education curriculum is organized. This year's theme was "Protectors of our Dharma: Preserving our Heritage." The children learned about some of the key historical figures of India who were instrumental in reviving and preserving our Hindu heritage, culture, and traditions during the numerous invasions and often brutal foreign domination of India.

Food and lodging





was provided for the whole week. Each meal of breakfast, lunch, and dinner was freshly prepared every day by the parent volunteers. The entirely vegetarian cuisine consisted of traditional Indian dishes (such as sabzi, roti, rice, daal, idli, etc), and other favorites like Italian, Mexican, and sub sandwiches.

Camp was awakened at 6:30 am every morning, to the lilting sounds of Bhajans. The day began with Yoga Asanas and meditation, followed by a hearty breakfast. After that the morning was filled with education classes, discussion periods, and project time, during which one was able to develop one's artistic and craftsman skills. By this time, all were ready to devour lunch so that all can rush afterwards to the waterfront to splash-splash and try a hand at kayaking and canoeing in the tranquil lake. As if waterfront wasn't exciting enough, the huge playfield was the venue for outdoor Hindustani games like kabaddi, agni-kund, sher-bakri, kho, and much more. After a quick shower for everyone, aarti filled the Camp air with prayers. Dinner was followed by a showcase of talent where everyone could dance, sing, play instruments, or perform a short play in the cultural program. After a jam-packed and active day, everyone was ready for milk and cookies, and their beds in the cabins.

The children range from kindergarten (or younger) all the way to 12th grade. They are grouped according to grade so that they can participate in appropriate level of education classes and physical activities. Some of the 11th and 12th grade children apply for a special Leadership Training Program in which they learn specific skills such as public speaking, debate, and discussion of current events that can be applied in the real world of school or job. The Junior Volunteer Program is comprised of college students, most of whom are former Camp attendees. Junior volunteers help run Camp by assisting in leading discussions, teaching in education classes, helping with arts and crafts, liaising with the children, and doing the essential duties of washing dishes, kitchen work, and cleanup in the background. Through their hard work,





proactive actions and learning of Sanatana Dharma, junior volunteers learn responsibility and prepare to become future leaders of the Camp and ambassadors of Hindu Dharma.

Vivekananda Family Camp is the culmination of the effort by a dedicated group of volunteers who plan year round for Camp. During the week of Camp, volunteers prepare the meals, teach in the education classes, instruct in the arts and crafts periods, lead the discussions, and perform the

various cleaning and setup duties. The tremendous work of the volunteers helps keep Camp running smoothly for the whole week.

By the end of the week, long lasting bonds form among the children. Friendships that carry on long after camp is over are established. The knowledge and skills children acquire help them in building their character and establish their identity as Hindu Americans. As Swami Vivekananda said, "All power is within you. You can do anything and everything.

Believe in that. Do not believe that you are weak.... Stand up and express the divinity within you." This is what the children learned: about pride in our Hindu traditions and that only they can help ensure that the traditions are practiced, preserved, and have a place in our lives.

Vivekananda Family Camp is held every year during second week of August in Tolland, MA. Information and registration is available in March/April. ■



For more information please visit the Camp website at <http://vhpfamilycamp.com/>. You may also send email to vph.family.camp.ma@gmail.com.

माँ की साधना

कवि : ॐ/ ओम अरोरा

मैं छोड़ चली यह जग तेरा, यह युग सब तुम्हे मुबारक हो
बरसें खुशियाँ हर पर तुम पर, दिन रात मंगलमय हो
शांतिर्मय सुखमय हो जीवन, धन वैभवसे तुम खेलो
हों सब लक्ष्य तेरे आसान, जा आसमान को तुम छू लो
मैं कौन, कहाँ क्या राह मेरी, जानें क्या मंजिल होगी
गर हुआ डगर पर मिलन कही, (भगवानसे) बस एक मेरी विनती होगी
तुम बनो भद्र तुम आर्य बनो, मानवता को अपनाओ तुम
बनकर ज्योतिर्मय नवप्रकाश, आशा के दीप जलाओ तुम
तुम बनो सहायक निर्बल के, भूलों को राह दिखाओ तुम
तुम बनो प्रतीक प्रतिषष्ठा के, सत्यमार्ग अपनाओ तुम
तुम बनो ज्ञान के अखिल स्रोत, तुम सत्य ज्ञान को फैला दो
कर दो सब को बंधनविहीन, सद्मैत्री- भाव को फैला दो
तन, मन और धन अर्पित कर दो, कर दो समाज का स्तर उँचा
झोली भर मिले दुआ तुमको, मेरा भी हो मस्तक उँचा
है चाह मेरी मैं फिर आऊँ, आ कर खेलूँ, जी संग तेरे
ममता पर है अधिकार तेरा, बाँटूँगी आ दुःख- दर्द तेरा
आँचल में सह लाऊँ तुझको, पोछूँगी मैं आँसू तेरे
तुम ही तो हो मेरे भविष्य, तुम ही तो हो हमदम मेरे
फिर बनो अंश के पात्र मेरे, है यही साधना मेरी
युग युग से यह अस्तित्व मेरा, मैं हूँ माँ जननी तेरी,
मैं हूँ माँ जननी तेरी



About the Author

Dr. Om Prakash Arora, MD,
based in metro Atlanta, is a General
Surgeon. He has been writing Hindi
poems since his early school days.

Communities Work Together to Raise Over \$20,000 for Homeless Children!

What a nice way to spend an evening with a group of likeminded people - the 3rd Annual Bollywood Meets Borscht Belt fundraising event was coming together of Indian & Jewish community to do the goodness of helping over thousand homeless children with school supplies for upcoming school year in Austin, Del Valle and Manor for the third year. It is good to see the most affluent communities taking so much communal responsibility and leading the way to help the needy, which is a big deal! The event was organized by Hindu Charities for America and Jewish Federation of Greater Austin.

The evening started off with comedy show by the world's first Jewish Indian standup comedian, Mahatma-Moses along, Indian and Jewish dance performances by local talents in vibrant hues and delicious Indian food donated by local Indian restaurant owners!

Each year the increasing numbers of generous sponsors, performers, attendees and donors have made the fundraising successful. The stage and table decors were complements of Blueprint Events that made the venue more pleasant!

Costa Estos, an attorney said they are picky about what they eat and this was the first time he and his wife ate Indian food and was surprised that it was so good! The event was attended by many notable guests that included former Mayor Gus Garcia and Manor ISD Superintendent Kevin Brackmeyer. Former Mayor Gus Garcia has this to say "I really enjoyed visiting with all of you at the event that your organization sponsored".

The Hindu Charities work with Texas Homeless Education Office to identify the school districts and the work with the district officials directly to find out the specific counts and grade levels that need help.

Many of these families cannot afford to buy the much needed school supplies. Some families skimp on their life balancing medicine to save for their children's



school supplies. It breaks your heart to see some parent's compromise to support her kid's education,

All proceeds go to purchasing of school supplies for over thousand homeless children in Austin, Del Valle and Manor area. On Sunday August 16 at 1pm, volunteers met to pack the school supplies at Dell Jewish Community Campus.

The volunteers worked tirelessly to make this program possible and enjoyable for the attendees. Harish Kotecha, Founder of Hindu Charities, was recognized by Jewish Federation of greater Austin and honored for his selfless efforts by the White House signed by the President this year!

Though \$20 will get the school supply for a needy kid to start the school year, no amount is a small amount and the Hindu charities accept any amount of donation as long as there is a willingness to give and help the needy children. ■

Please visit Hindu Charities For America.org or call 512.994.4638 for more information.

Pictures courtesy of by Ken Nordhauser and Ravi Pothukuchi



Can **Vedic Dharma** Bring Peace to the World?

The gifts and contributions to society that can be traced to Vedic Dharma are many. One of the most popular these days is yoga. The benefits of yoga are both individual and social, various and numerous. On the mental level it strengthens concentration, determination, and builds a stronger character that can more easily reduce and cope with various tensions in the material world. The assortment of asanas or postures also provide stronger health and keeps ill



such as diabetes, high and low blood pressure, etc., away or in check. It improves physical strength, endurance, flexibility, back pain, digestive disorders, and arthritis. It promotes detoxification of the body, toning of muscles, and relief from stress and anxiety. Certain diseases can be prevented or improved by performing yoga on a daily basis.

*By Stephen Knapp
(Sri Nandanandana Dasa)*

When you progress in yoga, you can feel the unwanted burdens of the mind fall away, such as anxiety, anger, greed, envy, hate, discontent, etc. Then other qualities like peacefulness, tranquility, contentment, and blissfulness will be felt. These are qualities everyone is trying to find and are some of the many things that can be accomplished with yoga, at least on the elementary level. As you make further progress, you may enter into the deeper levels of understanding and transcending the mind and gradually go so far as to attain realizations as to what your own spiritual identity is and what your relationship is with the Absolute. Becoming free from material life and regaining one's spiritual identity is the superior goal of all yoga.

As we progress in this way, we separate ourselves from the general vibrations of selfishness, greed, and anger that often pervade this planet. But we also

contribute to the uplifting vibrations in the social or mass consciousness that this world so much needs these days. If we all can continue to work in this way, there could be a major shift in planetary consciousness for the upliftment of humanity for the greater good. Thus, our own spiritual progress becomes a positive influence on the whole planet, starting with our own small sphere of influence. This is how the Vedic Dharma goes from being an individual benefit to a positive social influence for peace and cooperation.

FACTORS THAT KEEP US APART

One of the main concerns in establishing peace, harmony and cooperation in this world is an old problem, mentioned in the Taoist text Chuang Tzu (11): "Men of this world all rejoice in others being like themselves, and object to others not being like themselves." One of the main reasons for this is that everyone acts under the influence of different bodily conceptions of life. This causes three of the inner enemies: envy, pride, and anger. Because of our bodily conception, we may become proud of who we are, envious of others, and angry over their apparent differences from us. Because of these diverse perceptions, people cannot act in harmony in this world. To act in harmony and unity, there must be a central focus.

Since everyone is actually a spiritual being, a soul within the material body, then accepting the body as oneself is an illusion. This illusion, the acceptance of the material body as ones real identity, causes a person to think "I am American," or "I am European," or "I am

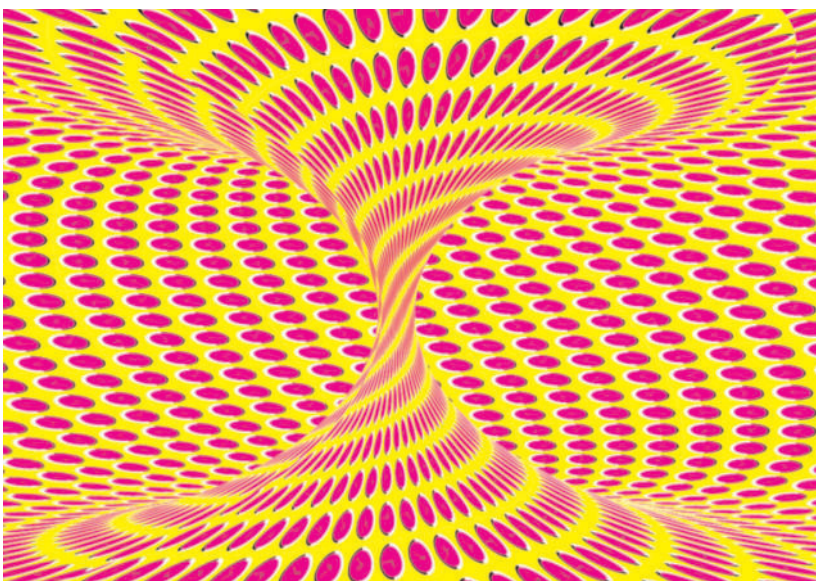
white," or black, or fat, or skinny. We may think this is my country, my family, my friends, my society, or my political party, and everyone else is different or wrong. But what is this consciousness of being American or Russian? A Republican or Democrat? Black or white? It is all illusion based on the impermanent identity of the ever-changing mind and body. It is the "I" and "My" consciousness. It creates a society in which people fight with each other because of the differences of the body and their identification with it. The whole world exists under this illusion. So how can there be peace? Even though government leaders talk about peace, and meet in peace conferences, there can be no peace as long as this misdirected consciousness continues.

When people are under the bodily concept of life, they do not know that their real self-interest is spiritual. Therefore, they try to adjust things materially, changing their situation, changing the way they look, changing their job, their government, or their living arrangement, or their neighborhood. They think such adjustments are the way to be happy and to improve their lives. These arrangements, however, are temporary. Sooner or later more changes will again be necessary if we live with this mindset.

Furthermore, leaders are doing the same thing. They try to change things through political, economic, or military adjustments. However, more often than not, it is merely guesswork, speculating on what strategy to use. Yet, the same problems, fighting, and antagonisms continue.

The United Nations in New York has been formed to try to calm this fighting so countries and people can work out their differences and work in unity. Instead, people often come together and blame or threaten each other. Unity has not been achieved. Actually, more flags are flying. More countries and borders have been established. Everyone has their own agenda. Disagreements between countries have increased. This brings the whole world into a deplorable state.

So, unless we have a central focus on the goal and identity of humanity, all talk of unity is merely utopian: It will never happen. As long as people act under the influence of thinking they are their bodies, born of a certain country, culture, religion, and loyal only to that



The whole world exists under illusion of self consciousness

particular identity, people will continue to fight like cats and dogs. No matter how much we desire peace between everyone so we can live in unity, as long as we are in this bodily concept of life, peace is not possible.

The only possibility of unity is in rising above the bodily platform of life and coming to the spiritual platform, the level of ultimate reality. Then there is a genuine possibility of unity on this planet because we can focus on the real identity of humanity as the uniting force among us all.

Therefore, one of the goals of human existence is to realize and enter that Reality. We need to be agents of Reality. This could also be called having spiritual vision.

HAVING SPIRITUAL VISION

So what does it mean to have a spiritual vision? To attain a spiritual vision, we need to follow the Dharmic process and rise above the bodily platform if we ever expect to reach a stage of permanent peace and unity. Even on an individual basis, real peace of mind can be attained only when one realizes that he or she is not the body. Otherwise, when you think you are your body you engage in the never-ending game of trying to satisfy your mind and senses, which always want new things for stimulation. The more you try to satisfy your senses, the more you will come under the control of lust, greed and anger. Lust is there when you want to satisfy your material desires. Greed is there when you want more than you need. Anger will always be there in some form when you fail to achieve what you want, or when you attain it but then lose it. The unmerciful masters of lust, greed and anger will never leave you alone. The only way you can achieve real peace of mind is by being free from your material desires, or at least most of them. That can only be possible when you realize you are not your body but the spirit soul within. And that is part of the essential process advocated in the Vedic spiritual tradition.

We find that the best sources for explaining the characteristics of what and who we really are, as the soul, are found in the ancient Vedic literature of India. Many such texts have information about this, but the great classic Bhagavad-gita (13.34) explains: "O son of Bharata, as the sun alone illuminates all this universe, so does the living entity, one within the body, illuminate the entire body by consciousness."

Another great verse compares the body to a chariot

in which the self or the soul is riding. "Transcendentalists who are advanced in knowledge compare the body, which is made by the order of the Supreme Personality, to a chariot. The senses are like the horses; the mind, the master of the senses, is like the reins; the objects of the senses are the destinations; intelligence is the chariot driver; consciousness, which spreads throughout the body, is the cause of bondage in this material world." (Srimad-Bhagavatam 7.15.41)

So, naturally, until our consciousness is cleansed or spiritualized, we recognize various beings according to their body. We may see a person that appears to be a man, a woman, a child, or a baby. Or we may recognize those who appear to be animals, insects, aquatics, or plants. As long as our consciousness remains in this level, we are bound to continue living in this material world. However, once we can see beyond these material bodies, we will see that all these entities are the same. They are all spirit souls. No other tradition provides such clarity. Then we have a chance of understanding reality.

The Svetasvatara Upanishad (5.10-11) states that the self is not man, woman, nor neuter, but appears in different types of bodies only due to previous activities and desires of the living entity. This is how the entity chooses whatever status in which one presently appears. But a person in divine consciousness can perceive that he or she is beyond all material designations and activities.

As further explained in another of the ancient Vedic texts, the Sri Isopanishad (Mantras 6-7): "He who sees everything in relation to the Supreme Lord, who sees all entities as His parts and parcels and who sees the Supreme Lord within everything, never hates anything nor any being. One who always sees all living entities as spiritual sparks, in quality one with the Lord, becomes a true knower of things. What, then, can be illusion or anxiety for him?"

Only in this frame of mind or with this focus, will we be able to reach a stage of peace within ourselves individually and go on to attain peace in the world. This is what the world needs. ■

Read the complete article at the source. More information on this topic is elaborated in Stephen Knapp's books: Toward World Peace: Seeing the Unity Between Us All and The Eleventh Commandment: The Next Step in Social Spiritual Development.

Jains Walk to Protest Ban on Fast-To-Death Ritual

About 5,000 Jains marched from Burrabazar to Esplanade on Monday afternoon protesting a Rajasthan High Court verdict banning Santhara, a centuries-old Jain practice of starving oneself to death to attain salvation.

The Jains who walked said Santhara was an individual's choice and their religion did not compel anyone to practice it. The high court order, they said, is an infringement on their right to practice religion.

"There is no compulsion on anyone to adopt Santhara. It's a matter of an individual's choice. Had it been forced on anyone there could have been a logic behind the decision to ban it," a rallyist said.

The Jains who practice Santhara, usually in their advanced years or when suffering from a debilitating and incurable disease, stop taking food and water and detach themselves from their loved ones. Rights activists have compared the practice to suicide, euthanasia and even Sati.

Rajasthan High Court had on August 10 banned Santhara, making it a punishable offence under the Indian Penal Code sections 306 (abetment of suicide) and 309 (attempted suicide). A person convicted under Section 306 can be sentenced for up to 10 years in jail and one convicted under Section 309 can be jailed for up to a year.

The abetment tag is meant for family and approximate community members of someone resorting to Santhara, which activists allege is sometimes a way of getting rid of elderly relatives and grabbing their property.

But the Jains who joined Monday's rally called the practice a sacrifice. "This is a sort of sacrifice the Jains make to attain salvation," said Priyanka Jain, 22, an engineer with TCS. She said she "strongly believed" in the tradition and took an off from office to join the rally.

Rounak Jain, 18, an IT student at IEST, Shibpur,



SC Stays Rajasthan HC Decision Declaring 'Santhara' As Illegal

New Delhi: The Supreme Court today stayed the operation of a Rajasthan High Court order terming as illegal the religious practice of "santhara", a ritual of fasting until death prevalent among Jain community members.

"Issue notice. Leave granted," a bench comprising Chief Justice H L Dattu and Justice Amitava Roy said while staying the HC order and issuing notices to the Centre, Rajasthan and others.



The bench was hearing a batch of petitions filed by various religious bodies of Jain community members against the High Court order on santhara.

The pleas had sought a stay on the high court judgement, claiming it was passed without appreciating the basic philosophy and tenets of the Jain religion.

The Rajasthan High Court had on August 10 held 'santhara' as illegal making it punishable under section 306 and 309 of IPC related to abetment of suicide.

The petitions claimed that the high court erred in equating the religious practice with the offence of suicide. The petition came in the backdrop of protests by the community in Rajasthan and some other states against the high court order. ■

Source: http://zeenews.india.com/news/india/sc-stays-rajasthan-hc-decision-declaring-santhara-as-illegal_1665122.html

stayed away from the campus to take part in the march. "I walked to express my support for something I believe in," he said.

Some of the rallyists wore caps with the slogan "Live and Let Live" written on them.

"Jains across India are discussing the issue. We will challenge the order in the Supreme Court and preparations are on for that," said Vikash Shyamsukha, a businessman and member of the Sakal Jain Samaj, which organized Monday's rally.

One rally started from Howrah's Dobson Road and another from Burrabazar's Digambar Jain Bada Mandir at 12.30pm. The two met on Mahatma Gandhi Road and then marched through Rabindra Sarani and Bentinck Street before reaching Esplanade around 3pm.

A spiritual guru of the community, Mati Ratan Vijay ji, addressed the gathering at Esplanade.

Jains across India organized rallies on Monday on the issue. In Rajasthan, rallies were held in Jaipur,

Jodhpur, Kota and Bhilwara, among other cities. All schools run by the Jain community were closed in Jaipur.

The Rajasthan High Court verdict banning Santhara followed a public interest petition moved by rights activist Nikhil Soni in 2006. Soni submitted during the hearing on his petition that the practice should be considered as suicide. Santhara, he had said, was in violation of Article 21 of the Constitution which guarantees the right to life.

Two acts of Santhara in Jaipur had triggered a national debate in late 2006. Bimla Devi Bhansali, 60, fasted to death after being diagnosed with terminal cancer. Soni alleged that Bimla Devi's relatives had publicly announced it was her own decision but in her final hours, the frail woman appeared to make a request for food and water. Her voice was drowned out by the bhajans being sung around her, he said. Soni moved his petition after another woman, Keila Devi Hirawat, 93, resorted to Santhara the same year. ■

Source: http://www.telegraphindia.com/1150825/jsp/calcutta/story_38952.jsp#.VeL_z_lViko

PM releases digital version of Ramcharitmanas musical



Describing 'Ramcharitmanas' as a great work which imbibes the "essence of India", Prime Minister Narendra Modi today released the digital version of a musical production on the epic recorded by All India Radio.

Praising efforts of the artistes, the Prime Minister said they had performed not just 'sangeetsadhna, but also sanskritisadhna and sanskaar sadhna' (devotion not just to music, but also to culture and tradition).

The Prime Minister described Goswami Tulsidas' Ramcharitmanas as a great epic which contained the "essence of India."

He mentioned how the Indians who had travelled to various parts of the world, such as Mauritius, kept alive their link with India over successive generations through the Ramcharitmanas, an official statement said here.

Modi, while unveiling the set of digital CDs, said the recordings have been done over a period of 20-22 years and the effort was no small achievement. He also appreciated the role played by All India Radio (Akashvani) in uniting the people and spreading awareness and information in India.

He said that he has been informed that AIR has approximately nine lakh hours of audio recordings of various artistes from across the country. He said this was a priceless collection, which should be documented in detail for posterity.

According to officials, AIR recordings of Goswami Tulsidas' work which were released today have been sung by many leading singers of Bhopal 'gharana' over several years from 1980 onwards. Minister for Information and Broadcasting Arun Jaitley and Chairman Prasar Bharati Board A. Suryaprakash were present on the occasion, the statement added. ■

New Delhi, Aug 31: PTI

Source: <http://www.oneindia.com/india/pm-releases-digital-version-ramcharitmanas-musical-1854417.html>



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.