



HINDU VISHWA

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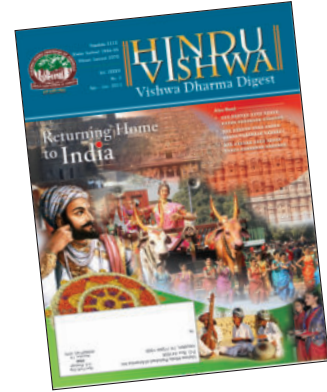
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जननी जन्मभूमिश्च स्वर्गादपि गरीयसी ।।

*Jananii janmabhuumishcha
svargaadapi gariiyasii*

**Mother and motherland are
far superior to even the heaven**



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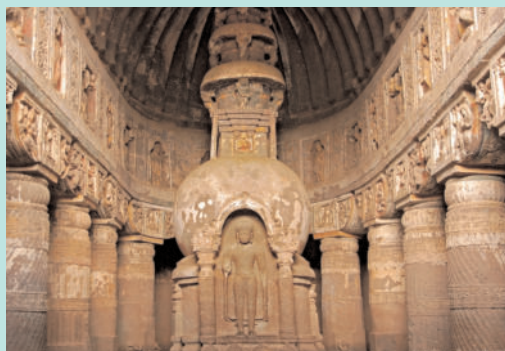
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Returning Home to India

Experiences of
Visiting India
after Seventeen Years





'Hoteliving' for Hindu Seniors **'Vanprasthis'**



The number of retired individuals and couples with Hindu background, and desire to live a Vanprastha-type lifestyle, with sufficient and satisfactory facilities at hand, is likely to increase with time. This phenomenon will occur particularly in this age when the 'baby-boomers' are reaching retirement and old-age. In many cases their children may be working and often may be rather taxing or burdensome to have to care for their weak and sick parents on a 24/7 basis. Here lies an opportunity for builders, hospitality-business managers, medical personnel (doctors, nurses), and social service-oriented people to combine the East and the West for the benefit of all concerned. Let's view this problem and solution from different angles.

Driving up and down any major highway, you are bound to discover that many of the motels along it are owned and/or managed by people of Indian origin.

Also, in any major city of USA and in its vicinity you are bound to discover hotel-type residences with 1-2 bedroom apartments designed specifically for senior (55+, most residents being in their 80s and 90s) citizens. Some of the residents may be capable of taking care of their daily chores ('Independent Living') while others may require assistance on a 24/7 basis ('Assisted Living'). Such senior living usually comes complete with dining, transportation, first-hand medical, laundry, cleaning, and concierge facilities as part of various optional packages and at suitable prices. It is like living in a moderately luxurious hotel on a long-term basis close to

all urban and medical conveniences, without having to worry about grocery-shopping, cooking, cleaning, maintenance and insurance. A third point in this context is a housing complex (called 'Shantiniketan') with small residential units near Orlando, Florida designed specifically for senior Hindu people, where the daily routine includes Puja and Aarati, and celebration of all Hindu festivals (Diwali, Holi, Durga-Puja, Ganesh Chaturthi, Shiv-Ratri, Krishna-Janmastami, etc.) are observed. Indian meals are available to serve different palates. It is almost like living in India for retired/visiting parents.

Combining the above three angles, we can envision potentially a wonderful triangle of enterprises of a proper-size apartment or housing-complex close to many or most of the major cities and suburban localities. These enterprises can provide comfortable accommodation, varied types of choice of Indian dishes served in a restaurant-style environment, medical help, and appropriate type of entertainment (music, movies), libraries, and other amenities of modern urban living.

The Hindu Mandir Executives' Conference (HMEC), and a large segment of Indian - American community involved in medical practices and of Indians belonging to the hospitality-industry could join hands to initiate and to create this type of "Hindu Hoteliving" as part of individual or as group-enterprises, which should prove to be quite successful commercially as well as meeting the needs of Vanprasthis. ■



Giving and Forgiving

■ *By Swami Asangananda*

Starting with the celebration of "Thanksgiving", there is a spirit of thankfulness, rejoicing and giving in the Western world. Around this time many charities are active and get their biggest collections of the year. People's generosity is evident at the workplace, street corners, malls and elsewhere. Giving and Forgiving are important parts of most religions. Let us explore these two important concepts.

● Giving

Giving means freedom. Only by giving do you become free to receive. If you are carrying something in your hands, how can you receive anything? You have to give up something first. Giving means unselfishness, it means love. Giving is a natural part of life and it liberates you. The first step of freedom is attained when you learn to do your actions with love and learn to give. To Give wholeheartedly and willingly is called Love. Love is the Lord of life. When you Give as part of a social norm, it may not be out of love. That is not considered Giving since there is an obligation and also because it may be reciprocal.

■ *Only by Giving you become free to receive.*

Giving is one of the most difficult things to do in the world. People get so attached to the things they possess that they cannot part with them easily. For Giving, one has to learn non-attachment and develop an empathy towards others. Only when you learn to see yourself as Divine Consciousness that you are able to recognize the same Self in others. It opens your heart and you are able to share and care. We are a bundle of samskaras that we have gathered over several lifetimes. These are the foundation of our personality, our individuality. It also gives us an ego and a sense of I-ness. Ego separates us from

one another and creates a barrier in sharing and giving to others. Unless we can see Unity amongst all, knowing that we are all part of the same Divinity, and learn to remain non-attached to our possessions, there can be no true Giving.



We hear a lot about the virtue of Giving. But, we are faced with the following questions: What to Give, to whom to Give and why to Give?

The first step to be free is to learn to give up, to let go. For this, we have to start with ourselves first. We have to give up all the conditioning of our mind, our ego and samskaras (past impressions). They are the bonds that keep us bound to the world. The ancient sages have shown the way to let go of these bonds through the path of yoga and meditation. No matter which path of yoga you follow, you have to learn to give up first. Giving up is a form of renunciation, renouncing the fruits of actions, desires, attachments. Renunciation means non-attachment. It frees you from the bondage of the world. You do not have to leave the world and go to a forest to practice this. Renunciation is a state of mind which can be developed with practice through satsang (good company), reading and knowledge of scriptures, contemplation, and prayers.

■ *How can one give up what they have acquired by their own hard labor?*

No one can live without doing actions, and actions



will always result in fruits. The fruits motivate us to do more actions, and we obtain more fruits and so on. We get trapped in the whirlpool created by us. How can one get out of this whirlpool? The only way is to give up the fruits to others. This is a difficult concept for worldly people. People often ask me, "How can I give up what I have acquired by my hard labor?" The answer is in how you look at your acquisitions. If you think they are yours, and you are possessive about them, then it is hard to part with them. The key is to surrender them to God. When you are doing your actions with God Consciousness, you will not do wrong actions and the fruits will also be good. Surrendering the fruits of your actions does not mean that you give them to temple and churches. Instead, according to the Gita, share them with those in need and those qualified to receive. This will help you in getting out of the circle of actions and you will be free.

The other way is to give the fruits of your actions to other fellow beings. Through actions that are performed skillfully and lovingly, this is the way of unselfish service to the creations of the Lord. For this we have to develop the awareness that all human beings and other life forms are like shrines and the Lord dwells in them. By serving others we serve God. According to Vedanta, this whole universe is the embodiment of God - be it animals, trees, a blade of grass or even stones. There is a common practice in Hindu households to take out a portion of bread and other cooked items as "Gou Graas", meaning a bite for the sacred cow. This is an offering, in the name of the Lord, to cows or other animals or to Mother Earth herself, where so many creatures reside.



Another form of Giving is practiced as Atithi sewa (service to any guest). The idea is to welcome and offer hospitality to all as part of service to the Lord. All these practices arise from the same feeling of service and Giving as a means of freedom. But it is important to recognize the difference between offering sewa and encouraging laziness or beggary. One has to learn to give judiciously.

Swami Rama said, "Selfless service is not to be done for the sake of others, to please others. It should be done because it liberates you, because it makes you happy. It is the highest of joys in the world." Then the question arises, "To give to whom?" Start with the people you love, with whom you live, your own kith and kin who are in need. Gradually, expand to your neighbors, your community, the society, the world, and ultimately the entire universe."

दातव्यम् इति यद् दानं दीयतेऽनुपकारिणे ।
देशे काले च पात्रे च तद् दानं सात्त्विकं स्मृतम् ॥१७.२०॥
यत् तु प्रत्युपकारार्थं फलम् उद्दिश्य वा पुनः।
दीयते च परिक्लिष्टं तद् दानं राजसं स्मृतम् ॥१७.२१॥
अदेशकाले यद् दानम् अपात्रेभ्यश्च दीयते ।
असत्कृतम् अयज्ञात् तत् तामसम् उदाहृतम् ॥१७.२२॥



■ *All these practices arise from the same feeling of service and Giving as a means of freedom.*

The Bhagvad Gita states -

- Charity given out of duty, without expectation of return, at the proper time and place, and to a worthy person, is considered to be in the mode of goodness.
- But charity performed with the expectation of some return, or with a desire for fruitive results, or in a grudging mood, is said to be charity in the mode of passion.
- And charity performed at an impure place, at an improper time, to unworthy persons, or without proper attention and respect, is said to be in the mode of ignorance. Giving charity is a noble thing which leads to liberation. But as Lord Krishna states, we must choose the right person, the right time and place to give. Else, it can lead to misuse and imbalance in society.

Forgiving

We are all seeking happiness, peace and joy and above all love in life. Forgiveness gives us all these. Just as Giving is love, Forgiving is also love. You cannot truly forgive a person unless you truly love him. In order to love someone, you have to love yourself first. In the same way by Forgiving someone, you do not just forgive the person, but you forgive yourself by creating happiness, peace and love within. However, it is not easy to forgive. Forgiving is a challenge, it requires tremendous courage and strength of will and spirit. Only a strong person can truly forgive. A weak person's forgiveness is out of cowardice or fear. True forgiveness is when you have the power to punish, but you choose not to do so. Mahatma Gandhi has said that ahimsa (non-violence) can be only practiced by a strong, courageous person, it is not meant for the weak.



■ *You cannot truly forgive a person unless you truly love him.*

To be happy and at peace with yourself, you have to learn to Forgive. If someone has done wrong to you,

the first reaction is that of revenge. The other person responds in the same manner, and a chain reaction ensues. This reaction may not be at the physical level, it may be mental and emotional and creates negativity, builds barriers and causes great harm to one's spiritual self. There can be no freedom in such a situation.

■ *Forgiveness frees us from self-imposed negativity and sense of revenge.*

When there is a confrontation, sit calmly and think why that person does not love you, and conversely, why you cannot love him or her. This contemplation will take the sting out between the two of you and

I forgive. I am forgiven.

you will have the courage to forgive this person mentally and you will find happiness and freedom for yourself. This will enable you to open your heart to that person and they will change as well. Forgiveness frees us from self-imposed negativity and sense of revenge. When these channels are cleared, we will find greater creativity and love. These virtues of Giving and Forgiving are for helping ourselves be free and to purify our heart and mind of anger, greed, resentment etc. They pave the way to liberation. ■

This article was published in the December issue of Inner Light magazine. Inner Light is a quarterly magazine which strives to broaden the awareness of yoga science and meditation to people of all ages, religions, and faiths.

To read more articles, search Inner Light magazine in Facebook or go to the link - <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Inner-Light-Magazine/146603325451005>.



Hindu deities in Non-Dharmik Depictions: Denigration or Freedom of Expression?

■ *By Niles Shirodkar*

The last few decades have seen a tremendous rise in Hindu deities and concepts being depicted in a non-Dharmik manner, such as in animation form or on commercial products. To answer the hotly debated topic of whether using deities in art, entertainment or marketing is denigration of the divine or merely freedom of expression, it is useful to understand what is denigration of Dharma.

● What is denigration of Dharmik symbols?

In a broad sense, denigration of Dharmik symbols or concepts means depicting them differently from their scriptural or traditional depiction. In the words of the eminent Hindu scholar Dr. David Frawley, "To really understand denigration of Hindu images, we must understand the Hindu view of art. Hinduism views art and religion as two aspects of the same human pursuit of the sacred, yet Hindu thought does discriminate between sacred and non-sacred art. Portrayal of Hindu deities follows a strict tradition, specific rules as to how deities should be portrayed, the type of temple or room it should be installed in, which direction it faces, the time of the year for its installation, etc. The work of the artist is also part of a daily spiritual practice, not a mere commercial enterprise. Therefore the artist should desist from creating denegrating portrayals of Hindu symbols. Portrayal of Hindu deities is meant to emanate the divine vibrations, to connect us to the supernatural, higher powers that they symbolize. And this is only possible when they are correctly depicted as per the scriptures."

Unfortunately nowadays, due to either ignorance or

plain disregard for the Hindu view of art there is rampant denigration of Hindu deities and concepts. What denigrators do not consider is:

- Hindu deities are not meant to be glorifications of the human form and their portrayal is not meant to express the beauty or the eroticism of the human body.
- Installing the spirit of the deity into the form is for the purpose of worship. The Hindus never think that the Deity can be used to represent a material form.
- The deity is highly revered and is often said to be like one's mother and father in Hindu thought.

The few examples of centuries old Hindu erotic art, such as at the Khajuraho temple, are not denigration as explained very well by Dr. Shive Chaturvedi*:

"The figurine depicted on the outer walls of the Khajuraho temple show in many erotic, including sexual engagements, but penetrating look at their emotions appearing on their faces show complete sense of calmness and serenity, and this represents the world of desires and sensual pleasure, with the highest degree being the sexual one. But this is the mode of Sattvic Kama. Now, if one moves toward the interior spaces of temple-toward the center, one finds a Deity-Murti alone and no traces of figurines in sensual, sexual engagements. And, that is where the Divine image appears leaving behind the Samsar. So, the entire temple architectural representation is the constant reminder to all us of the fact: what this Samsar is about; what human life is about; and how the journey of life should be directed to, so that one can experience the Divine directly (Atman. Parmatman), while going through this world of pleasure, as well as, the world of birth, growth,



sustenance, decay and death."

● Impact of denigration

Before we discuss further, please look at each of the images shown here for a few seconds and note how you react after

seeing them. This experiment of comparing the

two depictions of Lord Shiva was conducted during this year's five Hinduism Summits organized by the Forum for Hindu Awakening worldwide. Hundreds of attendees of the Summits reported that they felt unpleasant, disturbed or had increased activity of the mind when looking at the first (left) depiction, wherein Lord Shiva has been shown as a dog by an American artist, who had this vision in his dream. Most attendees reported feeling peaceful, experiencing deep concentration, a meditative state, etc., when looking at the second (right) depiction of Lord Shiva, which is scripturally accurate. This is the impact of denigration. While the proper image of Lord Shiva brought noble thoughts, peace and concentration, the denigrating image did the opposite.



● Don't condone denigration in the name of freedom of expression

When someone is charged with causing noise pollution in the neighborhood, they cannot get away by saying that it is their freedom of expression. So also, denigration causes spiritual, mental, and emotional pollution and should be curbed for the well being of the society. Hence, the spiritual pollution caused by denigration cannot be condoned. People ignorant about this often condone or overlook denigration, while stepping on the sensitivities of millions of Hindus.

● Deliberate and malicious denigration

Denigration is often unintended, but sometimes it can be deliberate and malicious. The much glorified Indian Muslim artist late M. F. Husain has depicted several Hindu deities in perverse, sexual positions under the pretext of 'nudity is purity'. However, he has depicted Muslim figures fully clothed. Such double standards betray deliberate and malicious denigration by the artist. In fact, Hussain has said that he painted Hitler naked because he hated Hitler. One can thus conclude that he painted nude and derogatory

forms of all those he hated. Hence, he must have hated Hinduism and Bharat Mata (Mother India). In the animation film, 'Sita Sings the Blues', the American Jewish artist Nina Paley not only shows Hindus' revered deities Rama and Sita in a trivial manner like Rama walking on pregnant Sita, but also propagates misconceptions like 'Lord Rama was an abusive husband.' When approached in an educative manner about the denigration committed, such artists are defiant clearly reflecting their anti-Hindu agenda.

● Can we stop denigration ?

Indeed, we can. We can start by praying to God about the denigration we have come across and make an attempt to educate the perpetrator about the denigration they are causing. We can also join the protest campaigns carried out by Hindus organizations against denigration. Also, we can stop buying products that cause denigration and communicate our objections to such denigrations.

● How successful are protests ?

People often wonder if a threatening approach would be more effective against denigration. On the contrary, educative, peaceful protests work very well to end the denigration. Within the last year alone, our website (www.HinduAwakening.org) has initiated several peaceful protest campaigns, most of which were very successful, such as in canceling the proposed exhibition of the late M. F. Husain's paintings at Hema Malini's dance performance in New York, and in uniting thousands of Hindus to end denigration of Hinduism. I hope this inspires every supporter of Hinduism to come together to understand denigration and preserve Hinduism. ■

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About the author

Shri Nilesh Shirodkar is a San Francisco Bay area resident and a System Administrator by profession. For the past few years, he is doing sadhana under the guidance of His Holiness Dr. Jayant Athavale. As a part of his



sadhana, he volunteers for various Dharmik and spiritual causes, including rendering his services for the Forum for Hindu Awakening, a nonprofit Hindu spiritual organization based in NJ, USA. Nilesh devotes all his free time to serve Dharma by creating awareness about denigration and other attacks on Hinduism and the Hindu community, and working with Hindus worldwide to preserve Hinduism.



First Regional Hindu Mandir Executives' Conference Held in Southern California

The first Regional Hindu Mandir Executives' Conference, jointly sponsored by Santana Dharma Temple of Norwalk, CA and the local chapter of World Hindu Council of America (VHPA), was held on March 24th, 2013 in Norwalk, CA. It was attended by 85 delegates from more than 20 temples.

The event began at 9.30am with ceremonial lamp lighting by HMEC National Chairman Dr. Umesh Shukla from New Jersey, an invocation to Shri Ganesh by the Shashtriji from Sanatan Dharma Temple followed by the World Religion

Many temple leaders presented their success stories, shared common concerns and future plans of their respective temples. Most concerns were about lack of youth involvement.

Interestingly, each temple revealed a unique strength while catering to the common heritage of a diverse Hindu community.

Many supported an idea of Hindu Sewa Diwas (volunteer day) to help mainstream American society such as feeding the homeless, holding blood drives and free medical camps for those in need. A central website for Southern California temples was another proposal backed by many temple leaders for easy networking,



Unity prayer by Sandhya Kumar, Zeal & Khushboo Nadasia. The tone was set by a song lead by Sheela Kene, Chairman of the conference, describing the richness of Hindu heritage.

Conference convener Natver Patel urged for unity and connectivity amongst all local temples in his welcome speech.

communication and announcements.

Twelve youth representatives, ranging from ages 13 to 35, articulated their opinions and observations in a very eloquent manner through series of presentations outlining their expectations from temples' executives to attract younger generations. The uniform request was for proper explanation of common Hindu deities



and symbolism of religious practices and using technology to make worship informative. Another idea was to create volunteering opportunities for youth involvement in temple. They felt such opportunities for involvement from an early age can increase youth participation.

After a 45 minutes lunch break, the third session started with note of Hindu unity through a group song lead by Sheela Kene. She read quotes from Swami Vivekananda about contributions of Hindu thought for world progress and read his galvanizing message for Hindu unity uttered in 1897. She also urged temples to adopt service projects in India to attract new generation of Hindus and seniors who may be interested in spirituality through service.

The Co-chairman of the conference Keshav Patel explained the goal of HMEC to network with temples for sustaining Sanatan Hindu Dharma, which includes Jains, Sikhs and Buddhists.

Dr. Umesh Shukla highlighted HMEC achievements like Hindu American Vanprasthi Network (HAVAN), Coalition of Hindu Youth (CHY), priest conferences, several book publications and observance of Hindu Sewa Diwas through blood donation drives in the last 7



years.

Below are some important conclusions and resolutions for future direction of temples

- All temples will come together to celebrate one common festival under one roof to show unity and sense of community.
- All temples will participate in Sewa activity catering to mainstream American community once a year around October 2nd.



- A common symbol to identify Hindu temples will be displayed by every Hindu Temple.
- A common website will be created for effective networking amongst Southern California Hindu temples.
- Organize a drawing and coloring competition for

AUM throughout all temples.

The conference was concluded with a thank you note by Co-chairman Keshav Patel. He commended Sanatan Dharma Temple for hosting the event and including excellent food arrangements. The speech was followed by unity prayer and sound of AUM by all. ■

Some valuable suggestions from youth

■ **Raksha Kopparam, aged 16yrs, from Balvihar Irvine** suggested temples to create volunteering opportunities in teaching Balvihar children.

■ **Shan Shah, aged 15yrs and a Boy Scout**, said that late evening classes for youth will be convenient

■ **Sharad Bhatt, a young adult from Radha Krishna Mandir**, said answering "why" questions from young children about religion will nourish their intellect at an early age.

■ **Rishi, aged 14yrs**, said the temple should be a



to attend so parents do not have to bring children to morning Balvihar.

■ **Aditya Mistry, aged 15yrs from Radha Krishna Mandir**, suggested using modern technology for teaching stories from scriptures and to appoint a youth committee to plan youth events.

■ **Sriram Velmunikandan, aged 14yrs from Sanatan Dharma Temple**, proposed volunteering opportunities to involve youth in temples.

■ **Rohan, aged 13yrs from Sanatan Dharma Temple**, suggested having service projects for Hindus and audio/visual presentations about Hindu gods and courses on Hindu values.

■ **Sapna, a young adult from Sanatan Dharma Temple**, suggested having service projects for Hindu seniors to act as bridge between the generations.

■ **Tejomayananda, a young priest from Vedic Temple Montclair**, recommended proper explanation of symbolism to avoid misunderstanding about deities.

place for youth to get stress free time alone.

He urged temples to host Boy Scout meetings to bring children and youth to temples.

■ **Bhaskar, from Satya Sai Baba Sansthan**, recommended that service of any kind in temple is best way to reach spirituality within.

■ **Arin, a young adult from Hollywood Vedanta Temple**, emphasized that service through action of volunteering is way to introduce unity and spirit of Hindu community to mainstream.

■ **Kavita, a young attorney from Sindhu Center**, felt the need to bring awareness of social problems faced by Hindus through temple network such as emails and common websites. ■





300-year-old Sanskrit work by German released in Belgium

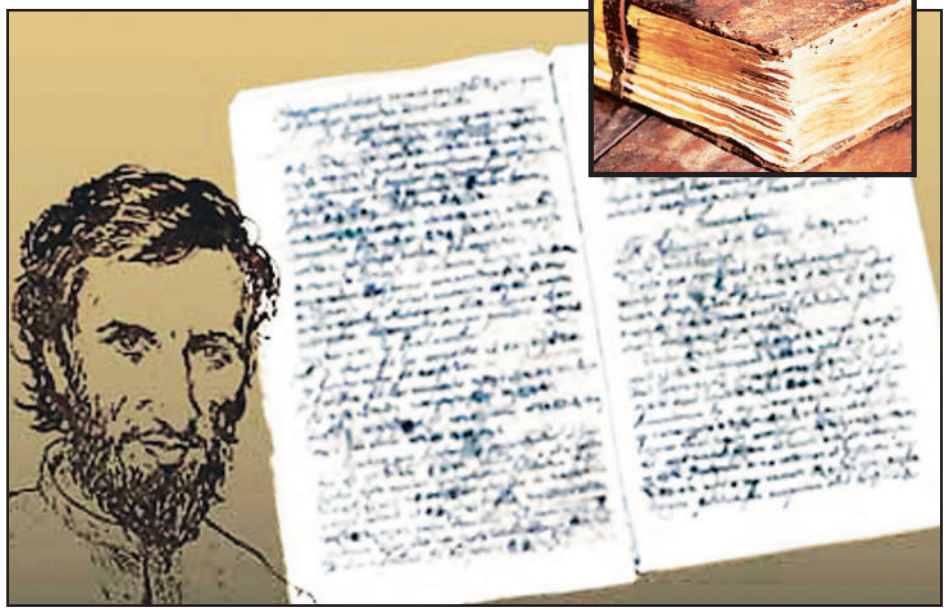
THRISSUR: A Sanskrit grammar written by German born grammarian, lexicographer and philologist Jesuit missionary Fr Johann Ernst Hanxleden, popularly known as Arnos Padre, was released in Belgium. The over 300-year-old work, considered one of the earliest missionary grammars in Sanskrit, was released on April 10, Fr Roy Thottathil SJ, Director of Arnos Padre Academy here, said.

He told PTI that he received an official communication in this regard from Prof Christophe Vielle and Prof Toon Van Hal of the Catholic University of Louvain, Belgium, editors and publisher of the book.

The 88-page manuscript of 'Grammatica Grandonica' was found missing for over three centuries and it was recovered last year by Hal from a Carmelite monastery's library in Montecompatri (Rome), Thottathil said.

Born at Ostercappeln near Osnabruck in Hanover, Germany, Hanxleden arrived in India on December 13, 1700, as a Jesuit missionary.

He built the Saint Francis Xavier's church at Velur near here in 1712 and spent his remaining days there.



The two professors had visited the church in January last year and other places related to the activities of Hanxleden, John Kalliath, Secretary of the Arnos Padre Research Institute told PTI.

The church and the building were declared as protected monuments by the Kerala government in 1994. Proficient in German, Sanskrit, Malayalam, Latin, Syriac, Portuguese and Tamil, Hanxleden compiled Malayalam-Portuguese and Sanskrit-Portuguese dictionaries. He mastered Sanskrit when even learning it was taboo for non-Brahmins and wrote several essays in Latin based on Ramayana and the Mahabharata. Hanxleden, who died of a snake bite at Pazhuvil near here in March 1732, made efforts to spread among European scholars and thinkers about India's cultural heritage and importance of Sanskrit. ■

timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/300-year-old-Sanskrit-work-by-German-released-in-Belgium/articleshow/19540570.cms?intenttarget=no



The Manuscript

HERITAGE: ARTHASHASTRA

Year Of The Guru

It has been hundred years since the discovery of Chanakya's great work from a manuscript

■ By Sugata Srinivasaraju

Against Amnesia

- This is the centenary year of the publication of Kautilya's Arthashastra
- The manuscript is in a cupboard in the director's office at the Oriental Research Institute, Mysore
- Its path breaking discovery, and publication, by Shamashastry altered our view of ancient Indian history
- The institute is still not clear how the centenary should be celebrated
- Shamashastry's family fears the event may go unnoticed

The Oriental Research Institute (ORI), set up in 1891 by the then Maharaja of Mysore, is a magnificent heritage building, blending architectural styles such as Gothic,

Corinthian and Romanesque, and housing nearly 60,000 palm-leaf manuscripts from antiquity.

What brought fame to the institute, however, was the discovery

among them of

Kautilya's

Arthashastra

some 100

years ago. A

manuscript of

the treatise on

politics and

governance,

believed to

have been

written circa

4th century

BC, was found

and identified by Rudrapatna Shamashastry, a refined scholar of Sanskrit who was the librarian and later the curator of the institute.

Shamashastry came across the work in a heap of manuscripts he was going through. This was in 1905.



Until it was identified from a manuscript by Shamashastry (left), Chanakya's opus was known only from references.

But it was 1909 by the time he transcribed, edited and published the Sanskrit edition, making the current year the centenary of his landmark publication. He then painstakingly rendered the work into English, publishing it to astounding ovation in 1915, by which time excerpts had already made appearances in journals like Indian Antiquity and Mysore Review, preparing Indologists across the world for the watershed appearance of the English edition.

All the fame of the work and its discovery, however,



do not seem to have inspired enough enthusiasm for careful preservation. Instead of a safe or a weatherproof glass case, the manuscript is brought out for viewing, after much persuasion, from an unlocked steel cupboard in the director's office. A wrapping of red cloth, and a spray of preservative

sounds in a script accessible to those who know Tamil.

At 'Asutosh', the house of Shamashastry in the Chamundipuram locality of Mysore, there's no electricity supply, but his portrait is illuminated by torchlight and brought down enthusiastically by his great grandson to be photographed. And the daughter-in-law explains that the house is



Nursery: The Oriental Research Institute, Mysore

citronyl oil, is all the protection the manuscript gets. Prof Jaganath, an expert in manuscriptology at the ORI, puts it all in perspective. "Don't expect an autograph of Chanakya on these palm leaves," he says. "This is perhaps only a recopy of a recopy made some 500-600 years ago. It was with a pandit in Tanjore, who handed it over to the institute not knowing what was written on it. Other such recopies were found elsewhere in India, but that was later, after our discovery." He explains that manuscript is in Sanskrit, but written out in the Grantha script, not Devanagiri. Since the Tamil script couldn't accommodate certain sounds from Sanskrit, Grantha was created to allow for the representation of those

named for the legendary Sir Asutosh Mookerjee of Calcutta University, who "encouraged my father-in-law a great deal and also visited our house when it was built". Family members bring out reprints of Shamashastry's other books and ask, "Do you think the university or the government will celebrate the centenary year?"

Their uncertainty is at odds with the magnitude of Shamashastry's discovery and the subsequent publication of Kautilya's work. Dr H.P. Devaki, director of the ORI, says, "The publication of Arthashastra not only gave a huge fillip to Sanskrit studies, but significantly altered our understanding of ancient India. A lot of course correction happened in history after this was



published. And since it touched upon subjects like law, politics, economics, trade, governance, diplomacy, war, weaponry, natural calamities, the vices and virtues of rulers, it also naturally attracted a lot of general interest." Even the genius and skulduggery of its

of 150 chapters.

F.W. Thomas, then the librarian of the India Office Library in London, had this to say about the work at the time of its English publication: "I can testify to the great value of the work, which sheds more light upon the realities of ancient India, especially as concerns administration, law,



The manuscript is preserved using citronella oil

author Kautilya—who was also known as Vishnugupta or by the patronymic Chanakya—was in the realm of myth before the discovery of the manuscript. It was well-known that Chanakya overthrew the Nanda dynasty and installed Chandragupta Maurya on the throne circa 321 BC, but scholars knew of him and his magnum opus only from references in other classical texts by people like Dandi, Bana, Vishnusarma, Mallinathasuri, or the Greek Megasthenes. Not until Shamashastry's labors of transcription and translation did it come to light that the original work was in 15 adhikarnas (or books) and a total

trade, war and peace, than any text we possess...." Vincent Smith, the author of the History of Ancient India, in the preface to the second edition of his book, makes this acknowledgement in 1913: "The description of the Maurya empire and administration...has been revised with special regard to the discovery and partial publication by Mr R. Shamashastry of the ancient treatise on the art of government, ascribed to Chanakya or Kautilya, the minister of Chandragupta Maurya." Several such revisions of history writing followed. Indologist J.F. Fleet, who wrote an introduction to the English edition,



was generous in his praise of Shamashastry: "We are, and shall always remain, under a great obligation to him for a most important addition to our means of studying the general history of ancient India."

The fame of Arthashastra and Shamashastry was so widespread that Krishnaraja Wodeyar IV, the then Maharaja of Mysore, had a strange encounter in Germany. At a party, he apparently

recorded by Mahadev Desai, the Mahatma's secretary: "Shastry told Gandhiji, 'Sir, in the ancient days, there used to be guides like Patanjali, Hemachandra, Vidyanaraya and others. Rulers today don't have such an advantage. You should lead the country towards morality.' Gandhiji smiled and said, 'Who will bell the cat? My orientation is slightly different; the minds of our people have to be rectified first.'" Asked how the ORI proposes to celebrate the centenary year of the publication of Arthashastra,



Legend & legacy: Shamashastry's son M.S. Srinivas at the family home

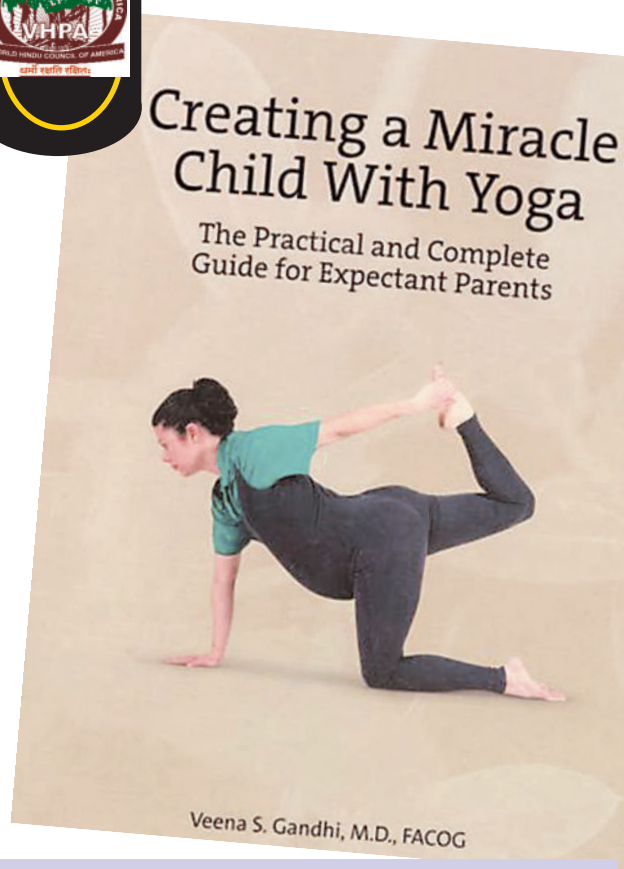
ran into the vice-chancellor of a German university and introduced himself, whereupon he was asked if he was from the land of Shamashastry. M.S. Srinivas, Shamashastry's son, now in his eighties, says, "The maharaja was so overwhelmed that on his return to Mysore, he invited my father and felicitated him. He also had the large-heartedness to say, 'In Mysore, I'm the king and you are my subject, but in the rest of the world, I'm known only through you.'" Accolades followed. In August 1919, the Oriental University, Washington DC, conferred a honorary doctorate on Shamashastry. Calcutta University followed suit in 1921; the same year, he was admitted to the Royal Asiatic Society and won the Campbell Memorial gold medal. There is also a record of Rabindranath Tagore complimenting Shamashastry. In 1927, Mahatma Gandhi met him in Nandi Hills. Prof A.V. Narasimha Murthy, a retired professor of ancient history, paraphrases the conversation, as

Devaki says, "We should do something and we will certainly do something, but then I am stepping down as director soon. My successor will make all the plans." But Prof Jaganath says the best way to commemorate the event is to study properly the several commentaries that have been written on the Arthashastra after the 12th century. The manuscript discovered by Shamashastry also carried a commentary on a small part by a writer named Bhattasvamin. The Mysore University, under whose jurisdiction the ORI comes, was given a Rs 100-crore grant in the 2008 Union budget. Perhaps it should set aside a small sum to commemorate the discovery of this great work. At present, it is only the Kautilya Circle, a roundabout on Radhakrishnan Avenue, that serves as a reminder of Mysore's great tryst with classical discovery. ■

www.outlookindia.com/article.aspx?250522



Book Review



Reviewed by Gaurang Vaishnav

Yoga has an important role in the physical, mental and spiritual well being of human being. This is a known and accepted fact but not everyone knows that yoga could also help conceive and nurture a life in womb and bring a healthy child in this world while at the same time help the mother to have least trouble in delivery.

This book, *Creating a Miracle Child with Yoga: The Practical and Complete Guide for Expectant Parents* assumes significance not only because it gives step by step guidance to achieve desired results written by a gynecologist with 40 years of experience in the USA but also because she is a practicing, certified teacher of Yoga.

The book starts with simple introduction to Yoga. It explains ashtang (eight fold), seven chakras, etc. and enumerates physical and spiritual benefits of yoga. This leads into preconception stage where Do's and Don'ts are given. Emphasis is laid on the couple spending positive, quality time together. Then the book details physical postures (Asanas) and

breathing exercises (Pranayama) to be practiced by the pregnant women during different stages of the pregnancy. Next it talks about importance of meditation and how it could be useful in a less stressful delivery. Emphasis is on sense of surrender developed by practice of daily meditation.

The chapter on Creating Life-Thrilling Experience with Labor contains chart of labor curve and also explains in detail process of actual delivery. Then the author moves on to Yogic Diet. Dr. Gandhi bolsters her argument of "you are what you eat" with this advice: It is not only important to count the calories that you consume, but also what you eat, when you eat, and with what attitude you eat. This chapter is useful for everyone in the family not only the expectant mother. There is also a chart of foods to eat under the heading of Nutrition Therapy for Morning Sickness.

Last three short chapters concentrate on Yoga and the Postpartum period and Beyond, sage advice in *Wisdom to Live By* and *As Your Baby Grows*. This finale emphasis incorporates of Yoga routine in daily life forever. Thus, it is understood that one should not think of following yogic practices for a short term gain but to utilize new found love for yoga to alter the way one lives and thinks about the life.

The book has several color photographs and illustrations so that the reader is able to understand how a yogic posture is to be maintained or how the breathing exercise has to be practiced. There are pictures of actual patients of Dr. Gandhi which make the book authentic. This book has extensive bibliography and glossary which makes it easy to follow the book for those who are not familiar with non-English terminology associated with yoga. The book has foreword by Sri Sri Ravi Shankar, spiritual head of Art of Living, blessings by Swami Ramdevji of Patanjali Yog Peeth and preface by US based famous Ayurvedic practitioner, Vasant lad. Hard cover book, published by Abbot Press is priced at \$44.99. The book is available at Amazon.com or contact the author at gandhiom1943@yahoo.com. ■

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HINDU WEDDING: THE GUIDE

■ **Reviewed by Ankit Tiwari**

After decades of being asked to officiate Hindu weddings in the United States, Dr. A.V. Srinivasan penned two books to serve as a guide for those interested in the Vedic marriage. The

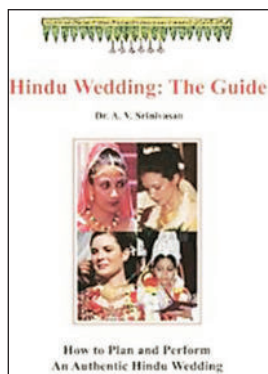
Vedic Wedding: Origins, Tradition and Practice is the comprehensive volume aimed at explaining the origins, motivations, traditions and rites of the traditional Vedic marriage ceremony. The book explains the first occurrences of marriage in the Vedas and the Hindu epics such as the Ramayan and Mahabharat. The customs performed during modern-day Hindu weddings can be traced to practices described in these scriptures. Dr. Srinivasan uses quotes in Sanskrit with English transliteration and explanation to illuminate the relevant scriptural passages.

A major part of the motivation for this book is

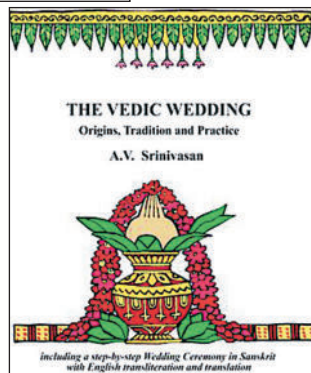
help those young people in the West who will be part of Hindu marriages understand the task they are about to undertake. Dr. Srinivasan cites that many first generation immigrants such as the parents of the bride and groom, or their relatives do not know the significance of the marriage rites. In India they may not have been expected to know what each specific ritual meant or may not have been interested. However, the author has encountered young adults in the West who are interested and have asked him for assistance in understanding this process. This also applies to marriages where bride and groom are not necessarily from a Hindu background. The explanation of the traditions and customs help those young adults and their families understand what they are partaking in. This helps build a sense of inclusiveness and encourages people appreciate similarities between wedding rites in various cultures. To help with this learning process the book includes a chapter on the motivations and meanings of certain essential practices during the ceremony such as such as the sankalpam, kanyadaa, and saptapadi. The next chapter of the book, which is extensive, is a detailed explanation of performing the wedding ceremony. This includes preliminary steps such as gathering materials, mandap arrangement, possible rehearsals, baraat festivities

and greeting ceremonies. The preliminary explanations are followed by instructions for performing the various mantras, puja, and yagna rituals. This section outlines the basics of the wedding which should be a part of any Hindu wedding. The book also contains a collection of appendices describing wedding attire, horoscope matching, and the basics of the Hindu calendar. One of the most

useful appendices is a collection of additional ceremonies that may be conducted as part of the wedding. These are performed based on the geographical and local traditions of Hindu families. This allows couples and families to enrich their marriage experience by including aspects of the ceremony which may not be practiced in certain parts of India. The second book Hindu Wedding: The Guide is a shorter book composed of text from the larger The Vedic Wedding: Origins, Tradition and



Book Review



Practice. This book is trimmed down to be used as a guide for the practical act of planning and performing a Hindu wedding. The material is taken from the first book but is arranged as a simple how-to guide and can provide excellent information for those participating in the marriage

ceremony and those who may be interested in officiating them. Dr. Srinivasan's efforts are a great boon to the Hindu community outside of India. These books help those who are curious about this very important stage of their lives. These explanations help bring gravitas to the marriage ceremony. Understanding the process lets those young adults engaging in the marriage understand the importance of their new vows and make them active participants in their wedding ceremony and opposed to distancing them from it because of lack of meaning and context ■

The Vedic Wedding: Origins, Tradition and Practice comes with a CD of all of the chants involved in the wedding ceremony as an aid to correct intonation and pronunciation. Above books are available at amazon.com and other similar retailers.



European Roma Gypsies carry Indian bloodline: Study

■ *By Kumar Chellappan*

In what could be a major turning point in the global socio-cultural-political landscape, an inter-continental team of scientists drawn out from Asia, Europe and the USA has found that the ancestors of the European Roma are the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes from north-western India.

"We have proved scientifically that the forefathers of the European Roma Gypsies are the domia, a collective term for the ancient aboriginal populations of the Indian subcontinent, also known as Dalits," Dr Kumaraswamy Thangaraj from Centre for Cellular and Molecular Biology, Hyderabad told The Pioneer. Dr Thangaraj led the team of scientists in the 30-month-long study. The scientists were from CCMB, Estonian Biocentre, Tartu University, Estonia, University of Bern, Switzerland; University of Cambridge, UK and Stanford University, USA. The ancestry of European Roma Gypsies was always enmeshed in controversy though it was widely believed that they had their origins from north-west India. The exact parental population group and time of dispersal into various continents remained a mystery all these years. This is the first time a scientific research has proved that the Gypsies in Europe have an Indian Dalit origin.

The Roman Gypsies are spread all over Europe, the USA and South America. Dr Gyaneshwer Chaubey from Estonian Biocentre said the breakthrough was made by studying the Y Y

chromosomes of the Gypsies with that of various ethnic groups in Indian subcontinent. "The Y chromosome is passed on from father to sons and grandsons. All males of a family or gotra evolved from a single founder male will possess the same Y chromosome," Dr Chaubey explained from Estonia through video-conferencing. He said the parental lineage of the Gypsies was traced based on the genetic signatures existing on





chromosomes.

Nearly 10,000 males from around the world, including 7,000 males belonging to 205 ethnic population of India were screened by the scientific team which included molecular biologists, anthropologists and linguistic experts. "The aboriginal Scheduled Tribes and Scheduled Castes populations of north-western India, traditionally referred as Dalits or domas are the most likely ancestral populations of modern European Roma," said Dr Thangaraj. The genome sequencing and genetic studies proved that the Doma group had their origins in south India. "Their migration to other regions of the sub-continent began 24,000 years ago. We could establish that they migrated to Europe some 1,400 years ago," said Dr Chaubey. Dr S Kalyanaraman, director, Saraswathi Research Centre, Chennai said the language of the Gypsies itself had its origin from India.



"The language of Gypsies also appears in the Comparative Dictionary of Indo-Aryan languages of RL Turner."

"Many words of the Gypsy people are now part of the European vocabulary. For example, the word 'goro' in Gypsy language means 'non-gypsy married to a gypsy'. This word got

absorbed in many Indian languages referring to 'gora' as meaning 'white or red'. The word 'dom' refers to a Nuri Gypsy. The word also appears cognate with 'roma' referring to a Roman. In Gypsy language, rom means 'man, husband,' said Dr Kalyanaraman, who has authored a multi-lingual dictionary of 25 ancient Indian languages including the language of the Gypsies.

"Our next step is to sequence the complete genomes of hundreds of Indians which will help us to find the relation and direction of migration among the Indians, Central Asians, West Asian and Europeans," said Dr Thangaraj and Dr Chaubey.

What is of significance is that a 2009 and 2011 research by Dr Thangaraj and Dr Chaubey in association with another group of international scientists proved that the Aryan-Dravidian theory was bunkum. "Human genome sequencing and genetic studies proved that

Indians all over the sub-continent had the same genetic traits. The physical traits differed because of external factors like climate, food habits and living conditions. We have found that there is no scientific validity for arguments like Aryan Invasion or Aryan-Dravidian theory. Classifications based on caste

and religion are of recent origin and has nothing to do with genetic traits," said Dr Thangaraj and Dr Chaubey.

www.dailypioneer.com/home/online-channel/360-todays-newspaper/112848-european-roma-gypsies-carry-indian-bloodline-study.html



Returning Home to India

■ *By Kalpita Abhyankar*

When leaving, my heart had wanted to stay back; it was an indescribable feeling. Maybe it was the air, water or soil. Or maybe it was being woken up every morning by shy rays of the sun, sweet songbirds softly singing to their babies, and crooning roosters shaking the sleepiness away. This was a rare sound to hear back in New York. But being in Mumbai, one of the largest metropolises in India, I was able to hear nature.

This trip had great importance for me because not only was I visiting my family after seventeen years, but I also had an opportunity to reconnect with my birthplace. As any new traveler, I was nervous about what to expect. The media had always presented a mixed portrayal of India, sometimes highlighting its poverty and other times its rapid development. With all this, I didn't know what it would be like to come back home.

Upon arriving, I felt the warm embrace of my family. Reconnecting with family was a very pleasant

experience. I experienced all the things I missed these past years. It was fun to help out in the kitchen; I learned all the traditional dishes that were my family's favorites. By the end of the trip, I had perfected my roti rolling skills to have them come out round every time and had even made homemade churned crock of butter. The welcoming feeling of meeting new people did not end after the first few days but continued throughout my visit. I found that like a banyan tree, the values of

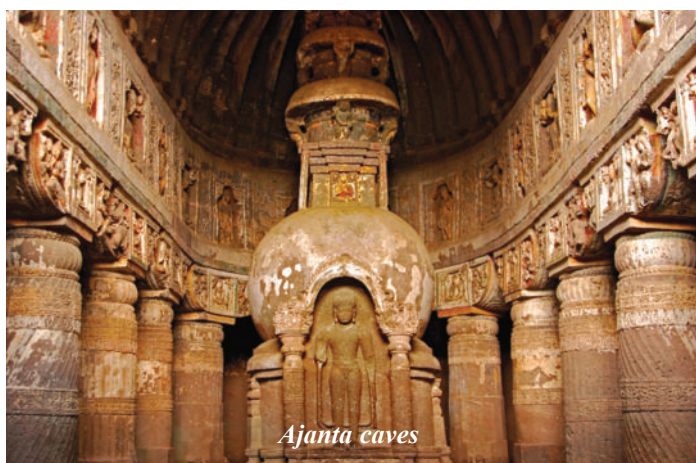
My Experiences of Visiting India after Seventeen Years

Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam, perceiving the whole world as one family, were deeply rooted in the culture of this country.

I experienced a unique sense of adventure everywhere I went. The train rides on the local were thrilling, and yelling out 'rickshaw' on the busy streets was always an experience. The trips to the local market to find

freshly picked veggies and fruits (mangoes at the end of the season) were completely different from the hurried grocery store shopping I was used to in the States. I would always discover something dynamic and unique; it was good old local small business, a precious rarity that might be threatened with the current rise of malls.

As I toured several historical places, I realized that this trip wasn't just about sightseeing. It was like taking a journey in the footsteps of these valiant heroes of the past, one that gave me a sense of belonging and pride. It was an emotional adventure climbing forts and going



Ajanta caves



through caves abundant with history. I sensed the true emotions of bravery, pride and a closeness that cannot be described in words. Climbing through the ancient Ajanta caves allowed me to witness first-hand the vast progressiveness of an ancient society. Walking through Panhala Fort in Kohlapur was thrilling. We were in the heart of a Mughal base, complete with canons and all weapon finery. When Shivaji, the great Maratha leader was held captive here for the longest time, what must he have gone through? It was with great boldness that he must have made the moonless night escape with his soldiers down a side of the mountain, which was considered impassable. Oh, the feeling I experienced when I felt I was walking alongside the footprints of a



Mathura

valiant man! This wasn't the only place such an emotion was evoked. When walking through the streets of Mathura, I was inside the very prison where Shri Krishna was born. I passed by the great open bath where demons such as Kansa and Putana had once bathed. How would it have looked when Krishna was exploring the city?

Traveling around India has opened my eyes to the realities of the average Indian. Great economic advances have been made in the past few decades, but along with those, there still exist some old and new challenges. This is understandable because in some sense, the Republic of India is still a relatively young state. India's advantage is that the groundwork for it to become great is already in place, through the ancient Hindu values engrained in society. These values form



Thrilling local train rides

a strong foundation for the country. A real challenge India faces is to ensure that these engraved values do not gradually disappear. I envision a future India with a strong symbiosis between material progress and spiritual knowledge.

I realize now how truly lucky I am to have a mother whose beauty includes not only the robust sun-burnt deserts, with lush diverse forests and balmy, raging rapids, but is also enhanced by the cultural gems hidden in the people, their rich samskaar. Such purity and natural divinity can't be described, but must be felt from within. While I was waiting for the taxi to come take me to the Mumbai airport, I bowed to Bharat Mata. I thanked her for the shelter of my birth and for giving me the opportunity to learn, explore, and implement great values. With moist eyes I didn't say my goodbye, but as is the custom, whispered, "I'll be back, now that I have come home." ■

About the author

Kalpita, currently first year Medical student in Lake Erie college of osteopathic medicine at Greensburg PA, completed her bachelor's in biology from Macaulay Honors College at the College of Staten Island. She has worked with a public health initiative called Shape Up NYC, through the Americorps program and she may be contacted at: Kalpita.abhyankar@gmail.com





Ruins of a 17th century Hindu temple found

A

government civil construction work has led to the chance-discovery of ruins of 17th century Hindu temple in Odisha's Kendrapara district.

A two-member team of experts from State Archaeology Department (SAD) yesterday inspected the site near the district Collectorate here and examined the three-foot-tall stone-structure, official sources said today. Construction workers were digging the boundary wall of planning and coordination department office building at a place in front of the district collector's office here when their tools struck a large stone structure. The stone structure has been taken possession of by the district administration even as the chance-discovery has sparked off a raging debate over the genesis of the temple.

SAD archaeologist Sachindra Rajguru said the stone structure dug out from the site could be that of a summit structure otherwise called 'Dadhinauti' of a Hindu temple. "From the character of the stone, we are of the view that the structure is of 400 to 500 years old", he said.

"We inspected the site where the discovery was made and came across several stone blocks which are quite old. It might be construed that the place of the construction work once housed a temple. The spot must be replete with ruins of the temple," the archaeologist said.

"After on-the-spot inspection, the department has asked the district administration to stop any form of digging or excavation work at the site and to ensure the safety of the relics lying beneath, the SAD would conduct another survey by experts very shortly", said Superintendent, SAD, B P Roy.

The administration following SAD's advice has stopped construction work at the site where the district planning and coordination office building was being planned to be set up.

Recently the said plot was under unauthorized occupation and occupants were evicted, said Collector Kendrapara Durga Prasad Behera.

The stone structure believed to be of a temple has been



preserved at the Collectorate building, he added. Meanwhile, researchers opined that the ruins of the temple were that of the Baldevjew that was demolished during the reign of Mughals. The Baldevjew temple in its present shape and form was later rebuilt in mid-18th Century during the reign of Marathas.

Researcher Basudev Das said the relics that have been found are that of Baldevjew temple.

"There is plenty of historical proof of it. Hunter's history of Orissa, Dr Harekrushna Mahtab's Orissa history and journal of Bihar and Orissa research society, volume-2, part-3, page -382 throws ample light on the destruction of Baldevjew temple during the Mughal rule," he said.

Thus the urgent need of the hour is that an archaeological excavation of the site needs to be conducted to unravel the temple relics, Das said.

Meanwhile, Tulashi Unnayana Parishad, a local socio-cultural outfit, has stepped up demand for preservation the temple relics inside the safety of the collectorate building.

"The site needs be conferred protected status and archaeologists should undertake the excavation of the site without further delay," said Girish Chandra Kar, the outfit secretary.

www.deccanherald.com/content/320724/ruins-17th-century-hindu-temple.html



The Miracle of *Sri Sathya Sai Baba*

■ *By Dr. Hiro Badlani*

(Based on articles published in the
Special Sai Volume 2012 of India Today)

Sri Sathya Sai Baba (1926-2011), the most famous holy man of India in the recent times, was somewhat an enigma in his life time. He was well-known for many miracles like producing the holy ash, watches, pearls, Shiva Lingams etc. from nowhere. There were some skeptics, who would denounce him as a trickster, called manifestations of these articles simply as "sleight of hand" and "magic illusions". But there were so many more persons, who had developed faith in him and they would vouch that these were all real; to them these were acts of spiritualism or higher consciousness by the divine avatar-the God incarnate as he was worshipped by millions across the globe. Indeed there were also many who had initially denounced him as an imposter but later after meeting with him personally and seeing his work had completely changed their views and even became his life-time followers. The phenomenon of miracles is not new; it has been there from the most ancient times. It is said that spiritualism or meta-physics is also a science, which has not yet been fully recognized, but it will be one day. This article is written to present his life-time work and mission in objective manner. It is most likely that as in the case of Swami Vivekananda his role as Hindu spiritual hero will unfold gradually more and more in history as the years and decades will role by.

There is a big difference between the miracles of a magician and a true spiritual person. The miracles of Sri Sathya Sai Baba have been hailed as true happenings rather than illusions by so many-amongst them are scores of very well-known philanthropists, politicians, governors,



presidents, ministers, physicians, literary giants, authors, journalists, priests, musicians, artists, judges, sports heroes, technocrats, industrialists, army chiefs-persons of highest caliber from all walks of life, and coming from all corners of the world. Such an endorsement would simply not be possible in the case of a trickster.

The life-story of Sri Sathya Sai Baba too is most amazing. Born in a humble family in the small



village Puttaparthi in Andhra Pradesh, India, he was so poor that he had to sew his own clothes with the help of a thorn. He had to wade

through a river to go to his school. Soon however he announced his spiritual plans rather suddenly and boldly, "I no longer belong to you; My devotees are calling." He also revealed his identity as the reincarnation of Sai Baba of Shirdi-the famous saint who had died earlier in 1918. The divine journey thereafter was rather meteoric. Temples, hospitals, educational institutes and village improvement centers were built in quick succession. He re-defined the role of religion; service in different sectors became the main function of religion. For more than 6 decades, he worked tirelessly, unceasingly and sincerely without any fanfare. What he did is much beyond the scope of an ordinary human being to perform in one life-time. It is nearly impossible to describe all what he accomplished; some important landmark activities are mentioned below:

Prasanthi Nilayam, his main activity center, provides accommodation to devotees coming from different places all over the world; sometimes numbering over 100,000 on festive occasions. The highlight of the Ashram was the Darshan that Baba would give twice a day, every single day.

Even today nowhere there is a hundi-donation box or any other money collection facility inside the temple. Anyone desiring to donate may do so with the State Bank of India branch, which is provided in the Ashram premises. All the service projects too-water projects, healthcare, education institutes etc. -are run totally free of any charge. The Ashram magazine Sanathana Sarathi in which Baba personally wrote regularly for over quarter of century is locally published in English and Telugu. The international editions of magazine are published in Chinese, German, Greek, Hungarian, Italian, Japanese, Portuguese, Romanian, Russian, and Spanish from the respective country headquarters. The magazine is devoid of any commercial motive and carries no advertisements.



Satya Sai revealed his identity as the reincarnation of Sai Baba of Shirdi

Baba himself lived for over 43 years in a small room 8 feet by 10 feet with very simple furniture. Only few years back, he moved in another location at the insistence of his devotees.

The alumni as well as students of the educational institutes of the Ashram actively participate in free village service activities, free medical camps, serving food to the poor, coaching academically to the weak children, teaching the blind, attending to the elderly in old age homes, entertaining children in orphanages, visiting patients in the hospitals, visiting prisoners and inter-acting with them etc.

Although he did not pursue the formal education and dropped out at the tender age of 14, he later became the treasure-trove of spiritual knowledge. Everyone from Tibetan monks to Islamic scholars, Hindu pundits to Christian clergy, Sikh savants to Buddhist preachers visited him and discussed religious philosophies. They were amazed at his deep understanding of their respective religious tenets and admired his insights. If one goes to the international Sathya Sai Baba Organization website



(www.sathyasai.org), to the search engine found there and types in almost any spiritual item/term, one would find references to numerous of his discourses, which reveal multiple facets of the subject in the most profound and simple way. The 'Vahini' series of books that he authored convey the greatest spiritual truths in easy and practical terms. 'Sathya Sai Speaks'-- number of volumes containing passages from his various talks through years--give good account of all aspects of Hindu religion and philosophy in great detail and offer glimpses from all major scriptures of Hinduism, especially the Srimad Bhagavad Gita. The books have been translated in number of languages and are read by millions of people all across the globe. Over the years, he created a vast army of volunteers. At their homes, they could be farmers, doctors, truck-drivers, professors, bankers, government officers, carpenters, laborers, or corporate executives; they could be from any place and belong to any religion. But here they worked in all humility and passion to render service to mankind in all different sectors. They travel to-and-fro to Prasanthi Nilayam at their own expense. This 'Love Army' is a practical demonstration of Baba's often repeated advice, 'Love all, Serve all'. The number of volunteers registered to offer service from menial to clerical service exceeds 600,000. Baba's entire work rests on this devoted cadre.

Rooted in Baba's teaching of 'Help Ever, Hurt Never', the Sathya Sai Healthcare System is propelled by the currency of unconditional love. The Healthcare system has now expanded into a network of general hospitals, super-specialty hospitals, mobile medical hospitals, medical camps, virtual hospitals and charitable beds in city hospitals, all at no cost to the patients. Sathya Sai International Centre for Medical Services was established with its main hub in Los Angeles, USA. A consortium of international surgeons, physicians, pharmacists, nurses and medical technicians, it runs world class international camps around the globe completely free of charge. Baba's unprecedented water projects have not only

rescued millions of neglected people, but are also serving as a universal model for authorities to follow. The highlight of Baba's water project is swiftness and efficiency of action. The four herculean projects were



executed in a span of 12 years. Nearly 5,020 km of pipeline was laid across 1,500 villages to provide pure drinking water to 10 million people. He thus accomplished in just 18 months what the government could not do in 50 years.

Over the years, the Sathya Sai Organization has completed similar water projects in El Salvador in Central America providing safe drinking water for about 2,000 families. These projects have been appreciated and recognized as role models at the highest level in global forums.

Be it an earthquake, flood or famine anywhere, Sai Volunteers are on the forefront to help the needy,



driven by Baba's teaching of 'Love All, Serve All'. All these service projects, both in different parts of India as well as in many other countries, are conducted free of cost, without any publicity, with high level of discipline, and with much love and compassion as the guiding principles. In the past, these natural disaster projects have been carried out in Gujarat earthquake, tsunami in Tamil Nadu, floods in Orissa, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, and Maharashtra. More recently service projects have been carried out in Sikkim earthquake, Odisha floods, Bihar floods, and Chennai floods. Similar Disaster Service Projects have also been conducted overseas in Japan earthquake and tsunami, Indonesia earthquake/volcano eruption, Haiti earthquake, East African famine, and many other places. In Cuba for instance, no one has traveled to India, but there are 108 Sai groups on that island. There is no religious freedom in that country, but thousands of Sai devotees meet to express their love for Sai. Sri Sathya Sai Baba has not trained Sanyasins or

monks, but ordinary men and women capable of addressing their own transformation in order to transform the world around them for a real change within. He never claimed anytime that he was starting a new Sai-religion. On the other hand he quoted very extensively from many Hindu scriptures. He also emphasized the oneness of all religious teachings. His multitudes of followers worshipped him as God. When asked, "Are you God?" he simply replied, "Yes. You too are God. God you think, God you are. Dust you think, dust you are." These quotes too echo very closely the ancient Vedic teachings: Ekam Sat, Viprah Bahuti-"There is one Truth, the sages call by many names"-Rig Veda, Aham Brahmasmi: "I am Brahman."-Yajur Veda. ■

About the author

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Venezuela's New President Maduro a Sai Baba devotee

Nicolás Maduro, declared winner of the presidential election in Venezuela, is an ardent devotee of Sathya Sai Baba and even has a large portrait of the late spiritual guru in his office in Caracas. A former bus driver, trade union leader and bodyguard, Maduro had even visited Sai Baba at Puttaparthi in Andhra Pradesh in 2005, along with his wife Cilia Fores, to seek the spiritual guru's blessings, according to those associated with the Sai Baba trust. Sai Baba had breathed his last in 2011. "When he visited Prashantinilayam in 2005 along with the



minister of education, Baba gave an audience to him and his family. He was then minister of foreign affairs," the Sathya Sai Central Trust has said in a statement after he was named interim president.

Legendary Venezuelan leader Hugo Chavez had named him his successor before he died March 5 this year after battling cancer.

"He (Maduro) was accompanied by his wife Cilia Flores who was then the president of the legislature. One of the founders of the 5th Republic Movement, Maduro, who has always had a photograph of Baba in his office, has had an illustrious career."

According to the Sai trust, Venezuela enjoys a pride of place among the 113 countries in which the movement is active. The first Sai Centre was opened in Caracas in 1974, while the first workshop for EHV (education in human values) teachers was held in 1987. The trust also runs a school and the Institute of Human values, besides holding medical camps for the needy and public meetings in several cities of Venezuela to inform people about Sai Baba and his work. ■

www.hindustantimes.com/StoryPage/Print/1044646.aspx



Harvard University Team Studying the Kumbh Mela



A multidisciplinary team of over 50 faculty, staff and student researchers from Harvard University traveled to Allahabad, India in January 2013 to document and analyze the processes involved in the successful functioning of the Kumbh Mela, the world's largest religious festival that occurs every twelve years, lasts 55 days, and draws millions of visitors to a temporary, purpose-built tent city on the banks of the Ganges and Yamuna.

This year-long interfaculty project is coordinated by the South Asia Institute at Harvard University and the Harvard Global Health Institute, as part of their focus on Urbanization. The brief below highlights the multi school research, touching upon interdisciplinary issues across a number of complementary fields - urban studies and design, religious and cultural studies, environmental science and public health, technology and communications.



● Religion and the Humanities:

Professor Diana Eck led a group of graduate and undergraduate researchers who studied aspects of the Kumbh Mela related to religion and the environment. Professor Eck and her students visited several akharas (Hindu religious organizations), including the Juna Akhara, one of the oldest such organizations in India. Research topics included: the ritual use of flowers and their environmental impact at the Kumbh Mela; diversity of sacred trees; the Ganges River- both its pollution and the effects of dams; the relationship between faith and science; religious performances at the Kumbh Mela, including lilas or playfulness, as part of the rituals; the Green Kumbh movement; and the various religious groups and their identity at the Kumbh Mela.

● Urbanism at the Kumbh Mela:

Professor Rahul Mehrotra led a team of graduate student researchers whose goal was to map the Kumbh Mela. At the macro level, students documented the spaces at the Kumbh Mela using two- and three-dimensional media, including plans and sections,



diagrams, perspectives and aerial photography and film. The team explored two complementary conditions: (1) the physical structure of the settlements, including the hierarchy of residential sectors, the attribution of spaces for public amenities, the location and organization of infrastructures, and the proximity of these spaces to the Sangam, the confluence of the holy rivers; and (2) the temporal, fleeting events that define the festival in a much more ephemeral way, including the routes that the pilgrims take between different parts of the city, the moments of bathing, and the nighttime celebrations. Among other issues, the group is exploring how these two parts function together, and how the systems that emerge can be applied to sustainable urban design in other nations and contexts. At the micro level, the team commenced documentation of the design and construction of the individual akharas and the temporary settlements of the pilgrims who reside at the Kumbh Mela for the 55 days of the festival.

● Business at the Kumbh Mela:

There were two teams of researchers from Harvard Business School at the Kumbh Mela. The first team has been engaged in a clinical study of the structure and governance of the Kumbh in order to understand how large scale urban infrastructure can be deployed in reasonably short order. The output for this research will be a series of articles and case studies focused on distilling implications for public policy and management.

The second team is conducting an econometric study of the formation of networks and groups in large scale, diverse, and reasonably inchoate settings. The study uses primary data collected in real time during the weeks of the Kumbh, as well as a proprietary cell phone usage dataset.

● Public Health at the Kumbh Mela:

Two teams of public health academics and experts, medical doctors, and students examined the health system at the Kumbh Mela.

Study around sanitation - One research group documented the diversity and services of toilet facilities constructed for use during the festival. These toilets range from a simple corrugated metal or canvas enclosure around a drainpipe channeling liquid waste into the ground, to sophisticated "bio-toilets" that use bacteria to convert solid waste into liquid that is then filtered and leached into the earth.

Health surveillance study - A second team is working



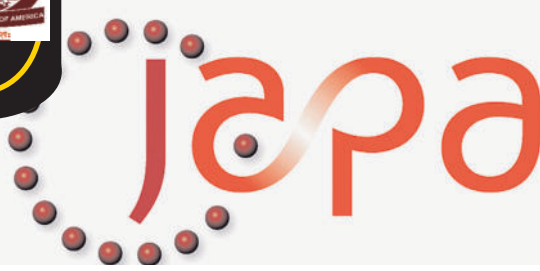
closely with the festival's health administrators, local public health students, and volunteer researchers on a health surveillance study at the Kumbh Mela, which aims to collect daily data on every patient visit at a representative cross-section of Kumbh Mela sector hospitals. The group seeks to understand how disease occurrence during the Kumbh Mela may be clustered, and to explore the provision of allopathic health care to this transient population. Specifically, the team hopes to digitize and analyze the data from five hospitals located in densely occupied sectors. Results from the surveillance team could be useful to the Kumbh Mela health care providers as it identifies spikes in disease and trends seen in real time. Data and results will be shared with officials and local health care providers, and could shed light on planning for subsequent religious gatherings.

● Next Steps:

Through exchange of knowledge between disciplines, the research and development from "Mapping of the Kumbh Mela" project will result in building educational tools and resources pertinent to the study of religion, urban design, business, and global health. The project will also lead to possible solutions to issues such as the design for disaster and medical response, rapid urbanization, management of public goods and services, communication & connectivity through mobile technology, and health care for large populations inhabiting temporary settlements. ■

For more information, please visit:

Main project Page: southasiainstitute.harvard.edu/kumbh-mela/



■ **By Madhumita Rao (9th Grade), Natick MA**

Japa is the repeated chanting of a mantra or shloka. Manu, a well-known Hindu lawgiver said, "The seeker after truth reaches the highest goal by Japa." Japa comes from the root word jap- which means "to murmur in a soft voice." Japa is a very important practice that is often considered to be the best way to pray. Many times when one goes to a temple or ashram, he/she will see the devotees sitting and repeating his/her favorite form of Ishwara's name. Japa is a very good way to show devotion to Ishwara, because sound is a result of devotion and thought. Sound is the expression of one's feelings. By doing Japa, the mind is being awakened to the

presence of Ishwara. Since it is often hard to keep the mind focused on the chanting of Ishwara, a string of beads called a Japa Mala is used. It usually has 108 beads, which is the multiplication of the 12 months in a year (cyclic time) and the 9 planets (universe). The mala is usually made with Tulsi beads or Rudraksha. The 108 beads show how Ishwara is omniscient and omnipotent because he takes up all time and space. After each time the person says the mantra, he or she will continue to think of Ishwara while rotating the beads. If a person is distracted, he/she will not rotate the bead. When they realize that they are not using their hands anymore, they will refocus on the Japa and the beads. The Japa Mala keeps a person focused on the task of devoting his/her time to Ishwara. When a disciple of a guru does Japa, it is a way for the disciple to reach Moksha or self-realization. Self-discipline is key during Japa, and distraction is not allowed. AUM is often a mantra that is repeated during Japa. AUM is a very significant mantra that represents Brahman, and repeating it is a true form of worship. Ultimately, the chanting of Ishwara's name or Japa, is a very important Hindu practice that will help people attain Moksha. ■

To learn Hindi, Chinese turn to Ramayana

■ **By Chitra Unnithan**

AHMEDABAD: Students at universities in China are getting lessons on human values from the great Hindu epic - Ramayana.

Wise sayings from Valmiki's text are being adapted by the universities teaching Hindi in China and are being made relevant to the current world situations. At least six leading universities in China including the prestigious Peking University, the Beijing Foreign Studies University as well as colleges in different parts of China are teaching Hindi, which has become a popular foreign language in China. "We are taught verses from Ramayana as part of literature classes at the university," said Eric Huidram, a student-turned Chinese translator and interpreter from Manipur. Several universities in the US have included reading the Ramayana as part of comparative humanities and literature sessions on Asia. It was through the efforts of Chinese indologist Ji Xianlin that many Chinese learnt the language of Sanskrit and the epic Ramayana. Ji, who founded the Department of Eastern Languages at Peking University, translated Ramayana from the original Sanskrit to Chinese

in poetry form. Ji's translated work of Ramayana and Mahabharata will be displayed at the culture park being planned at Kailash Mansarovar by India China Economic and Cultural Council (ICEC). "The Chinese version of Ramayana will be kept in a library at the park for visitors and researchers to read. We will also run it in the in-house television at the culture park," said Jagat Shah, convenor, Kailash Mansarovar Cultural Park and chairman, ICEC-Gujarat. The project is being handled by Shah from his office in Ahmedabad. Besides a library, the cultural park will have a museum, a research lab for studying the geographic impacts and the changes that have occurred in Kailash Mansarovar over a period of time, a language center to learn about and share different cultures and religions and an information centre. At a recent summit to discuss about logistics of the park, ICEC also invited people who have already visited Kailash Mansarovar to understand the journey from the pilgrims' point of view. ■

articles.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/2012-10-26/ahmedabad/34749549_1_ramayana-indologist-ji-xianlin



Hindus Fleeing Pakistan

■ **By Rahul Chandra**

In 1951, Hindus made up approximately 22% Pakistan's population. According to the 1998 census that number has dropped dramatically to 1.7% of the population. There are still 3 million Hindus that call Pakistan home today with a majority of them living in Sindh. The Hindus like other minorities in Pakistan live in poverty with little



Pakistani Hindu at temporary camp in Rajasthan.

access to education or employment. Most work as bonded laborers or take up menial jobs in the cities. This also makes Hindus in Pakistan an easy target for violence and genocide.

It was in late December 2012, I came to know that a group of Hindu refugees from Pakistan had arrived in India on religious visas and had been living there for the past 3 months. I went there with a VHP sponsored team with food aid. The stories that the refugees had to tell us were heart rending and tragic. Hindus are deprived of their basic human rights and face brutality and oppression in their day to day lives according to these first person accounts.

A woman named Rupa Ram tells the tale of her sister who was kidnapped on her marriage day. According to Rupa, her only fault was that she looked beautiful as bride. During the small marriage procession, someone spotted and kidnapped her. Her

body was found later with gruesome physical injuries. She says that such incidents made Pakistani Hindus stop the traditional marriage processions. More than joy, marriage nowadays just invokes fear of kidnapping or assault among Pakistani Hindus. She goes on to recount her day to day struggle to maintain a Hindu identity in the face of such difficult circumstances. She however gave up all hope when her nine year old son was brutally assaulted while he was lighting candles outside his home to celebrate

Diwali. He later succumbed to his injuries. She was so overcome with emotions after recounting her tale that she had to be taken away by other women to rest inside the camp.

Chatra Bai, a woman in her late 80's said that Hindu men were often forced to leave their families behind and go to other towns and cities in search of work. In their absence the women became easy prey for the local Muslims, who shackled and assaulted them in public with no fear of consequences.

Kidnapping of young Hindu

women, forcible conversions and marriages to their kidnappers in Pakistan has been widely reported over the past couple of years by the international press. In Pakistan, according to the refugees, Hindus are neither allowed to cremate their loved ones nor are they allowed to bury their dead in the local graveyards as Muslims fear that such a burial will poison the land. Most poor Hindus are therefore forced to bury their dead at an isolated place like a field or in nearby forest areas.

Most of these refugees were born before 1947 in undivided India and stayed behind in Pakistan after the partition. They lived fairly normal lives according to Khia Ram, the group leader till the demolition of Babri structure. That according to him started the attack on minorities, which coincides with an observed increase in the insurgency in Kashmir. The Jihadist and reactionary forces in Pakistan took



this opportunity to spread sectarian riots between the Shias and Sunnis in Pakistan and commit atrocities on the minorities who have no voice. Khia Ram also says recently in suburban Islamabad, Muslims came in large numbers with bulldozers and demolished a temple. Many Hindus came out to protest this act which allegedly resulted in violence killing 25 Hindus. Police were called to disperse the crowd but no arrests were made nor were any attempt made to identify the assailants.



Hindus are forced to bury their dead at an isolated place like a field or in nearby forest areas



Panoramic view of Pakistani Hindu Refugee 'Jattha' group based at Rajasthan who migrated from Pakistan. Around 220 people including 110 men and 40 women are staying here.

Hindus cannot wear the sacred saffron thread on their hands, nor can women put 'Bindis' on their heads. There is often brutal retaliation by the radical elements for such overt displays. Hindu labors are routinely exploited by Pakistani land lords. After the crops are harvested, the landlords take it away to sell it in the open market. Later when Hindu labors ask for their fair share, they are told a story of crop loss due to a variety of reasons. The net result is that the Hindu laborers end up owing the landlord for electricity, water and seeds. Hindus are openly called 'Kafirs', non believers in local and public places. They are given last priority and their grievances are ignored by officials. This leaves them at the mercy of unscrupulous brokers (Dalals), commission agents and goons. This situation is getting worse according to the refugees with each successive government. The Hindu refugees want their voices to be heard by the Hindu Diaspora that is spread around the globe. They want Hindus to be vigilant about guarding their

religious beliefs and traditions and passing it on to future generations. What has happened and continues to happen every day in Pakistan could be repeated elsewhere where Hindus are in the minority. When asked about being refugees in India, Dinesh Ram says that his heart feels light and happy as for the first time he was able to celebrate Diwali without any fear of retribution. He says he is able to sleep in peace and now has a life to look forward to. He ends this with the words 'Jai Shri Ram'.

About the author

Rahul Chandra, based in Texas and a Governing Council member of World Hindu Council of America (VHPA), has been long associated with Hindu organizations. He holds Masters Degree in engineering from New York and currently works as an Enterprise Application Analyst. To help Pakistani Hindus please contact:
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Learn from the Best



■ ***By Siddheshwari Devi (Didi Ji)***

- Be punctual. Plan on being on time. Work on being punctual. My Guru is highly recognized and respected. People expect to wait for him and would be happy to do so, but he does not make anyone wait. He wakes up on time; eats on time; sleeps on time; conducts visits on time and keeps his appointments.
- Trust young people. Don't fall into the trap of thinking that the younger generation is careless and lazy. My Guru has trusted very important works such as running a charitable hospital, an entire Ashram as well as charitable educational institutions, to very young devotees. I have learned from my Master that young people will do the job well because you trusted them with it. They will give you their best.
- Give it your all. Take pride in a job well done. Whether your duty is to sweep the road, washing dishes, cooking food or giving a lecture, you must give it your best. You must strive to do it well. My Guru always praises a job well done, no matter how small the job may be.
- Be humble. The greater the individual, the more humble he is. Just as a tree laden with fruit bends its branches, so I see my Guru being extremely humble and down-to-earth despite being full of divine wisdom and knowledge. He speaks the village dialect with the villagers; sits down at the level of devotees, and listens carefully to what even a small child has to say.
- Have a sense of humor. You are never too

important to laugh at yourself. My Guru wins hearts in many ways, including through his self-deprecating sense of humor. It is refreshing to see someone so highly regarded as being humorous to the extent that he is able to poke fun at his own importance.

Discover Yourself

You may be travelling all over the world and discovering new places and people and yet remain a stranger to yourself. Take some time to find out who you really are and what you truly stand for.

Ask yourself the following questions:

- What are the values I hold dear to my heart?
- Am I the kind of person I would like to be friends with?
- What are my hobbies?
- What kind of books do I like to read?
- Do I believe in God?
- Am I quick to get angry and frustrated?
- Do I speak the kind of words I would like to listen to?
- Am I behaving with others in the way I would like them to behave with me?
- How do I communicate with others?
- What do I really like about myself?
- What do I not like about myself?
- What changes do I need to bring about within myself?
- Am I a helpful person?
- How do I view followers of religions other than my own?
- Do I believe that people of different races are



equal?

Answer these questions truthfully, and you will see a clear image of yourself emerging from your

responses.

Discover the Simple Joys of Life

Everyone ultimately wants contentment and peace of mind. You want to have free time to spend with people you like. The idea of fun, in the minds of most people, is to be relaxing in a hammock or an easy chair, reading a good book, talking to loved ones or just watching TV. These are some of the simple joys of life. You do not need more money, a better job or a bigger house to get the contentment you seek. You just need to discover the simple joys offered in life. We go to faraway places on vacation, and spend money that we do not have. We consider ourselves intelligent, yet easily fall into the trap of overspending. We pay by plastic, and go into debt. You don't have to do what others are doing. Take an affordable mini vacation on the weekend by visiting a beautiful park, zoo or botanical gardens. The possibilities are endless. Do not schedule too many activities in your day. Take out the time to water the plants, watch the sunrise and sunset. Spend time laughing and playing silly games with your children and with other loved ones. Do not become too busy to appreciate the pitter patter of rain and the healing sounds of a waterfall. Discover the simple joys of life.

We are Different, Yet the same

Every child of God is unique; very different from the rest. The various shapes, forms and colors of the world reveal the diversity that exists. There are hundreds of thousands of species, and each creature within the species has a distinct look. Every leaf growing on a tree is different; every snow flake has a different shape. Every person has a distinct set of fingerprints.

The surprising fact is that despite the diversity there exists a uniformity which is quite amazing. We are all different, but are the same in that we are all seeking only happiness in life.

All our mutually contradictory actions are performed with the purpose of receiving happiness. We laugh so that we may become happy, and we cry for the same reason. We sleep at night for the sake of happiness, but we awaken in the morning for the same purpose. Sometimes we seek happiness by talking; sometimes by remaining silent.

At the point of birth we desire happiness. This desire is communicated by us to the world through the act of crying. As we grow older, we start doing many things. Though we may not be consciously aware of it, yet we are seeking happiness at all times. There is indeed a very strong reason behind it.

We all desire happiness because we belong to God, who is another name for unlimited happiness. We are God's children. He is the one we desire, and His true nature is happiness. This is why all of God's creatures secretly desire happiness.

Take Your Medication

We suffer from many physical diseases which cause discomfort to the body. To ease the pain we are prescribed medication. Whether it is allopathic, homeopathic or Ayurvedic, medicine brings us relief, even though temporary. Besides physical diseases, we suffer from mental diseases. Some of these are anger, greed, pride and envy. For physical pain we take medication. For mental diseases the enlightened masters prescribe not just temporary alleviation of pain but permanent relief.

If you are suffering from anger, go to the root of the problem. You will discover that you get angry whenever you do not get what you want. When some desire remains unfulfilled, you become angry. The prescription for easing anger is to reduce your desires.

When envy rears its ugly head in our mind, we suffer greatly. How can we control envy? Find out why you are envious. You will find that you truly admire the one you are envious of, and wish to become like him. To reduce the feelings of envy in the mind, learn from the one you envy. Follow in his footsteps. Turn envy into admiration.



Pride is a very sneaky disease. We fail to realize we are suffering from it. Only a

fortunate few are able to detect it. Fight the disease of pride with large amounts of gratitude. Express gratitude to your parents, teachers, mentors and most of all, God. What you have learned and acquired in life is a gift from God. Realize that all the abilities and talents you possess can be taken away by the one who gave them to you.

Take quick action to combat diseases of the mind. Take your medication.

Learn from a Child

To learn we must be humble. We must have humility enough to learn from even the ones who are younger and less educated than us. Even a small child can teach valuable lessons if we pay attention.

The newborn teaches what self-surrender is all about. The child is completely dependent upon its mother, doing nothing for itself. It is up to the mother to feed the baby, bathe the baby and take care of its each and every need. Just as the newborn is surrendered to its mother, so we must surrender to God. Just as the baby cries and calls its mother, so we must also cry out to the Divine Mother. She will surely come.

In the beginning of its life, the child is not able to do anything; not even turn sides. However, the child starts trying. After many failed efforts, he manages to turn over. The next attempt the child makes is to sit up. After hundreds of failed attempts, the child is able to sit up. Next, the child wishes to stand. He tries but falls down. But he does not give up. He continues to make an effort until he succeeds. After this point, he tries to stand; then walk; then run. He fails again and again, but does not give up. The child teaches us not to give up on something worth doing despite many failed attempts. Another lesson we learn from a child is that we should not hold grudges. If a child is scolded, he may cry and walk away from



you. But the same child will forget the scolding and return to you when you call his name after some time. He bears no grudges. We must learn to do the same.

Ask Yourself

- Why do I care so much about what others think of me?
- What am I doing to improve my state of being?
- How much time do I devote to my body and how much to the soul?
- Am I working mindlessly or with a definite purpose and focus?
- Do I enjoy the work I am doing?
- What regrets do I have in life?
- What can I do right now to minimize the regrets later in life?
- Do I like the way I am?
- What positive changes can I bring within myself?
- Am I trying to become the best version of myself that I can?
- What is holding me back from realizing my full potential?
- Whom do I admire, and why?
- Which values are the dearest to me? ■

www.radhamadhavsociety.org

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Raashtram

Spiritual-Emotional Concept of Nationhood



■ *By Ram Madhav*

Nation, nationalism and nationality are essentially European ideas which evolved in the 18th & 19th centuries. Emergence of nation-states in Europe and their expansion into America was the first catalyst for the discourse on the concept of nationhood in the West.

■ **Nation-states: A History of Just Two Centuries**

Many European nations that we see today didn't exist 200- 300 years ago. These nation-states came into being much later. Two World Wars witnessed great changes in the geography of many of these nation-states and the disputes about their boundaries and their very existence are contested by many groups to this day. Take the case of the Scots in the UK or the Flemish in Belgium or the Kurds in Turkey... they all challenge the nation-state they live in and say they are a different nation. Even American history tells the same story. The United States of America as a nation-state is not more than two centuries old. Also important to note here is the discourse as to whether the nation-state called the USA has really become a nation or not. The Second Continental Congress had declared independence in July 1776 and adopted the United States Declaration of Independence drafted by Thomas Jefferson. It is this Bill of Rights that keeps the diverse American peoples as one. However skeptics like Samuel Huntington questioned this very feeble foundation of American identity. In his important work 'Who Are We' he raises the crucial question as to whether the America had really become one nation. His answer was in the negative although his thesis was about creating one national identity for entire America which he described as 'Protestant Ethic without Organized Church'. There are a few countries that can claim much longer history like Mexico, Egypt, Turkey etc. But here again the nation-states of all these countries are of very recent origin and had nothing to do with their ancient past. The Aztec culture prevalent in Mexico before the

Spanish Conquest has remained only as a museum item and mark of pride while the present day has become Hispanic in language, religion and culture. Same is the case with Egypt and Turkey. All this points to the fact that the global understanding of the concept of nation, nationhood etc. is based on models that are short-lived and shifting their bases constantly. Yet, based on the experience of last two centuries various scholars have tried to develop theories for nation and nationalism. Ethnicity, language, kinship, culture, territory and several other factors have been enumerated as the basis for nationalism. All this has ended in definitional confusion with regard to nation and nationality.

■ **European concept of Nation and Nationhood**

Despite these definitional worries, there was a fair amount of agreement among the modern Western scholars about what is historically the most typical, paradigmatic form of nationalism. It was extolled in classic modern works by Hobbes, Locke, and Rousseau. The territorial state as political unit is seen by nationalists as centrally 'belonging' to one ethnic-cultural group, and actively charged with protecting and promulgating its traditions. This form is exemplified by the classical, 'revivalist' nationalism that was most prominent in the 19th century in Europe and Latin America.

Some scholars have added cultural dimension to the definition. Michel Seymour in his proposal of a "socio-cultural definition" states that nation is a cultural group, possibly but not necessarily united by a common descent, endowed with civic ties (Seymour 2000). Classical nationalism of the Western origin is the political program that sees the creation and maintenance of a fully sovereign state owned by a given ethno-national group ('people' or 'nation') as a primary duty of each member of the group.

Some modern day critics like Prof. Balagangadhara have argued that the European concept of nation-state



has its origins in Christianity itself. They cite the story in Genesis of the Old Testament. According to the Old Testament there is a narrative of the City of Babel in Genesis 11:1-9.

Ethno-political or ethno-cultural form of nationalism has led to the creation of a large number of nation-states in the 18th and 19th Centuries. It might have benefitted some, like the Israelis, the Belgians etc. and continues to be seen as beneficial by groups like the Scots in UK, the Flemish in Belgium, the Kurds in Turkey and Iran and the Tamils in Sri Lanka. But it essentially is based on divisive and superiority sentiments.

■ Nation-states Alien to Indian Thought

Influenced by the Euro-centric discourse on nation and nationalism some Indian and British scholars have tried to apply the same nation-state concept to India as well. The British, who ruled over India for more than two centuries, were in the forefront arguing that India was never a nation in the European sense of the term.

This Anglicized discourse on India's nationhood was taken forward by some Indian scholars also along with the European ones. Surendranath Banerjee authored a book titled "A Nation in the Making" describing India as a Nation that is slowly being built on the lines of the European nation-state model.

However, the European concept of nation is alien to Indian thought. "The concept of nation itself is, in fact, alien to the Hindu temperament and genius. It is essentially Semitic in character, even if it arose in Western Europe in the eighteenth century when it had successfully shaken off the Church's stranglehold," writes eminent Indian author Girilal Jain. Rishi Aurobindo, one of the greatest saint-philosophers of 20th Century described Indian approach to Nationalism as, "With us today Nationalism is our immediate practical faith and gospel not because it is the highest possible synthesis, but because it must be realized in life if we are to have the chance of realizing the others. We must live as a nation before we can live in humanity."

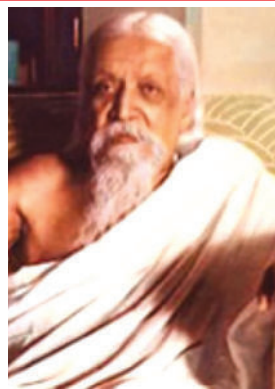
■ Rashtram: The Enlightened Path

"Common enthusiasm coalesces with a common interest" as basis of nationhood has been realized in India for millennia. This is described aptly from the Vedic period as "*Rashtram*" or "*Rashtra*".

Rastram is etymologically explained as a firm,

enlightened path for welfare of a community. The word is derived as a combination of two roots: *ras'mi* 'the sun' and *sTha* 'firm, placed in'. This leads to an extraordinary evocation in the Vedas: *rastram me datta* (Give me that lighted path).

In Rig Veda, the word '*Rashtram*' was used to describe the national identity of the people of the land called Bharatavarsha. '*Rashtram*' is a uniquely Indian concept for nationhood founded essentially on the spiritual foundations. Thus '*Rashtram*' as an idea is a unifying and development-oriented (*Abhyudayam*) concept as against today's concept of nation, in which the basic urge to live together is not developed, and which has been a major source of political conflict and violence throughout last three centuries.



Sri Aurobindo rejected the theory that the essential conditions of nationality are unity of language, unity of religion and life, and unity of race. Sri Aurobindo defined the essential elements of nationality as "A common enthusiasm coalescing with a common interest is the most powerful fosterer of nationality."

■ Rashtram – The Divine Mother

Rashtram has been invested with divinity and motherhood in the Vedas. Vak, one of the innumerable women composers of the hymns in Vedas says in the Pratham Mandala of Rig Veda:

Aham Rashtri Sangamani Vasunam

Chikitushi Prathama Yagyianam – Rig Veda

I am the beholder of this Rashtra; benefactor of the gods; and first among the worshipped.

In the foreword to R.K. Mookerjee's The Fundamental Unity of India, late Sir J. Ramsay MacDonald, ex-Prime Minister of Britain writes: "The Hindu regards India not only as a political unit naturally the subject of one sovereignty – whoever holds that sovereignty, whether British, Mohamedan, or Hindu – but as the outward embodiment, as the temple – nay, even as the goddess mother – of his spiritual culture... He made India the symbol of his culture; he filled it with this soul. In his consciousness, it was his greater self."

■ Evolution of Rashtra

In Bharat there was evolution of *Rashtra*. The



underlying concept was different. It is not similar to the theory of Nation in the West. There is a beautiful shloka in the Atharva Veda which says:

*Bhadram icchhantah rishiyah
swar vidayah, tapo dikshaamupanshed agre.
tato raashtram, bala, ojasya jaatam
tadasmai devaupasanmantu*

It means that a *bhadra icchha* – a benign wish originated in the minds of ancient seers during the course of their penance. This benign wish was for *Abhyudaya* – the welfare and glory of all. This is not divisive and is not guided by the desire that I should get all pleasures. These rishis – sages were supremely learned and it was their benevolent wish. *Abhyudaya* is material and spiritual wellbeing of the mankind. The sages say that even gods bow before such consciousness of *Rashtra*. Now what is *Rashtra* here? This is not political but it is spiritual.

But the most important question is how to explain *bhadra icchha* (benign wish) from which *Rashtra* and *Dharma* emanate?

Sage Kanada in Vaisesika Sutra notes a definition of *Dharma* by its beneficial impact, focusing on discharge of one's responsibility:

*Yatobhyudaya nisreyasa
siddhihi ca dharmah*

“That which leads to the attainment of *Abhyudaya* (prosperity in this world) and *Nisreyasa* (total cessation of pain and attainment of eternal bliss hereafter) is *Dharma*.” The *Bhadra Icchha* – benign wish of the sages was to secure this two-fold objective. It is this *Dharma* which is the soul of the *Rashtra*. Swami Vivekananda described India as ‘*Dharma Praana Bhaara*’; ‘*Bharat with Dharma as soul*.’ This concept of National Soul is unique to India and that soul is ‘*Rashtra*’; the quintessential national identity of India. Pt. Deen Dayal Upadhyaya called it ‘*Chiti*’. The first Prime Minister of India, Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru, despite his Western upbringing and socialist convictions, had to appeal to this concept of the National Soul in his famous Tryst with Destiny address to the Indian Parliament on the midnight of 14/15 August 1947. He said, “...Through good and ill fortune alike she has never lost sight of that quest or forgotten the ideals which gave her strength. We end today a



Bharat Rashtra

period of ill fortune and India discovers herself again.” The ideals that Nehru referred to as those that had given her strength were the ideals of *Dharma*. *Dharma* can be understood a set of values that define the ethical, spiritual life of India as a *Rashtra*.

Some of the fundamentals of *Dharma* can be enumerated briefly in order to underscore the difference between the concept of ‘*Rashtra*’ and ‘*Nation*’.

On the question of Creation it believes:

★ *Isavasyam idam sarvam* (Chapter 4: The *Isavasya Upanishad*). The entire universe, animate and inanimate alike, is pervaded by *Isvara* – the divine consciousness. On the question of ethnic, racial, linguistic and other difference in the world it proposes:

★ *Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam*

The entire world is one family.

On the economic question it talks about ‘sustained consumption’:

★ *tena tyaktena bhunjitah*

One should acquire only that much which was left for him by *Isvara*

On the welfare question, it states:

★ *sarve bhavantu sukinah – sarve santu niramayah*

Let ALL be happy and free from diseases

On the environment related questions, its proposition is:

★ *Mata bhumi putro 'ham prithvyah*
(Atharva Veda 12|1|12)

This earth is my mother and I am her son.

On the question of religious diversity in the world, it proposes:

*Indram mitram varunnamagnimaahutathoe
divyah sa suparno garutmaan |*

*Ekam Sadvipraa bahudhaa Vadanti
maatarisvaanamaahuh – Rig Veda*

Truth is one; wise men interpret in different ways.

It has attained ultimate levels of tolerance, accommodation and celebration of pluralism on the earth.

*nana vibrati bahudha vivacasam
nana dharmanam prithivi yathaukasam
sahasra dhara dravitasya ye duham
dhruvena dhamurenk pasphuranti*

‘The earth is full of variety; it contains people speaking different dialects and speech, of diverse religious customs, each living according to what they think is right.

The earth contains innumerable valuable things. It bears trees and plants of great diversity. We should pay



homage to that Earth.'

■ Entire World is One *Rashtram*

However, one important dimension needs to be understood here. '*Rashtra*'

is not a political concept in the sense that it doesn't define any geographical boundaries. It is more an ethical, spiritual concept – a view and way of life. The sages of India concluded that this whole earth surrounded by oceans is one *Rashtra*

prithivya samudra parayantaayah eak raashtra iti
Therefore the idea and concept of *Rashtra* is a philosophy here. It is a way of life and principles to live life which define relationship and expected behavior between people and other beings.

■ State under *Rashtram*

What is State under *Rashtram*? Contrary to nation-state concept *Rashtram* views State as one of the many institutions that help society pursue the path of Dharma. State, described as *Rajya*, is thus not coterminous with *Rashtra*.

The Aitereya Brahmana, one of the ancient scriptures of India describes 10 kinds of *Rajyas* under one *Rashtra*:

sAmrajyam. bhaujyam. svArAjyam. vairajyam.
pArameShThyam. rajyam. MahArAjyam
Adhipatyamayam.
samantaparyAyI syAt. sArvabhauma sArvAyuSha
AntAdAparArdhAt.
pRithivai

Chanakya, the great Indian political philosopher, states that *Rajah* – the King – is a servant of *Dharma*. Unlike in nation-states the *Rajah* enjoys no special privileges whatsoever. He is mandated to live like a commoner. The happiness of the *Rajah* lies in the happiness of his subjects. Even his powers as ruler are subject to the scrutiny of the *Dharma*. When a *Rajah* is coronated he would declare thrice – *Adandiyosmi* – Nobody can punish me. A revered sage is then made to pronounce thrice – *Dharmadandiyosi* – *Dharma* will punish you.

■ Millennia-old Experience of India as *Rashtram*

In India, this kind of *Rashtra* existed for millennia as an ethical and spiritual idea pervading the entire national life of Hindus. There existed innumerable political units in the form of kings, vassals, principalities, self-governed republics and occasionally the monarchs. But they never interfered in the national life of the people. Their duties were limited to safety, order and development. In fact while the kings waged wars the society carried on with its daily life

unhindered.

As a *Rashtram* it had the enormous catholicity to welcome and absorb any number of outside elements, whether they came as aggressors like the Huns, the Kushans, and the Greeks etc. or whether as refugees like the Parsis, the Zoroastrians and the Jews. When its boundaries were threatened the *Rajah* of entire *Rashtram* rose against the enemy. In fact the *Rajahs* were mandated to secure the borders not only of their kingdoms, but also of the *Rashtram*.

In order to sustain this spirit of ethical and spiritual ideals various institutions were devised in India. Innumerable sacred places were strewn across the length and breadth of the country. Pilgrimages, festivals etc. became important institutions in the life of the *Rashtra* instead of politics and statecraft. A unique band of renounced individuals became the vehicles of this ethical, spiritual ideal across the country from place to place, time to time and generation to generation. They authored number of *Dharma* Shastras to guide the society in upholding the spirit of *Rashtram* in contemporary age. Great epics like Ramayana and Mahabharata to their innumerable forms in later ages became powerful instruments of carrying the message of the *Rashtram* through generations. That is the secret of India's uninterrupted life as a *Rashtra* for millennia irrespective of the fact that it was never in history a united political entity.

To conclude, *Rashtra* is spiritual, all inclusive and is for the welfare of all. The foundation and the meaning behind it are not political or divisive. This *Rashtra* does not exist on the basis of rulers or army. This *Rashtra* has originated from the *bhadra ichchha* (benign wish) of the sages – *rishis*. This *bhadra ichchha* sees element of supreme soul in all, it propounds the idea of *Ekam Sadvipraa bahudha vadanti* and has a vision of *sarve bhavantu sukhinah* before it.

It is this *bhadra ichchha*, which has given rise to the *Bharatiya Rashtram* – Indian nation and sustains it through *Dharma* which should be the basis for a new discourse on nation and nationality. ■

Excerpts from the paper presented at 2nd ASSE International Conference on Nation, Nationality, and Nationhood: What is in the Name? on 2-3 May 2013 at Tirana, Albania by Sri Ram Madhav Varanasi, MA (Pol. Science), Director, India Foundation, New Delhi, India



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