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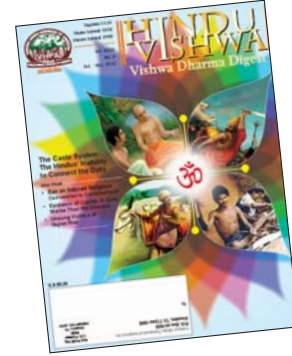
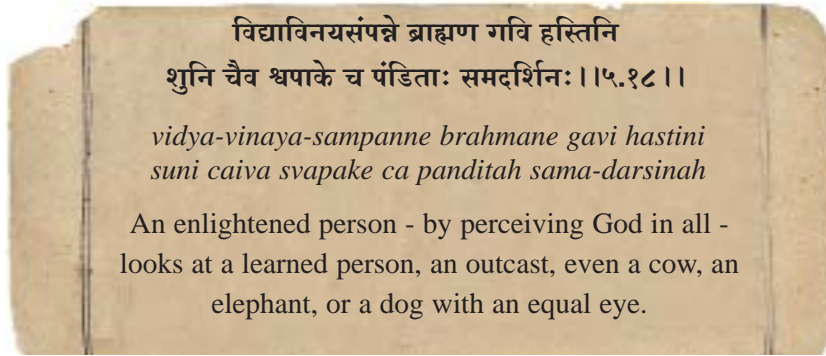
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COVER STORY

**The Caste System:
The Hindus' Inability
to Connect the Dots**



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HINDUISM IS NOT
HIERARCHIAL PYRAMID BUT
PURELY WORK DISTRIBUTION

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तमिल हिंदी के बीच सेतु है संस्कृत

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Victims
of
Gujarat
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caste and class. Such disciples came to be called Sikhs, literally meaning 'Educated, Cultured and Refined Ones.' Basically Sikhism started as a reformist movement within Hinduism and served a great

Identity Error Led To **Terror Attack?**

The recent terror attack by a lone white gunman on the Sikh congregation in a Milwaukee suburban Gurudwara in Wisconsin, USA, in which several innocent lives were lost, brings out a number of burning questions on the issue of religious bigotry and hatred. Did the gunman have any clear idea or accurate information as to who his intended victims were, in terms of their nationality and religion? Was he motivated by a feeling of white supremacy or acting as a Christian crusader who mistakenly thought he was attacking a group of Muslims from the Middle East? Was this an isolated act of a deranged and probably terribly misinformed individual, or are there other blind and mindless hate-mongers lurking in American society who might carry out similar heinous crimes of communal violence in the future?

The murderous attitude and violent outburst against innocent people was of course condemnable, punishable by death - a punishment indeed brought to bear as the gunman was killed on the spot by the police. The above disturbing and ominous questions will remain afloat for now and for the foreseeable future because the perpetrator of the crime is not available for interrogation and clues as to cause, mentality or motive cannot surface.

A conceivable possibility is that it was a case of mistaken identity, the attacker perceiving the Sikh devotees as Muslims. Such a possibility might arise due to total ignorance about the origin, history, and culture of Sikhism. Guru Nanak, the founder of Sikhism, who lived in the sixteenth century CE, started imparting a monotheistic philosophy, lessons in pure devotion and brotherhood among men free from shackles of hierarchy and discrimination based on

purpose of uniting and organizing a segment of the Hindu society. Borrowing from Hindu traditions, Vedic and Upanishadic philosophy, Sikhism sought to lend new life, survival force and energy in the face of the 1526 CE Islamic invasion by Babar, the subsequent tyrannical and oppressive reign, forced conversions and the claim of Islam's superiority as a monotheistic and casteless religion.

The poetic and philosophic compositions of many saints of India, including Nanak, Kabir, Mirabai, and the ten Sikh Gurus form part of the Granth Sahib, the



Sikh scripture which was elevated and established as 'the Guru' by the tenth Guru, Shri Guru Gobind Singh. Sikhism did not present a simplified representation of Hinduism by sidestepping the 'polytheistic' aspect of Hinduism. Most Gurus wrote hymns in the Granth Sahib venerating Hari (Vishnu), Gobind (Krishna) and Kali (Shakti) as the One God. As this veneration is also central to Hindu traditions it created an enduring bond between Hinduism and Sikhism, no matter how different one might wish to portray them.

Castelessness and classlessness were symbolized and celebrated in Sikhism through collective congregation for "Langar" or formal sitting together and sharing of food. Such traditions were great reforms in Hinduism and helped it survive at a vulnerable time and in the face of growing Islamic assaults, influence and propagation. In fact, in the open war between the tyranny of Aurangzeb, the Mughal emperor, and the valiant Guru Gobind Singh, the Sikhs became protectors of Hinduism. They started bearing five "Ks" which have become the symbolic

hallmark of Sikhism - Kesh (hair), Kangha (comb), Kada (metal bracelet), Kachchha (undergarment) and Kripan (dagger) - for identification, self-protection, battle-readiness, tidiness and efficacy. The tradition of keeping a beard and a turban also became traditional symbols of a Sikh man.

The question remains whether the Wisconsin gunman mistakenly took the Sikhs with turbans and beards as Muslim prototypes relatable to Al-Qaeda. He may have been deluded by pictures of Osama Bin Laden, the Al-Qaeda leader, and many other Islamic fundamentalists, who religiously wear beards and head-dresses. The memory of the 9/11 terror attack will not easily leave Americans, and a vengeful attitude can easily give birth to violent reaction in the head and hands of less than balanced and not so peaceful Americans. Such incidents happened before in the months immediately following the attacks.

Apart from the question of better gun-control regulations and abhorrence to violence in general, the

possibility of mistaken identity makes it necessary to educate the American public about Hinduism, Sikhism, Buddhism and Jainism to ward off such unfortunate, catastrophic consequences. This is not to say that this attack would have not been a hateful, ugly act if it were directed at Muslims. However, the fact that questions of identity were raised following the attack illustrate that there is an unhealthy knowledge gap operating in the American consciousness which should be remedied. Religious ignorance is a worse killer than a stray bullet. A better world could of course become a reality if all religions, including Islam and Christianity, also underwent internal reforms and addressed only spiritual aspirations of man and vehemently decried the violence of Jihads and Crusades. Focus on peaceful co-existence and mutual respect rather than on religious conversions to gain world dominance - individual and/or collective - would give rise to a new world order where there would be little scope for error turning into terror. ■

Indian-American doctor couple donate \$12 mn to US University

An Indian-American doctor couple, Drs. Kiran C. and Pallavi Patel, have donated \$12 million to the University of South Florida in a new endowment aimed at creating the Patel College of Global Sustainability.

The endowment would expand on nearly a decade of world-leading applied research to advance sustainability around the globe and improve the lives of the world's most vulnerable people, according to the Tampa, Florida based university. Pending approval from university panels, the new college will elevate the work of the Patel School of Global Sustainability to a new level that allows it to build on its far-reaching portfolio of projects focused on improved urban systems, water and transportation. The gift is the Patels' latest contribution to the ongoing USF: Unstoppable fundraising campaign.

The new endowment brings the Patel's contributions to USF to \$25,798,329 through a series of donations and state matching funds in which the Patels have focused attention on sustainable global development and health care.

Past giving has supported the Dr. Kiran C Patel Endowment Fund; the construction of the Patel Centre for Global Solutions; the Dr. Kiran Patel Centre for Global Solutions Operating Fund and USF Health. Since 2010, the Patel School of Global Sustainability has served as a graduate-level program in the education of new engineers, entrepreneurs and environmental managers to lead sustainability projects around the world.

"The Earth is God's gift to humanity and we believe that the current generation must ensure that while meeting our present needs, we do not compromise the ability of future generations to meet their needs," the Patels said in a joint statement. USF President Judy Genshaft commended the Patels for their leadership and influence in helping shape USF, now a Top 50 research university, with an international perspective that has become a hallmark of its applied research programs.

Born in India, Pallavi Patel and the Zambia-born Kiran Patel first met while studying medicine in Ahmedabad, India. Both doctors received their advanced specializations in New York at Columbia University; he in cardiology, and she in pediatrics. As the successful founders of a physician-owned and run managed care plan, the Patels have earned a reputation for generosity for developing and funding a variety of programs in health, education, arts and culture. ■

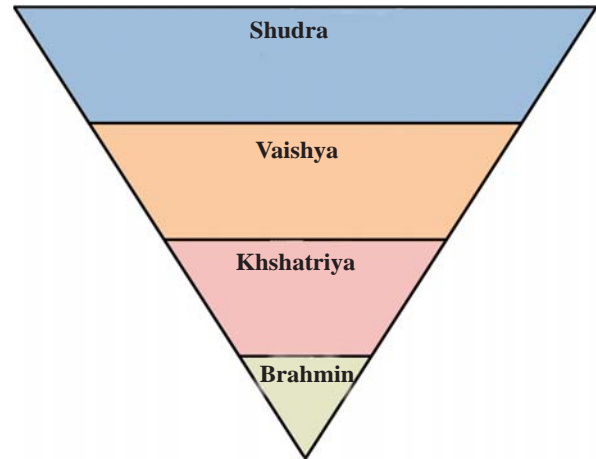
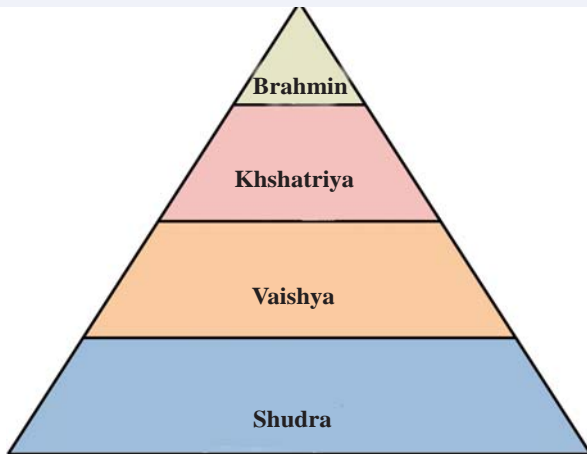


COVER STORY

The Caste System: The Hindus' Inability to Connect the Dots

- By Dr. Sheenu Srinivasan

THE CASTE SYSTEM IS NOT HIERARCHIAL PYRAMID BUT PURELY WORK DISTRIBUTION



1. Watch a typical Hindu family rush forward to greet a guru or a swami and touch his/her feet. Some even wash the guru's feet. Why? Because from times immemorial Hindus have chanted:

गुरुर्ब्रह्मा गुरुर्विश्वः गुरुर्देवो महेश्वरः

गुरुः साक्षात् परब्रह्म तस्मै श्रीगुरवे नमः

guru brahma gururvisnu: gururdevo maheswara:

guru: saksat parabrahma tasmai sri gurave nama:

Salutations to the preceptor who is verily Brahma, Vishnu and Maheshwara and who personifies the Supreme Being

So the guru is verily Brahman. And touching the feet of gurus and elders is not only a mark of respect but also a very satisfying action for most Hindus. But

why the feet? Why not a kiss on the cheeks? Why not a hug? Never! So worshiping the feet and prostrating at the feet is authorized by tradition. So for us feet are as no less important than our heads. This is the first dot.

2. But then in the Rig Veda the infinite embodied spirit (the supreme Purusha) is described and it states that the Brahmin (men of learning) were issued from his face (head; thought center), the Kshatriya (warriors) from his arms (power of protection), the Vaishya (traders) from his thighs (power of acquisition and distribution) and the shudra (service oriented men) issued from his feet (power of support and movement).

A major misinterpretation of this metaphor is that the placement of Shudra at the feet somehow dictates hierarchy and thus we are now on the proverbial slippery slope. You can see where this leads: superior

and inferior classes in a society. A positive interpretation would be to accept the fact that no part of a body is inferior to any other part and that each has a clear and distinct function much like the large variety of instruments in an orchestra. Successful functioning of the body therefore demands that all parts perform their "assigned" functions efficiently and harmoniously. This is the second dot.

3. In stanza 13 of chapter 4 of the Bhagavadgita, Lord Krishna declared:

चातुर्वर्ण्यं मया सृष्टं गुण कर्म विभागशः

chatur varnyam maya srutam

guna karma vibhagasha:

"I have created four categories of people in order to distinguish among their nature and functions."

No other shloka has created more havoc than this one in Hindu society. People who wish to divide a society may argue that this establishes a scheme to discriminate among people. The actual categories don't get discussed until the last chapter of the Gita. The four categories are really functions that need to be performed or responsibilities that need to be borne by citizens in any society. These categories were called Brahmins,

Kshatriyas, Vaishyas and Shudras respectively. They are broadly classified as (a) gatekeepers of knowledge, (b) keepers of security and wellbeing (c) managers of agribusiness, trade and commerce and finally (d) providers of care and serving people.

Let us take the first category i.e. brahmins. They were called brahmins because their single most important assignment was to strive towards understanding the absolute truth, i.e. Brahman. It required a certain level of intellect, objectivity, and tenacity to adhere to the truth. It implied a certain level of responsibility to their fellow beings. In short, these were brilliant people with heart who had an intimate connection with society and helped lead and reform society. This is precisely the reason why we pray ब्राह्मणाः संतु निर्भयाः *brahmana: santu nirbhayah* ; May brahmins be fearless).

Why didn't the entire society devote itself to this noble cause? A naive and theoretical question, but it can still be answered. First of all, if you examine the question, there are some built-in but wrong assumptions. It presumes that all members of a society have not only a similar and simultaneous interest in the



type of studies implied earlier, but more importantly they all have the requisite talents to engage themselves in that task. Secondly, there is an implication that this is indeed the only noble task. Both assumptions are incorrect. In practice individuals have different talents and interests. Furthermore, there are other tasks equally challenging and equally noble that a society needs undertaken for wholesome development of society. In fact, it is in society's interest that there are people with varied interests and talents and each individual has the scope to reach his/her heights in sharpening those skills. This allows them to be able to contribute their very best in the specific areas of their calling.

So in formulating the total work that needs to be performed ancient societies provided certain opportunities and defined certain responsibilities to their members. Clearly they needed a group of people who had the requisite talents to protect society from external aggression or internal strife. This group specialized in the science of arms, ammunition, strategies, tactics of warfare, etc. and was called Kshatriyas. Then the society required people who specialized in agribusiness, trade and commerce to procure goods and services so that the society as a whole can lead a life of plenty. This group was known as Vaishyas.

These first three of the four varnas allowed specificity because they involved unique requirements. If we agree that the first three functions

demand focus, concentration, studies, dedication and total immersion, then a legitimate question arises. Who takes care of the many other needs of these folks? Who toils to make sure they are fed, clothed, sheltered and attends to a wide variety of daily tasks typical of any household? Who works in their fields, their homes, kitchens, baths etc.? Now we are defining the need for a service function; a class of people who make their livelihood serving others. Think thousands. No, millions indeed who work day and night serving others for remuneration. Who or what does this category not include? It does include doctors, engineers, lawyers, accountants etc. The list of shudras is almost endless and must include those who work at restaurants, hospitals, banks, public and private buildings. Thousands of young men and women who serve us with a smile at resorts and restaurants keeping rooms and tables clean are indeed performing the duties of a Shudra. Will the latter stay in that profession throughout their life? May be or may be not. As long as that decision is theirs and theirs alone and as long as there is no stigma attached to it and as long as they can live the life acceptable to them, there should be no problem. The problem arises only when they are dubbed "low class" and that opportunities for them to consider other options are denied.

This whole system is not a strange or crazy arrangement. If you think about it, this system is alive and well, with appropriate variations, in every corporation, household, government and even in civic, religious and political groups. There is no inherent problem with it. It is a practical reality. The system simply recognizes various needs of an organization and assigns people to perform the corresponding tasks. This then is the third dot.

4. The metaphor for the division into four principal groups is the human body with its head, arms, trunk and legs. The system described is similar and bound together by ties of common fellowship much the same way the different parts of the body are bound together into one whole. So what is the problem? The problem is that the system was dubbed "the caste system" and there was a stigma attached to that description because of some serious misinterpretations and improper perceptions. One such perception is based on an unfounded belief that somehow some tasks are more important than others.

Another more serious perception was about social mobility. Social mobility, or rather the lack of it, meant that once a person is committed to a group and its task

that person can never move to another group and take on a new responsibility.

Let me emphatically state that these perceptions have no basis and are not realistic. However, they have caused major havoc in Hindu society and therefore the obvious thing happened. Instead of trying to understand its original intent of shared obligation and responsibility by all sections of society, the national debate shifted its emphasis to "correct" the so-called imbalance. As a result, not only have Brahmins and their task suffered (As far as I can surmise, this category is near extinction!) but the other groups have too. What we have instead is a major headache with groupism, exploitation and senseless rivalry.

Therefore, the original intent is now lost. That intent provides an opportunity for individuals to excel in what they can do well and reach new heights keeping in mind that they can shift in either direction. Individuals can take on tasks and responsibilities that are the domain of another group if they have the interest and talents to do so. That is their birthright and no force on earth should be able to prevent them. In Chapter 18 of the Gita, there are references to this that may cause confusion unless we keep in mind the context. Krishna's thesis is that maximizing one's natural abilities is the best for individuals and society. This then is the fourth dot.

5. Before we look critically at one or another task we must understand some ground rules. For example, let us examine what a Brahmin is. What does it really take to be a Brahmin? In fact that question was put to Yudhishtira by the Yaksha (See my book: A Hindu Primer: Yaksha Prashna, IND-US, 1984). Listen to the Yaksha and Yudhishtira.

राजन् कुलेन वृत्तेन स्वाध्यायेन श्रुतेन वा

ब्राह्मण्यं केनभवति प्रब्रूह्येतत्सु निश्चितं

*rajan kulena vrttena svadhyayena srutna va
brahmanyam kenabhavati prabruhyetatsu niscitam*

Stanza 107, Chapter 313
(aaraneya parva in Vana Parvan)

King, how does one become a Brahmin: by birth? character? study of the Vedas? Education? Tell me precisely.

Stanza 108, Chapter 313
(aaraneya parva in Vana Parvan)

शृणु यक्ष कुलं तात नस्वाध्यायो नचश्रुतं

कारणं हि द्विजत्वेच वृत्तमेव न संशयः

*shanu yaksa kulam tata nasvadhyayo nacasrutam
karanam hi dvijatve ca vruttameva na samsayha*

Listen, Yaksha, it is neither birth nor education, nor even the study of the Vedas. Without doubt, it is character alone that marks a Brahmin.

Yudhishtira's answer is crisp, clear and unambiguous when he replies, 'na samshayaha' there is no doubt about it: it is not birth, it is not education, it is not the study of the Vedas but it is vritta (character) alone that determines a Brahmin. So the basic problem that has distorted Hindu society over centuries is that we have conditioned ourselves to make an immediate connection between birth and caste. This is in spite of the authority of no less a person than the noble king Yudhishtira. If we somehow train ourselves to make the connection between a human being and what he/she does we shall have no problem in looking upon an Ambedkar as a brahmin when he wrote the constitution of India and Rajendra Prasad or a Kamraj Nadar as kshatriyas.

What is Yudhishtira's definition of character? He has already answered the same question in a previous passage in the Mahabharata, the dialogue with King Nahusha: "He is known as a Brahmin ... in whom truthfulness, liberality, patience, deportment, mildness, self control, and compassion are found. And he may gain knowledge of the Supreme Brahman, beyond happiness and unhappiness ... on reaching which they grieve no more." The long list of attributes may be looked upon as components of character.

This inquiry and answer ought to be adequate to clear the great disagreement in regard to heredity. But more recently, in the previous century, Swami Vivekananda in his lecture on "The Mission of the Vedanta" declares that, "Our ideal is the Brahmin of the spiritual culture and renunciation ... I mean the Brahmin ideal-ness in which worldliness is altogether absent and true wisdom is abundantly present. That is the ideal of the Hindu race." (The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda, Advaita Ashrama, Calcutta. Vol. 3, p.197). That is the reason why, in ancient India, the greatest princes sought to trace their descent to some ancient sage who dressed in a bit of loincloth, lived in a forest, eating roots and studying the Vedas. Their satisfaction was immense if they could discover that their ancestor was "devoid of worldliness and possessed true wisdom." So if one desires to be a Brahmin, one

can do so if he/she can satisfy the stringent requirements and that has nothing to do with who one is born to and what one's ancestors' occupation may have been. This is the fifth dot.

6. The four functions may not be equal by some measures and similarly the "qualifications" are not the same. But what is same is they are all svabhavajam i.e. born of one's own nature. Their goals are different. Their approaches are different but they are all tasks that need to be performed by societies to keep it functioning at its best.

The fact of the matter is that during the course of a day, your thought processes, your actions, your words may classify you as a Brahmin (however briefly), later a Kshatriya or a Shudra and/or a Vaishya. Thus all of us, in a way, have all the four varnas integral to our being. Of course one or the other aspect reflecting a particular varna may predominate at certain times directing our particular action at those times. That, if you observe yourself carefully, is life. That is the sixth dot.

In summary, let us look at the dots.

1) In a body, a metaphor for a smooth functioning society, we do not consider feet to be inferior to say, the head

2) All parts of a body are essential for a successful functioning of the body

3) In any society there are at least four major categories/functions/tasks that need to be shouldered by its citizenry. Matching talent to task is the ideal sought.

4) Each function has its own requirements, approach and prerequisite talents and it is in the interest of a society that individuals performing such functions maximize their skills

5) Heredity has no bearing on the function

6) Each one of us, during the course of a day, undertakes a number of tasks that may include all the four major categories.

Connect all these dots and you see its practical sense. You will see a system that was created to work. It does work as long as we take the taboo out of the equation. So connect all dots and get on with your task of serving society matching your talent to your task. If you want to call it a caste be my guest. ■

About the Author

Dr. Srinivasan is the founder of Connecticut Valley Hindu Temple Society and his recent publications include: Vedic Wedding: Origins, Tradition and Practice and Hinduism for Dummies. www.avsrinivasan.com

What I Did This Summer:

Dr. Amrutur Sheenu Srinivasan's Vedic Wedding Training



By Jeffery D. Long

This summer, over the course of two days (July 16th and 17th), my wife and I had the privilege of taking a mini-course in officiating at a Vedic wedding. Our kind, helpful, and knowledgeable guide in this exciting venture was Dr. Sheenu Srinivasan, author of *The Vedic Wedding: Origins, Tradition, and Practice* (2006-with a recently streamlined and updated version being published as *Hindu Wedding: The Guide*, 2010) and *Hinduism for Dummies* (2011). The program was held in Dr. Srinivasan's home, where a group of us gathered and spent our time exploring the intricacies of the vivaha sanskara, practicing our Sanskrit chanting, and sharing one another's company and good fellowship.

My wife and I were married seventeen years ago in a Vedic wedding ceremony that was conducted at an Arya Samaj mandir in New Delhi. Just prior to this ceremony, I was also formally received into the Hindu, or Vedic Dharma, having felt drawn to this wise and ancient tradition since my childhood. (My wife is Hindu by birth.) Being a professional teacher and scholar of Indic religious and philosophical traditions with some training in Sanskrit, as well as a Hindu practitioner, I was asked by a friend in 2008 to perform the wedding of

his son. I was both honored and quite nervous to perform such an important duty for my friend. He explained, though-and as many of us have also observed-that our Hindu priests, while often highly knowledgeable in regard to how to perform a ceremony, are not always equipped to explain the various steps that are involved: the meaning of the ceremony and of the Sanskrit mantras that accompany them. Due to language barriers, it can be especially challenging to explain these things in a meaningful way to the younger generation of Hindus growing up in America, as well as to non-Indians, many of whom would be very positively inclined toward the tradition if it were explained to them in a way to which they could relate.

Despite my scholarly training, though, and the fact that I had performed some pujas, I had never done anything as elaborate or demanding as a wedding. To

whom could I turn for guidance? Through the wonder of the internet, I came across Dr. Srinivasan's book and found it to be an outstandingly clear and scholarly presentation of the Vedic wedding. It was my invaluable



guide throughout the entire process. The greatest compliment that I received from some of the guests who attended the wedding I performed was when they asked me how often I performed weddings and I had to explain to them that this was my first. The fact that they found this surprising is testimony to Dr. Srinivasan's qualities as a teacher and explicator of Vedic ritual.

As fate would have it, a friend of Dr. Srinivasan's was present at this wedding, which led to my eventually making Dr. Srinivasan's direct acquaintance. This, in turn, led to the invitation to participate in the training that he supplied to our group this summer.

I recommend Dr. Srinivasan's in-person training as highly as I possibly can, and it is my sincere hope that word of it will reach a wider audience so he can replicate what he did with us this summer on a larger scale. Excellent though his book is (which comes with a CD of all of the chants involved in the wedding ceremony, as an aid to correct intonation and pronunciation), nothing can substitute for the presence of a living teacher: something that our Hindu tradition has known for many thousands of years!

In the course of our training, Dr. Srinivasan took us

patiently through all of the phases of the Vedic wedding ritual, explaining both the significance of each step, as well as giving us pragmatic advice based on his many years of experience performing Hindu weddings. This was the main focus of the first day. The second day was devoted wholly to chanting and practicing our pronunciation and intonation.

The result of the kind of training that Dr. Srinivasan imparts is a wedding ceremony that is infused with deep meaning that is clear for all witnesses to see, and that has a dignity and a solemnity sometimes missing from the chaos that sometimes reigns in our Hindu wedding proceedings. At the same time, in what I regard as a typically Hindu fashion, his approach has a built-in flexibility that allows for the incorporation of local customs from all the various Hindu communities across India, as well as for interfaith marriages, where the best elements of multiple traditions are brought together in a shared celebration of love and family.

If Dr. Srinivasan's program of Vedic wedding training can be expanded, it will be a boon and a blessing to the Hindu community worldwide.

Jeffery D. Long

Professor of Religion and Asian Studies, Elizabethtown College, PA



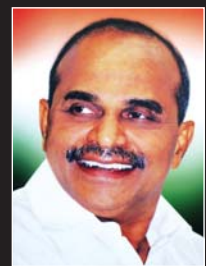
Non-Hindus to sign faith form to enter Tirumala temple

By A Srinivasa Rao

The Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams (TTD), which manages the affairs of the country's richest temple of Tirumala in Andhra Pradesh, has now banned the entry of all non-Hindus into the temple, if they do not declare their faith in Lord Venkateshwara, the presiding deity.

The decision was taken by the TTD apparently in the wake of recent controversy over the entry of YSR Congress Party president Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy, a devout Christian, into the Tirumala temple without bothering to sign the register declaring his faith in the Lord despite repeated appeals by the temple authorities. Jagan's indifferent attitude in respecting the tradition has raised a lot of heat and dust in political and religious circles and the TTD authorities had to face the wrath of Hindu organizations, besides political parties for allowing a Christian into the temple, in spite of he deliberately flouting the traditions.

According to TTD joint executive officer *Continued on page 39*



Jagan Mohan (left) & his father, ex C.M. of Andhra Pradesh late YSR Reddy



By Siddheshwari Devi (Didi Ji)

Advice for Daily Living

Keep your word

We all make promises, but do not necessarily keep them. If you make a promise, keeping your word is the right thing to do. It's not a personality trait that has gone out of style. It's not something that people do not value any more. If someone gives you his word and



does not keep it, you feel offended and slighted. If you do the same to others, they will also feel offended.

There are some who fulfill their commitments no matter what. They believe that you are only as good as your word. But there are many more who think that promises are meant to be broken.

While it is easy to make commitments, it is challenging to fulfill them. Life is busy. Responsibilities get in the way of good intentions. Knowing this, do not make promises you cannot keep.

If you promise that you will show up at a certain time, show up on time. If you have promised to help a friend move on the weekend, keep your promise and be there to help. If you have given your word that you will get back to a person, get back to her. In personal relationships you will lose your loved one's trust if you fail to keep your commitment. At work you will not be respected if you make hollow promises. You will be passed over for promotions and bonuses.

If you have made a commitment and cannot fulfill it, you must apologize and communicate to the concerned person that you will not be able to do what you had promised.

When you keep your word, you show that you

respect and care for the one to whom you have given your word. You also reveal that you are a trustworthy and reliable person.

Being Good Versus Looking Good

There once lived a king who wished to know how many believers lived in his kingdom, and instructed his chief minister to find out. The minister was a very wise man. He announced on behalf of the king that if everyone gathered in the main place of worship in the Capital city on such and such day, they would be able to see God. It was also announced that God would not be visible to those who were born out of wedlock.

On the designated day there was a sea of people outside the place of worship. The minister had tied up a donkey in the courtyard of the worship hall without anyone's knowledge. The volunteers led the first group of people inside. These people did not see God; they only saw a donkey. When they came out, however, they gave a glowing account of God whom they had seen inside. Otherwise, people would think less of them.



The king heard his subjects speak about the effulgence and brilliance of God. He too went inside, but saw only a donkey. However, he felt too ashamed to admit the truth and have his subjects think less of him. So, he too told lies.

Then the king asked his minister to go inside. The minister knew what to expect. As soon as he went inside, he came running outside holding his nose. He admitted to the king that he was not fortunate enough to see God and that he had only seen a donkey. Hearing this, the king mustered up enough courage to admit that he too had seen only a donkey. Eventually, everyone admitted to their nearest and dearest that they had seen only a donkey.

When it came time to give a head count of all the believers in the kingdom, the minister wrote a zero. The king had to admit that there was not a single believer in his kingdom, not even himself. Everyone in the kingdom was trying to look good in the eyes of others. No one was trying to look good in the eyes of God.

Are you trying to be good or just look good?

Put away your toys

Just as parents provide toys for their children, so has God given many toys to His children. There are toys for every sense organ. Some look good; some produce nice sounds; some are sweet-tasting; some are very



Use electronic gadgets (toys) but without forming an attachment to them.

soft, and some are very fragrant. We have been playing with these toys and have become so attached to them that we have forgotten the one who gave them to us.

What are these worldly toys? These are worldly possessions such as family, house, car, jewelry, iPhone, iPad, iPod and the rest. These are not dangerous by themselves, but attachment to them is dangerous for the mind. These toys are here to stay, and there will be more in the future. Many of them have become a necessity. Therefore, use them but without forming an attachment to them.

Put the toys in perspective. Do what a highly knowledgeable man did. He addressed God - When I

eat, I think that You have eaten from my plate and that I am now tasting Your food remnants. When I put on clothes, I think these are Your hand-me-downs. When I wear ornaments, I think that You have gifted them to me. When I use fragrance, I think of it as fragrance that You have used.

As you become deliberately conscious of God, the mind will become more attached to the Creator instead of the toys He has created.

Have Fun in Life

Are you enjoying your life? I hope you are. If you are working inside the house, I hope you are having fun. If you have a summer job outdoors, I hope you are having a blast. If you are a doctor, enjoy the interaction with your patients. If you are a parent, have fun taking care of your children and molding them into wonderful people. If you are a teacher, have a great time as you share your knowledge and shape minds. If you are on the road all day, enjoy the scenery along the highway.

Your attitude will determine the quality of your life. The same life may be considered a blessing or a curse. It all depends on your outlook. Time and time again I hear the comment, "I am just a housewife," or "I am just a secretary." Whatever job you have, do it diligently and with a smile on your face. At least look as if you are enjoying it. In time, you actually will.

Treat everyone you meet as a VIP. He really is a VIP, because he is a child of the Almighty God. He belongs to a highly exclusive club, whose members are called humans. He is one of the 7 billion humans who inhabit planet earth at present. Treat him with love and respect. Respect the planet also. Look at every leaf, snowflake and raindrop with awe and marvel at its



Enjoy the life fully.

beauty. Walk in your neighborhood with totally different eyes. Let go of the misconception that you need to be serious and miserable. Have fun in life.

Advice for Daily Living

If you are living the life of a hermit you are not required to speak with people or interact with the world. But chances are you are not a hermit. There is a great likelihood that you are living with your family, and working either at home or outside, or running a business. Chances are you are interacting daily with family members, friends, neighbors, fellow-workers, employers and employees. Living a householder's life poses numerous challenges. To meet the challenges that your life presents, you must have effective tools that will help you cope at home and at work.

Scenario: You are upset because your co-worker is always undermining your efforts.

Advice: Do what is needed, and do it calmly. Reason with the co-worker. If he/she refuses to listen and leaves no other choice, go to your superior. If needed, it is perfectly alright for you to show your anger in order to let the co-worker know that you are not a pushover. However, do not get angry on the inside. Be humble and tolerant internally. Three reasons: (1) You will harm yourself by getting angry and frustrated. (2) God lives within your co-worker, and you do want God's grace. (3) No one is completely good or bad. Reflect on the good qualities of your co-worker.

Scenario: Your kids don't listen to you. This is keeping you awake at nights, giving you heartburn and increasing your blood pressure.

Advice: Rather than getting frustrated, keep the line of communication open with your children. This may not be something you are accustomed to doing,

and it may not be easy for you to change, but it would benefit the entire family if you made the effort. Listen to your children patiently rather than yelling at them. Try to understand their point of view. The child may or may not come around, but you have a much better chance if you deal with her calmly and respectfully. Do not say to your child, "I never talked back to my parents," or "If I had spoken like this to my mother, I would have gotten slapped." Work with the here-and-now rather than dwelling on the 'good old days.'

You may say that to do all this, you need a great



Keep the line of communication open with your children.

deal of inner strength. You are absolutely right. And to gain that much-needed strength you must turn towards the source of strength. God is the only source of inner strength, and therefore, you should make it a point to spend some time every single day in prayer. When you do, you will find that your day will go much smoother, and you will not be as frustrated as you would be otherwise.

It is not possible for you to change the other person; so work on changing yourself. Your problems will remain the same, but the changes within you will give you a fresh look at your 'problems.'

Earlier your problems may have looked like huge mountains, but now they will look like mustard seeds or even smaller. ■

By Prakash Waghmare

One of the most well-known columnist, author and sought-after speaker for academic conferences, Mr. Niranjan Shah has recently come out with a new remarkable book titled "Indian Origins of Ancient Civilizations." For several years Mr. Shah has been known to his thousands of avid readers as 'Grandpa' who dispensed the forgotten history of India through his popular weekly column "A letter from Grandpa"

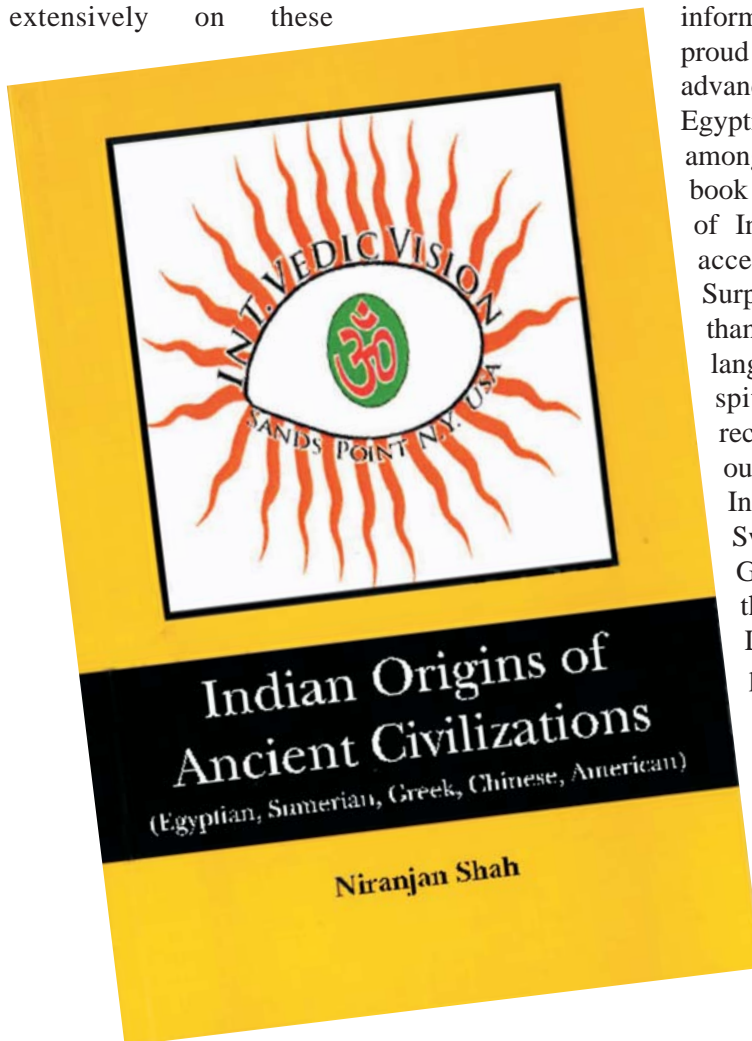
Book Review



Indian Origins of Ancient Civilizations

which appeared in the India Tribune newspaper. This book is culmination of those articles and reflects his painstaking research and hard work. The book is only 140 pages but contains a bibliography which cites 120 books and articles. Mr. Shah, a scholar of Vedantic studies and the pre-Christ era, has drawn extensively on these

sources to prove his various points. So much so that at some points the book a collection of quotations. Mr. Shah has woven together information from his various references rather than interject his own narration to stack before us insurmountable evidence of the Indian origins of ancient civilizations. There is wealth of information in this book, which will make any Indian proud of their scientifically based and technologically advanced ancient past. The book spells out how Egyptians, Sumerian, Greek, Chinese, and American, among others have sprouted out of Indian cradle. This book shows that there is possibly more to the history of India and its civilization than what has been accepted as current historical consensus. Surprisingly, the book has been printed in larger-than-average font for the benefit of all ages. The language is very fluid and simple to understand, in spite of its complex subject. I would highly recommend this book to anyone, and especially to our second generation, who has a desire to learn India's true heritage. Padmashri Dr. Sudhir Parikh, Swami Veditatmanand of Arsh Vidya Gurukul and Goswami Indirabetiji have assisted in releasing this book. New York State Senator Thomas Libous, last month, presented a special proclamation honoring Mr. Niranjan Shah for this historic book. This book has been sponsored by Dr. Dilip Doctor and Dr. Dipika Doctor, pioneers of the Vedic Vision Foundation, who want to bring India's ancient glorious history to the forefront. ■



This book is available on Amazon and other major retailers, Arsh Vidya Gurukul or through the author himself at nshah32@hotmail.com.

LONDON: Indian universities, which failed to make it to the top 200 World University Rankings, should draw inspiration from ancient academies like Nalanda to be recognized globally, says NRI industrialist Lord Swraj Paul.

Paul, an MIT alumnus and Chancellor of two British universities, said that his own experience in higher education suggests that the concept of community building brings significant benefits and results.

"Wherever possible I have encouraged and promoted this idea. In every instance there has been a radical improvement in the performance and ratings of the university concerned. This is not especially new thinking.



Indian Universities should emulate Nalanda: Lord Paul

"It is present in the spirit of the ancient academies like Nalanda, which we are now trying to rebuild, and in the notion that education is Goddess Saraswati's gift to India," he said.

His comments came after no Indian university figured on the list of top 200 universities on the prestigious QS World University Rankings announced earlier this month.

America's Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) grabbed the top slot from UK's Cambridge University on the list of 700 universities that were ranked under the scheme.

Paul said the ranking criteria used to define the top 200 universities "could be a bit too harsh" on Indian institutions as many of them were doing well in their academic endeavors.

Examining the possible reasons for Indian institutions not figuring in the top 200 ranking, Paul said that they were under-funded.

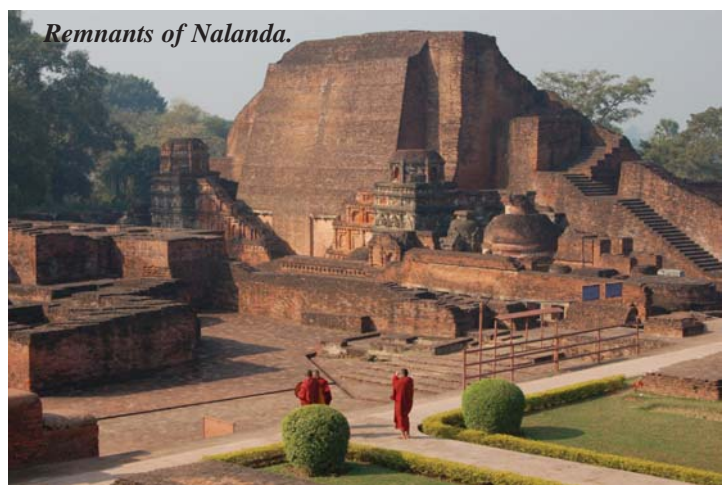
"I believe, on average, higher education in India is substantially underfunded. We need to invest more money into advancing educational excellence and we need to encourage more endowments supported by private funds. This has begun in some areas but needs to be accelerated if it is to produce any visible results in the near future," Paul said.

He emphasized the need to cultivate the concept of "community and inclusion" which,

according to him, cuts across generations and gives alumni, faculty and students a sense of participation and joint endeavor.

Paul wondered whether Indian universities were too conscious of hierarchy and over-regulation. Is the division between state responsibilities and central responsibilities appropriate or too restrictive? Is the education in the states too politicized? Do quota systems promote or retard educational advancement?

According to Paul, "Our (Indian) students are unquestionably among the best and the brightest anywhere. The time is long overdue for our advanced education to have the same high ranking." ■



URL: <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com//articleshow/16579025.cms?intenttarget=no>

Himachal Pradesh Freedom of Religion Act

Ban on Induced Religious Conversion is Constitutional

The Himachal Pradesh High Court Bench has handed down a landmark judgment on the HP Freedom of Religion Act (HPFRA) holding it to be Constitutional. The Act was challenged by Christian missionary organizations as against the Constitution and secularism.

The bill to enact the Act was in fact moved by a Congress-led Government of Virbhadra Singh, the maverick Chief Minister in the Himachal Pradesh Assembly, and it was unanimously passed in 2006. It received Governor's Assent on Feb 18, 2007.

The Object for the said Act was framed in the Preamble as a "prohibition of conversion from one religion to another by the use of force or inducement or by fraudulent means and for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto".

In 2011, two Writ Petitions were filed in the HP High Court by two Christian missionary organizations challenging the constitutionality of the Act and the Rules framed under the Act. There was no explanation given for this long delay of four years between the bill's enactment and the Christian missionaries approaching the High Court.

The main point that the two petitioners sought to make was that the Act was unconstitutional since it sought to deter the Christian missionaries from exercising their fundamental rights of propagation and conversion activities, which they said was guaranteed under Article 25 of the Constitution.

They also charged that the HPFR Act was to frighten a citizen from freely exercising his or her fundamental right to convert to Christianity. I decided to intervene in the case at the urging of the VHP. The Court permitted me to lead arguments, which I did at length. I raised five main objections to these Writ Petitions.

First, I argued that the petitioners had no locus standi, because they had not adduced any legally valid evidence that anyone has been aggrieved by this newly enacted statute, viz., HPFRA. It was also apparent that the three petitioners were not personally aggrieved from any infringement of their fundamental rights to get converted.

Dr Subramanian Swamy

Second, the major flaw in the two petitions was that there has been a failure of the petitioners to distinguish their respective cases from the Constitutional Bench judgment of the Supreme Court in the Rev. Stainislaus vs State of Madhya Pradesh (AIR 1977 SC 908 Vol II, p.55), and which judgment holds the field today. This was a serious flaw since most of the Sections and Rules of the HPFRA were identical to such Acts in other States, which were considered by the Supreme Court Constitutional Bench and were upheld as constitutional.

The important result is that banning of induced conversions has been held to be constitutional. This is a total defeat of the Christian missionaries.



Thus, there is no question of considering the ultra vires of the Act or the Rule making power under it.

Third, the Supreme Court [Bennet Coleman case (1972) 2 SCC 788] had held that the test in determining the question whether a legislation or executive action infringes the fundamental rights is to examine its effects and not its object or subject matter. The petitioners failed to do so in this regard.

Although the petitioners have sworn in their affidavits that all the facts in their respective petitions are to their "personal knowledge" yet it is obvious that the violent incidents and instances of intimidation cited in the petition and alleged to be a consequence of enacting the impugned legislation, could not have been to their personal knowledge since they have not sworn that they were at the site of the said incidents.

Fourth, the Constitutional Bench of the Supreme Court held in the Stainislaus Case that such Freedom of Religion Acts fall within the purview of Entry II of the

Seventh Schedule of Article 246 of the Constitution "as they are meant to avoid disturbances to the public order by prohibiting conversion from one religion to another in a manner reprehensible to the conscience of the community."

The Apex Court in the said Stanislaus Case also observed that "it cannot be predicted that freedom of religion can have no bearing whatever on the maintenance of public order or that a law creating an offence relating to religion cannot under any circumstances be said to have been enacted in the interest of public order."

This ruling has since been re-affirmed in recent judgments of the Supreme Court. In *Rabindra Kumar Pal Dara Singh v. Republic of India* [in (2011) 2 SCC 490 at para 97], the Court said, "There is no justification for interfering in someone's religious belief by any means."

In the Stanislaus judgment, the Supreme Court held that (para. 22) "if forcible conversion had not been prohibited, that would have caused public disorder in the States (of Madhya Pradesh and Orissa)."

Thus, I argued, the petitioners had been derailed by focusing on the right to convert when in fact they ought to have been concerned about public order that would be disturbed by fraudulent forced or induced conversions.

Induced or forced religious conversions, thus, arising from demeaning other religions have impacted on pluralism in society and on the religious demography of the nation and hence there are dire consequences for public order, public health and public morality. The State thus has to act as a deterrent.

Fifthly, the necessity for placing reasonable restrictions on the right to propagate religion in Independent India was emphasized during the freedom struggle by Gandhi ji and Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel.

Hinduism, the only theology which explicitly accepts that all religions lead to God, is thus inherently committed to secularism and hence tolerant of other religions. In the Vedas, it is repeatedly stated Ekam Sat Vipra Bahuda Vadanti. No other religion states this. Parsis, Jews, Syrian Christians, and Moplah Muslims in India testify to this. But Christianity and Islam are not inherently secular and are fundamentally predatory



proselytizing theologies that do not accept any other religion.

Hence, an underlying concern of modern India's founding fathers of the Constitution has been how to ensure that there is a stable religious demography in the country and thus continued plurality in worship in modern India.

For this objective and concern, in Jammu & Kashmir for example, Article 370 was incorporated in the Constitution

to prevent migration of people from the rest of India into the state and disturb the religious demography.

However, in Kashmir Valley, being majority Muslim, we have witnessed forced emigration of Hindu Pandits and Sikhs, out of the State leading besides forcible conversions to Islam.

The said Article failed thus to provide protection for forced emigration of Hindus from the State. In varying degrees, this has been the fate of Hindus wherever they are in a minority. The Indian Republic therefore can preserve a liberal religious outlook only if the Hindus remain in overwhelming majority in the country. Any rapid change in religious demography will therefore cause a huge public disorder.

That is, to safeguard secularism, we cannot allow the present religious demography to be wholesale altered by induced, forced or fraudulent conversions to Christianity and Islam. Democratically elected state governments have thus been constitutionally empowered to take pre-emptive action to deter any kind of forced or bribed conversion because it de-stabilizes the religious demographic structure of the nation.

Much noise has been made by the Evangelists about the High Court direction to delete Section 4 of the Act. The fact is that the Congress government which passed the Act had poorly drafted it, and I had agreed that the BJP HP government must bring an amendment to replace Section 4 as presently drafted. Section 4 only required that anyone intending to convert should first inform the police. The word "intend" if replaced with "decided" will make it acceptable.

The important result is that banning of induced conversions has been held to be constitutional. This is a total defeat of the Christian missionaries. ■

URL: <http://organiser.org/Encyc/2012/9/11/-b-Ban-on-Induced-Religious-Conversion-is-Constitutional--b-.aspx?NB=&lang=4&m1=&m2=&p1=&p2=&p3=&p4=&PageType=N>

Epidemic of castes:

A Cure Worse



Than the Disease



However beneficial the strategy, you should occasionally look at the results.

Winston Churchill
(1874 - 1965)

What is said in the epigraph is particularly relevant concerning the caste based reservation policy which has been in existence for more than half a century. The policy was initially introduced as an attempt at remedying disadvantages suffered by a segment of the population. It is imperative that policies are periodically reviewed and retooled to meet the changing needs of the society. Otherwise there is the danger of the remedy becoming worse than the disease it was supposed to cure.

By Dr. Venkatachala Sreenivas

Background

The Constitution of India which came into effect on 26th January of 1950 guarantees equality of status and of opportunity to all her citizens. However, the framers of the constitution were keenly aware that there were segments of disadvantaged people who unless given state assistance would loose out in open competition. Based on social and educational disadvantages suffered, the Hindu community was divided into three groups. At one end of the spectrum were the forward castes and at the other end were the Schedule castes (SC) and Schedule tribes (ST) who suffered from the stigma of untouchability. The in-between group was heterogeneous and suffering varying degrees of disability. It was considered that the forward castes needed no special state assistance. The need for state assistance for SC and ST was obvious and the constitution provided reserved seats for them in proportion to their estimated numbers in the general



Dr. Ambedkar was of the opinion that reservation should be confined to a minority of seats.

population. Under this scheme SC and ST were allotted 15% and 7.5% respectively of positions available in educational institutions and in government jobs. The in-between group was designated by the Constitution such as 'socially and culturally backward class', 'educationally and economically weaker section', and other backward class. However, the constitution did not define what constitutes social and cultural backwardness nor did it stipulate how backward one has to be to merit designation. Dr. Ambedkar described a backward community as that which is backward in the opinion of the government. However a provision was made for appointment of a commission to objectively investigate the conditions of the socially and educationally backward class and recommend measures for their welfare.

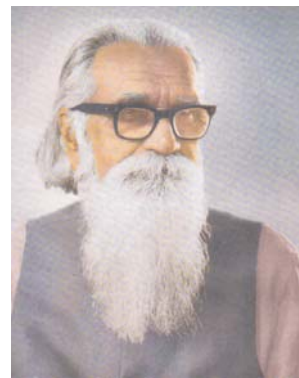
Commissions

The first ten-member commission chaired by Kaka Kalelkar was constituted in 1953 and submitted its report in 1955. It listed 2399 communities as backward of which 837 were considered most backward. It recommended 70% of seats to be reserved in technical and professional institutions. There were problems.² The foremost was the lack of accurate data on the number of other backward communities (OBCs) in the general population. There were disagreements among members on several issues such as using caste as the basis of backwardness, reserving jobs in government employment, and non-inclusion of urban Vokkaligas and Lingayats of Karnataka in OBC category. Furthermore there was concern that the process would strengthen caste identity instead of eliminating it, endanger national integration, retard social cohesion and culminate in disaster by injecting the caste virus into politics. They also feared that the benefits would be robbed by the relatively more affluent sections of OBCs to the detriment of the truly needy. Unfortunately, their concerns materialized.

The central government, unsatisfied with the report of the commission, did not want to draw an all India

OBC list but directed state governments to use their discretion for identifying OBCs, preferably on economic rather than caste criteria. At least twenty-six commissions have been created by different states for the difficult task of identifying OBCs resulting in a lack of uniformity in assigning communities into groups. Moreover, as time advanced the issue became distorted, diluted and discredited by policies adopted by state government as system of political patronage.³

The second commission widely known as Mandal Commission⁴ was constituted in 1979. The commission identified 3743 castes (1344 more than identified by the first commission) and recommended 27% reservation in addition to a wide range of welfare programs for the benefit of OBCs. There were many flaws with the report. To institute proportional representation the information about the proportion of OBCs in the general population is essential. The



Acharya Kaka Kalelkar

commission lacked this information and estimated the number using the outdated census figures of 1931 and a complicated indirect mathematical method at arriving at the number. It lacked substantial data on socioeconomic, educational and occupational conditions of different communities.

Furthermore, for its socioeconomic survey the commission chose only two villages and one urban block from each district. Since there is wide variation in the caste composition of villages, the validity of the sampling method is essential to launch a massive welfare program and questionable sampling results in questionable results. In addition, the commission compiled its list of OBCs using lists prepared by the states. Different states had used inconsistent criteria for including or excluding a caste under the OBC category which was often influenced by political rather than socioeconomic considerations. The commission assigned different numerical values for the eleven indicators it used for determining OBC status. It arbitrarily chose to designate those scoring eleven points as backward.

Implementation

When the report was presented in 1980 Indira Gandhi was the prime minister and she did not want to implement the recommendations of the report fearing



B.P. Mandal submitting his report to then Home Minister Zail Singh in December 1980.

displeasure of the vested interests in her own party. Rajiv Gandhi, who succeeded her, allowed the report to gather dust using the excuse of creating a casteless and classless society. Ten years after the report was submitted on August 7th, 1990, V.P. Singh, who was prime minister then and had previously opposed the report, abruptly announced the implementation of the recommendations as a political expediency to bolster the survival of his government. The government's survival was threatened and to neutralize the influence of Devi Lal, who was projecting himself as the leader of OBCs, V.P. Singh sought to project himself as the messiah of OBCs.

There was a violent response against the implementation of the recommendations especially in Northern India.⁵ Sixty-three educated youths immolated themselves in protest following the example of Rajeev Goswami.⁶ The Supreme Court intervened and granted a stay to V.P. Singh's notification when the constitutional validity of implementing the recommendations was challenged.



Rajeev Goswami self immolation

Unfortunately, politicians did not learn lessons from the traumatic experience. A similar mistake was committed in 2006 by the Human Resources department minister Arjun Singh. On the eve of elections in five states he declared his intention to reserve 27% of the seats to OBCs in higher educational institutions. The election commission viewed his action as a prima facie violation of model code of conduct.⁷ Wide spread student protests began immediately after the bill was introduced in the parliament. The government's attempt at quelling the protests left many students injured. The protests came to a halt when Supreme Court intervened and passed its historical judgment on April 10th, 2008.⁸

The Constitution, Supreme Court and the policy

The authors of the Indian constitution had to contend with and accommodate diverse voices without sacrificing the vision of an effective centralized government.



V.P. Singh

A document designed to accomplish seemingly opposing goals, of necessity, will have built in tensions. One such area is the reservation of seats to disadvantaged sections which is opposed to the principle of equal opportunity and equality of status to all citizens. It is a fact of life that when someone is favored someone else bears the brunt of being disadvantaged. The different goals, often mutually antagonistic, must be finely balanced to achieve the over all good. The framers of the constitution struck a balance between the opposing principles of equality of opportunity and the need for state assistance to the disadvantaged by limiting the duration of preferential treatment to ten years and by placing certain posts and some departments out side the purview of reservation policy. In addition Dr. Ambedkar was of the opinion that reservation should be confined to a minority of seats. Unfortunately the policies regarding reservation have been governed by political exigencies whereby the original ten year limit duration has been extended repeatedly for more then fifty years with no end in sight of cessation. Moreover the benefits have been

extended to increasing number of groups. The aggrieved parties have sought relief from the Supreme Court. In 1980 it gave the verdict that reserved posts should not exceed 50% of the available positions. Following protests over Arjun Singh's directive to reserve 27% of the seats for OBCs in institutions of higher education, the Supreme Court upheld 27% reservation for OBCs; excluded creamy layer from the 27% quota; excluded children of former, current members of parliament and state legislature; and required review of OBC list every five years.⁹ Such interventions by the Supreme Court have prevented the fundamental rights of citizens from becoming a play thing of the majority party in the parliament.

Flaws of caste based reservation policy

The most glaring flaw of the reservation policy is the mistaken assumption that castes are homogeneous and rigid. There are disadvantaged people among forward communities and people not deserving state help for their upliftment among backward communities. In some instances individual disadvantages are even more oppressive than that resulting from caste related disadvantages.

Societies are not static. They change; so do castes. Even defining what constitutes a caste is difficult. Caste as we understand it now has four features : ¹⁰

1. Hereditary (in the sense one is born into the caste of one's parents)

2. Endogamy (marriages between members of the same caste)

3. Craft exclusiveness (caste members pursue a particular trade or occupation).

4. Commensality (concept of pollution and purity governing from whom one may receive food. It is acceptable to receive food from members of one's own caste or from higher castes). In the post independent India, with the advent of urban living, technological advances and the spread of education the barriers between castes, especially in urban areas, are breaking down at a rapid rate. Of the four criteria used for defining caste,



three of them - endogamy, commensality, and craft exclusiveness - are of doubtful validity. The increased incidence of inter caste marriage poses problem in determining the caste of children born to such couples. Because of these changes the caste system as we know it would have become a thing of the past but for the government. The policy of caste based reservation has increased caste consciousness and caste identity and has made it a force for political mobilization.

Any policy worth implementing must have sound philosophical backing and the philosophical basis of the reservation policy is controversial. The reservation policy has created two groups: the preferred group which reaps benefits which are denied to the non-preferred group. This is discrimination and hence not acceptable. Those subscribing to this view advocate creating equal opportunities for everyone by providing quality education, affordable health care, good nutrition, job opportunities, and elimination of exploitation in any form. Such an endeavor will conform to the letter and spirit of the Constitution. Another school of thought is that the disadvantaged will not be able to effectively compete to take advantage of the opportunities provided and need extra assistance in the form of reservation. The goal of this school of thought is to create equality of outcome whereby there will be proportionate representation of the disadvantaged in all societal endeavors including educational institutions and in employment.

Equality of opportunities is achievable but the creation of equality of outcome is impossible which the



Equality of opportunities is achievable but the creation of equality of outcome is impossible which the reservation policy is trying to achieve.

reservation policy is trying to achieve. Equality of outcome has never existed during human history and is unlikely to occur in the future since people have differed and will continue to differ because of historical, cultural, geographic, demographic and other factors shaping particular skills, habits and attitudes. Predominance of certain groups in certain human endeavors is a rule rather than an exception not only in India but throughout the world over the ages. The wisdom of the assumption that the lack of proportionate representation of members of a caste in any given trade or occupation is proof of discrimination is questionable.¹¹

The advocates of equality of outcome claim that preferential treatment is reparation for the past injustices suffered by the disadvantaged group. This argument is flawed. In this system the present generation, which had nothing to do with past injustices, is made to compensate for crimes they did not commit for those who were themselves not victims of past injustice. This situation is opposed to the principles of justice.

III effects of reservation policy

When an important principle such as the equal treatment of all citizens guaranteed by the constitution is superseded by the preferential treatment of some, it is important to prove that the reservation policy is beneficial to the nation. The benefit may be utilitarian or promotion of an ideal or both. The utilitarian argument for implementation of a policy is beset with problems. It is difficult, if not impossible, to quantitate the net gain and net loss incurred by the society. Preferential treatment is not a zero sum game where loss of one is annulled by the gain of another. There are costs borne by the society as a whole. For instance under the influence of preferential treatment both the favored and the non-favored groups could change their behavior. The favored group may slacken their effort in achieving excellence since they are assured of a position even with mediocre performance. On the contrary the non-favored group may slacken their effort because their effort will earn them neither recognition nor reward. Society as a whole suffers from loss of efficiency and this loss is difficult to quantify.¹²



The most neglected aspect of reservation policy is a lack of evaluation as to what it has accomplished or has failed to accomplish.

It is not surprising that the non-preferred groups resent the benefits conferred on the preferred group and try to be included in the preferred group. One such instance is the Vanniyar agitation.¹³ In 1897 the Vanniyar community started an agitation demanding 20% reservation. The agitation turned violent. Twenty lives were lost and 20,000 were arrested. Unfortunately the worst clashes were between the Vanniyars and Schedule Caste members. Although both communities were similar in their backwardness Vanniyars, who were not favored with the benefits of the reservation policy, directed their full fury against Schedule Caste members. Ultimately, Vanniyars were able to achieve 20% reservation within the backward class reservation. The Vanniyar agitation opened doors for every community to claim a share of reservation by

agitation and by inflating their number and touting their backwardness.

The resentment created by reservation policy among different castes reached a higher level with the Gujjar agitation in Rajasthan. Gujjars in Rajasthan are assigned OBC status where as those in Jammu and Kashmir and in Himachal Pradesh are categorized as belonging to Schedule Caste. Because of the large number of people in OBC category the benefits get too diluted to be meaningful. In

order to improve the share of their benefits they started an agitation to gain SC status. Meenas, who have been enjoying the benefits of the status of SC, feared dilution of their share of benefits by the inclusion of Gujjars and vigorously opposed their inclusion.¹⁴ In the ensuing violent political agitation several lives were lost and an estimated 7000 crore rupees worth of property damage occurred in Rajasthan alone.¹⁵ The Gujjar agitation has paved the way for inter caste resentment and fights. A more sinister fact was that all Meena legislators of the ruling BJP resigned illustrating that caste loyalty was superseding other loyalties - a dangerous trend concerning national integration.

Another significant adverse effect of the reservation policy is the conditioning of people to ascribe a caste motive to all problems. For an example, twenty students had been expelled from IIT for poor performance in accordance with the established rules. Of the twenty, eight were from the general category

and the remaining eleven were from SC and one from ST. Interestingly, the incident was reported in the media under the heading "ITT shuts door to nine Dalit students," although the dismissal had nothing to do with caste.¹⁶ As a matter of fact the debate should have been about the appropriateness of the IIT academic dismissal process. Such quixotic reporting diverts attention from real issues and allows them to fester.

Another no less damaging aspect of reservation policy is the creation of victimization syndrome. Reservation policy implies that the preferred group can gain more by emphasizing their past suffering than by discipline and hard work in the present.¹⁷ It becomes backward looking and addicted for preferential treatment. As backward looking entities they have to keep on finding new enemies or new reasons to hate the old ones to continue to derive the benefits of reservation. Under such circumstances how can one develop self respect and self confidence?

Reservation policy is not unique to India. Preferential policy under different names for the disadvantaged is practiced in many countries based on race (U.S.A), language (Sri Lanka), ethnicity (Malaysia), etc. It is interesting that all of them more or less suffer from the same ill effects. These ill effects include:¹⁸

1. The range of beneficiaries keeps on expanding as more and more groups seek to benefit from the scheme.
2. The array of benefits keeps on increasing as groups demand more and more.
3. Political mobilization on the basis of caste/ethnicity.
4. Emergence of backlash from the non-preferred groups.
5. Inclination to resolve conflicts generated by preferential policy by creating redundant positions adding inefficiency.
6. Compromise of economy, efficiency, and equity generating bitterness and resentment within institutions.
7. Inter group infighting.
8. Increased group/caste consciousness to the detriment of national integration.
9. The benefits intended to be temporary often become permanent creating a new privileged group. In the Indian context there is no incidence of a caste changing its status from backward to forward category.

A question we should not lose sight of is: Has the

Twenty students had been expelled from IIT for poor performance in accordance with the established rules. Of the twenty, eight were from the general category and the remaining eleven were from SC and one from ST. Interestingly, the incident was reported in the media under the heading "ITT shuts door to nine Dalit students," although the dismissal had nothing to do with caste.

policy benefited the really deserving? Unfortunately the answer is in the negative. In all countries where any form of preferential treatment is in effect it is the relatively affluent of the preferred group who have siphoned the benefits to the detriment of the really needy.¹⁹

The most neglected aspect of reservation policy is a lack of evaluation as to what it has accomplished or has failed to accomplish. Without such evaluation the policy is extended to new groups for longer periods of time with total disregard to the ill effects.

A different approach

So far the ill effects of the reservation policy and its failure to help the really needy are pointed out. The obvious question is there a better system for helping the needy? In order to devise a better system we have to recognize that disadvantage is multifaceted and free ourselves of our exclusive commitment to caste as the sole criterion of disadvantage. The disadvantage a person suffers is influenced by ones gender, economic status, educational achievements of family members, educational opportunities governed by the type of school one is able to attend, the area where one lives, and caste. Each of these disadvantages can be assigned a numerical value in proportion to the disadvantage suffered. The more disadvantages a person has suffered the greater will be his score. Depending on the position of a given individual in the continuous spectrum of disadvantage score, measures can be taken to compensate the disadvantage to the extent it is suffered. Such an approach is flexible and is in contrast to the present all or none phenomenon of caste based reservation. Using the above principles Prof. Purushotam Agrawal has devised a system called MIRAA.²⁰ The categories and numerical values he has assigned are as follows:

1. Caste: 5 points for SC/ST; 4 for most backward castes; and 2 for OBCs

2. Gender: 5 points for women

3. Economic status: 0 points for families with an annual income greater than 250,000; 3 points for those with income between 100,001 to 251,000; 5 points for those with less than 100,000; and 6 points for less than 100,000

4. Regional considerations: 0 points for those living in metros and other large cities; 1 for those living in state capitals; 3 for those living in conflict ridden regions; and 5 those living in villages and tribal hamlets.

5. Kind of schooling attended: 0 points for those attending well known public, boarding, residential and convent schools or their equivalents; 2 for students from central government schools; 3 for students from regional language schools; and 5 for students attending village panchayat/municipal schools.

6. Educational Achievement of parents: 0 points when both parents are graduates; 1 when one parent is a graduate; 3 when one of the parents is not a matriculate; 4 when both parents are not matriculate.

The system is based on sound management principles although one may modify the number assigned to any one category to some extent. In the above system each candidate for admission to educational institution or government employment will earn certain points ranging from 0 to 30. This score can be factored into the academic score for the selection process. For instance, if the academic score is 60 and the disadvantage score is 20, the total score will be 80. A candidate scoring 90 will be preferred to the one scoring 80. Such a policy can be introduced as a pilot project and after ironing out the glitches over a period of time could be applied widely. In addition those factors which become irrelevant over a period of time can be and should be eliminated.

Political will to replace the failed caste based reservation policy by a more scientific and fair system seems lacking. The reason for such a lack is a separate subject not dealt with here because of space constraints but is almost self-evident. Suffice to say that politics is too serious a business to be left to politicians only. Citizens who are concerned for developing a strong, prosperous and just India should become proactive in demanding the politicians and political parties to abandon failed policies and institute in their place better and fair ones. The price of inactivity is to suffer bad governance. ■

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US Hindu Student's Experience in Support-A-Child (SAC) Project

My desire was to help poor and needy children who could not afford a proper education. Poverty and illiteracy have been long standing problems for developing countries like India that face the inevitable consequences of such social malaise. In such countries, urgent financial support and educational help is needed to fight against social problems. I helped a group of underprivileged students become computer literate and created new learning opportunities for them by setting up a computerized learning center for them.

Support-A-Child foundation (SAC) supports 800+ children in 36 institutions across 17 states of India. They provide lodging, boarding, medical assistance, and education to poor and needy children. I worked with one of the SAC schools in Kota, India. Bhartiya Vidya Mandir (BVM) is a schooling center for around 400 underprivileged children varying in age from 5 - 15 years old. I focused on approximately 30 students in the age group of 10 -14 years that had basic language skills in English required to understand the curriculum of my project.

For a period of 3 weeks I taught these children English comprehension and language constructs before imparting computer foundational skills on using Microsoft Word, Excel, and PowerPoint. I introduced the students to key Internet features such as web browsing, searching, e-mailing, etc. The students created Gmail accounts in their names and learned communication techniques using pictures and file attachments. They learned the use of flash drives to store and move information between computers. By installing a new computer system and with the help of donated books I expanded the school library with a media center.

There was significant effort required to make this project a success. I developed leadership, organizational, and public speaking skills. The fund raising required persuasive skills. My interest and extensive knowledge in computers and passion for teaching became my major strengths in conducting this program. I also learned new things about computers through my project. Interaction with the students had to be in the regional language (Hindi)

By Sanjana Saksena



which I could speak fluently. I also used my experience from my Silver Award project in handling children and maintaining order among them to ensure a focused and ready to learn audience.

Through the execution of this project, I developed my creative skills in preparing the lesson plan and curriculum at a level that the children could comprehend. I also learned how to make the teaching effective and useful for them.

Support a Child (SAC) helps children in India financially, as well as in terms of obtaining a primary education. It addresses one of the United Nation's Millennium Development Goals of Achieving Primary Education at the grass-root level. The media center I left behind can be used as a guideline for future volunteers and teachers to work with the students. It offers a simple and scalable model for those interested in expanding the program's reach among more students and schools.

The media center provides the students of the school easy access to the computer and related reading material which will promote continued self-learning and practicing their computer skills. They will continue to expand their knowledge from my

teachings by using the new learning center.

My project benefitted the students group greatly in overcoming their language limitations and developing computer skills to leverage the Internet as a valuable learning resource.

I developed a stronger sense of myself because I had to perform the role of a teacher. I had to express confidence and strength while speaking to the students. In order for them to take me and my project seriously, I had to be strong, and talk in a loud, clear voice. I also developed critical thinking while creating new lessons to teach my students. Sometimes, my planned lessons would have ended, and I would be left with extra time to spare. Therefore, I had to engage the students into effective activities on the spot.

I developed healthy and friendly relationships with the children I taught, and the staff of the school. The students respected me for the fact that I was conducting these classes for their benefit, and the staff was proud to know that I supported their school and tried to make a difference in it voluntarily. Through my lessons, I promoted cooperation and team building by engaging the children in team activities and games.

I educated and inspired others to act by teaching poor children advanced technology information. Many became interested in the computer field, and wanted to learn more, even after I was finished with my project.

After my Gold Award project, I felt empowered to go further. If I made an impact on one small school, I could promote more schools like Bhartiya Vidya Mandir. One by one, the education issue would not be a financial problem, and more children could gain opportunities to learn and be successful in their future. I felt like a leader throughout my project, and I feel that many others can by taking the initiative to make a difference in underprivileged children's lives.

About the SAC internship

Sanjana Saksena, a high school student from New Jersey, was looking for internship program to complete her Girls Scout Gold award. Renu Gupta SAC Director suggested her to go to Kota, Rajasthan and do internship in Vidya Barati School. Sanjana's Dada ji and Dadi ji (grandparents) live in Kota. That was the perfect place for Sanjana to go. This way she could stay with her grandparents and complete her project.

SAC is developing the internship program for Hindu students in USA. This way they will get an opportunity to serve Bharat their land of origin and Punyabhumi. They can stay connected with their extended family in Bharat also. ■

For more information about SAC internship program contact Renu Gupta at nishved@yahoo.com

Indus Valley 2,000 years older than thought

The beginning of India's history has been pushed back by more than 2,000 years, making it older than that of Egypt and Babylon. Latest research has put the date of the origin of the Indus Valley Civilization at 6,000 years before Christ, which contests the current theory that the settlements around the Indus began around 3750 BC.

Ever since the excavations at Harappa and Mohenjo-daro in the early 1920s, the civilization was considered almost as old as those of Egypt and Mesopotamia.

The finding was announced at the "International Conference on Harappan Archaeology" recently organized by the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) in Chandigarh.

Based on their research, BR Mani, ASI joint director general, and KN Dikshit, former ASI joint director general, said in a presentation: "The preliminary results of the data from early sites of the Indo-Pak subcontinent suggest that the Indian civilization emerged in the 8th millennium BC in the Ghaggar-Hakra and Baluchistan area."

"On the basis of radio-metric dates from Bhirrana (Haryana), the cultural remains of the pre-early Harappan horizon go back to 7380 BC to 6201 BC." Excavations had been carried out at two sites in Pakistan and Bhirrana, Kunal, Rakhigarhi and Baror in India. ■



URL: <http://www.hindustantimes.com/India-news/NewDelhi/Indus-Valley-2-000-years-older-than-thought/Article1-954601.aspx>

Unsung Victims of Gujarat Riots

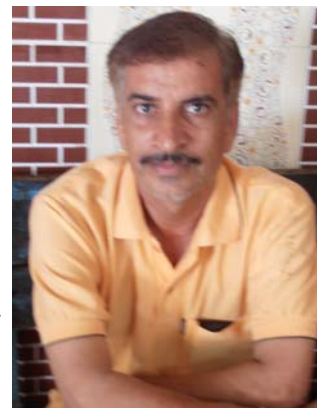


Qutubuddin Ansari's face (left) was used to show the plight of Muslims in Gujarat to the world after the Godhara riots. But there are many Hindu families who also suffered in Godhra. But their deaths never get enough attention of the media.

Hindus too lost their lives in riots that resulted after the Godhara train burning. However, the stories of these unfortunate victims and their families have never been brought forth. While affected others have been getting wide publicity the world over, the Hindus who also lost their lives and their families have been totally ignored. Other than some meager governmental aid they have hardly received anything at all. A decade after the burning of Sabarmati Express at Godhara, it is infuriating that some self styled so called champions of the plight of Muslim victims in Gujarat, have not even once tried to understand the sorrow and hurt experienced by the Hindus in the same riots lest assuaging the feelings of Hindu victims and their families! As a mark of 10th year of the Godhara incident of Gujarat, 'Hindu Vishwa' attempted to connect with the families of some of the victims, and understand their woes. This is an attempt to bring forth few of these stories.

Janakbhai Panchal lost a brother, a friend and a job too

Thousands from Gujarat had gone to Ayodhya for karseva. There were about a 120 people from Amraiwadi, a suburb of Ahmedabad. Along with Janakbhai were his cousin Shailesh Ranchhodbhai Panchal and Chirag Eeshwarbhai Patel, a neighbor. Both were 21 years old. While returning from Ayodhya to Godhara, the Sabarmati Express arrived two hours late. The atmosphere at the station appeared to be tense. Outside the station a crowd of thousands had gathered. The train just moved out of the station and stopped at Signal Falia. Before anyone





Mortal Remains of S6 Sabarmati Express

could respond hundreds of Muslim youth marched to the train from nearby residences. They stormed the train with stones, some of them carried petrol (gasoline) and kerosene cans. In fact further findings revealed that had the train not been late and arrived at Godhara as per schedule at 5 AM instead of 7 AM, the extremists had plans to set the whole train ablaze in the early morning hours of the cold winter of February, when most people would have been fast asleep. However, most passengers were awake and the attack took place at 7 AM. The miscreants could only set bogey S-7 on fire. Janakbhai was standing near the door of S-7 bogey. Stones were being thrown so rapidly that it was impossible to open the door and see what was happening outside. Just then some youths lit the bogey on fire by throwing cans of kerosene/petrol on the bogey and cotton swathed in petrol inside.

Everything happened so fast and with perfect planning that most people inside were trapped. Only a handful managed to escape. According to Janakbhai, the vandals had kept only two choices for the people inside - get burnt inside the bogey or die in the riots/stone throwing outside. Unfortunately, Shailesh and Chirag who were with Janakbhai were charred to death in front of his eyes. All of them had spent last few days together and had come to know each other well. Janakbhai had to witness many of his fellow travelers burning to death. Janakbhai reached Ahmedabad by evening with the bodies of Chirag and Shailesh after the identification of the bodies. The last rights were performed at Wakaner. For Janakbhai, this trauma was too much to handle, he would often wake up in the middle of the night with nightmares for nearly two

years. He would see Karsevaks begging for help and would hear the screams of the burning people. The whole day of February 27th would run like a film for him. He couldn't sleep, he had lost his appetite and he wasn't even able to work. Janakbhai lost his brother, his neighbor, his job and is left with a deep sense of fear and tragedy that would accompany him forever.

Retirement proves unfortunate

Sadashiv Jadhav was a simple and poor mill worker in Naroda. He lived with his wife and two children in a two room tenement in a chawl. A devout Hindu, he had recently retired and had some free time for himself. When he came to know that some people were going for karseva to Ayodhya he decided to join them. He last spoke to his wife and son when he left Ayodhya, the next image the family saw was his charred body. Sadashiv's son Vitthal is the sole bread winner for the family now and takes care of his mother. His reaction to his father's death at the hands of religious extremists is sober. "If Godhara had not happened, riots would not have started," this is all he has to say. He says the



Vitthal & his mother. Top Sadashiv Jadhav

Muslims are not their enemies, but the way Hindus were killed at Godhara instigated the riots. It was the backlash of Godhara. Vitthal believes that the social life in Gujarat is back to normal now. Nearly 20 people from Naroda died in the Godhra massacre. Their families come together every year on February 27th and mourn the dear departed.

Loss of son and husband

The Godhara massacre will trouble Prafullaben Mansukhbhai Soni forever. Her well settled, happy household was destroyed in that carnage. Mansukhbhai



Prafulla ben in front of Mansukh bhai & Jesal's Photo

had recently retired, her son Jesal was married and had a pretty seven month old daughter. The family was looking forward to getting the younger daughter married soon. Mansukhbhai and Jesal went for karseva and never came back. Prafullaben lost everything that was precious to her. Her life support was taken away from her. The way it happened tore her apart and she was in deep sorrow and pain. After sometime she regained control of her life and got her daughter and Jesal's widow married. Now, after a decade, it seems she has no emotions left. She has witnessed so many different aspects of human beings that nothing surprises or shocks her anymore.

What happened in Godhara was a tragedy, Prafullaben feels. Even though the events literally burnt down her hopes and future, she feels for the families of those who died during that period, Hindu or Muslim. "They were human beings, with them their families lost a support," is how she looks at it. But, she is firm in her belief that the onus of the deaths during riots is on the perpetrators of Godhara, those who burned down the train to kill Hindus.

The only support lost

Ishwarbhai Patel looks like a much older man without any hope, even though he is just above 60.

He lost his hope when his son, a blooming young man in his twenties, died a tragic death. Chirag was 21 and had just started a new job. He went to Ayodhya and every thing ended. The dreams that his father and mother Shardaben had woven around him were over. They feel no reason to live. Shardaben's family is settled in Canada. Ishwarbhai has retired from the mill where he used to work. They are spending their days with the support from a brother and friends. Their rage against those responsible for the Godhara tragedy comes out to the fore only if asked repeatedly. But they know they have to accept that the dead don't come back.

This is what families of some of the 58 victims of the Godhara massacre had to say. However, it is agonizingly clear that because of fear of biased media and some members of the general public these people can't speak their minds freely, afraid that their words will be misinterpreted. They are suspicious of anyone who goes to meet them. They are not openly ready to part with each others' addresses. Many have chosen to leave Ahmedabad and settle in Baroda, Surat, Mumbai, or even the US or Canada. They have attempted to move on. Time doesn't wait for anyone; the wounds they received in their minds and souls



Ishwarbhai & Shardaben. Above Chirag

are not seen anymore and not even acknowledged. On the other hand, they are upset that the grief of affected Muslim families was discussed and written about worldwide while Gujarat and the Hindus have been forced to live with a tarnished image even a decade later.



Diwali Celebration at Centennial Olympic Park Draws Diverse Crowd

By Smita Daftardar

World Hindu Council of America (VHPA), Atlanta Chapter, celebrated Diwali, "Festival of Lights", at Centennial Olympic Park on 4th Nov 2012. The colorful and lively annual variety entertainment show has become a permanent feature of the thriving social and cultural scene of Atlanta. The event, as always, was well received, with an attendance of about 1700, in spite of a forecast of rain!

The chief guests for the event were Deputy Counsel General Shri Ashok Kumar (Indian Consulate Atlanta) and Georgia State Senator Kurt Thomson. Shri Ashok Kumarji lighted the ceremonial lamp and State Senator Thomson graced the occasion by addressing the assembled audience, applauding the participation of community and urging people to show the same spirit and participate in the voting on Nov. 6th. Shri Shyam

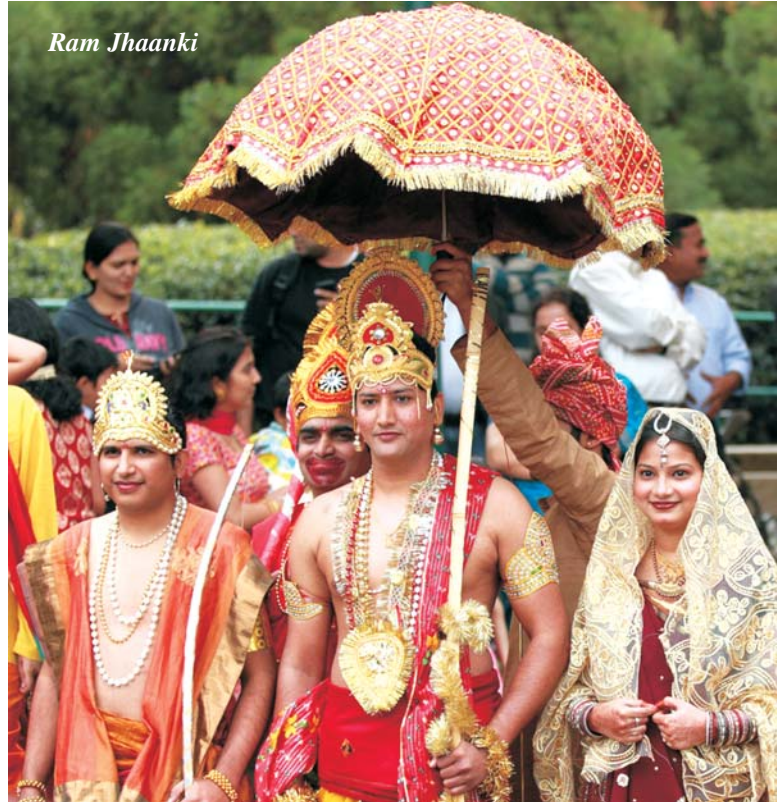
Tiwariji, Vice President, VHP of America, addressed the crowd with a Diwali Sandesh.

The five hour event started at about 11am with the traditional Prarthna offered by students of Balvihar of Cobb and Gwinnett. A group of about 20 kids recited shlokas and sang Vandemataram flawlessly, a perfect beginning of a program dedicated to preserving our culture and heritage for our progeny. The group of volunteers from Balgokulam and Balvihar presented a Jhanki, explaining the various reasons for celebrating Diwali, featuring Laxmiji, Ram -Sita Laxman and Hanuman, Krishna and Satyabhama,



Georgia State Senator
Curt Thompson

the Sikh Panth and the Jain Panth. The elaborate costumes and make up were used for a spectacular Jhanki. The participants were rewarded for their effort by a lot of pictures clicked by the audience! The highlight of the event was the sheer variety of beautifully choreographed and masterfully presented solo and group dances. The expertise with which each individual and group performed, showcased their talent as well as their dedication. It also spoke volumes about the love the Indian community has for music and dance, especially classical. Surely, this is a sign of a highly evolved and refined culture. The age group of performers was as varied as the show itself, from 5 year olds to adults joining in with gusto. The dance forms included Bharatnatyam, Koli dance, Telugu and Rajasthani folk dance, the Lejhim dance from Maharashtra, fusion dances and a modern dance cum exercise routine "Zumba", and of course the all time favorite, Bhangra. The fusion dance presented by students of Gwinnett School of Math, Science and Technology combined Hindu mythology with Chinese Yin and Yang philosophy, using moves from Bharatnatyam and Tae Kwon Do. Another fusion dance combined various classical Indian dance forms. A Bollywood dance medley performed by an all American group of dancers got a great applause from the large audience! The program had it's fair share of



Ram Jhaanki

musical treats from the performances of some really talented singers. A short play by a local theatre group added a different flavor to the song and dance routines. The program ended with all volunteers assembling on stage to the tune of Mile Sur Mera Tumhara.

The DJ for the show was a volunteer Dhruv Khurana also known as DJ Tiger J. Dhruv showed exceptional talent and patience as he managed the music for the 30 different items.

The things that are vital to organizing a program of this magnitude and outreach are selfless volunteers and generous donors. The VHP America, Atlanta chapter is blessed to have both. A number of sponsors, offering financial help and donation of food and drinks, made this program possible. Good times go hand in hand with good food and our sponsors ensured that everyone enjoyed morning snacks, tea, a hearty lunch, and as a token of appreciation, a snack box at the end of the show. The main sponsors for this event were Shree Shakti Mandir with their generous donation of Chole, Poori and rice; Hindu Temple of Atlanta who donated sweet sand rice, House of Spices supplied numerous cartons of bottled mango and guava juice, plus packaged bhel. Shiv Agrawalji of Global Mall and Atlanta Chowki Group donated cash. A raffle



Bharathanatyam and Tae Kwon do fusion



Lezim by Maharashtra Mandal

was organized with the grand prize of a beautiful gold necklace donated generously by Legacy Jewelers. These organizations and businesses have always supported VHPA's activities and without them an event of this magnitude would be impossible to stage.

The main reason behind organizing Diwali is to bring the community together in a festive spirit. In an increasingly commercial world where you can't take a breath without someone trying to sell you something, VHPA dares to defy odds and proves that good things in life can be free. The organizers abhor from giving this event a commercial color, keeping all services free, from entry to the event, to food and drinks, and keeping the event open to public. The booths for Mehndi and face painting are managed by volunteers and are free for kids. A nominal, optional



Deputy Council General Shri Ashok Kumar and Shyam Tiwari



Visible Diwali Spirit in Crowd

donation is requested from adults.

The final culmination of the show is the result of countless hours of work put in by a large team of dedicated volunteers. Here, the work done by one group of volunteer warrants a special mention, the group of young volunteers from Georgia Tech, who worked tirelessly from 8:00am to 6:00pm on the day of the show, which helped to start and end the show on time. VHPA is proud to be able to present such unique events and applauds the continued support shown by the community, both as participants and as an appreciative audience. ■

The Lost River

THE NOW DRIED UP
SARASWATI RIVER HOLDS THE
KEY TO MANY RIDDLES OF
ANCIENT INDIAN HISTORY -
FROM THE FATE OF THE
HARAPPANS TO THE IDENTITY
OF THE VEDIC PEOPLE. A
CONVERGENCE OF
ARCHAEOLOGICAL,
GEOLOGICAL AND CLIMATIC
STUDIES MAY SOON PROVIDE
US SOME ANSWERS



By Michel Danino

The riddle of the Saraswati river never goes long out of public view. The fascination the lost river has exerted on Indian minds is understandable. Praised in the Rig Veda's hymns as a 'mighty' river flowing 'from the mountain to the sea' somewhere between the Yamuna and the Sutlej, it is reported a few centuries later by the Brahmanas (commentaries on the Vedas) as disappearing in the desert at a point called Vinashana, which was then a highly revered pilgrimage site. The Mahabharata, whose great war is waged in the region of Kurukshetra watered by the Saraswati and its tributaries, paints a similar picture, adding some details about the broken-up westward course of the river all the way to Prabhasa on the Arabian Sea. The river went on dwindling down, eventually becoming 'mythical', finally relocated at the confluence between Ganga and Yamuna as an 'invisible' river - a convenient device to remember it.

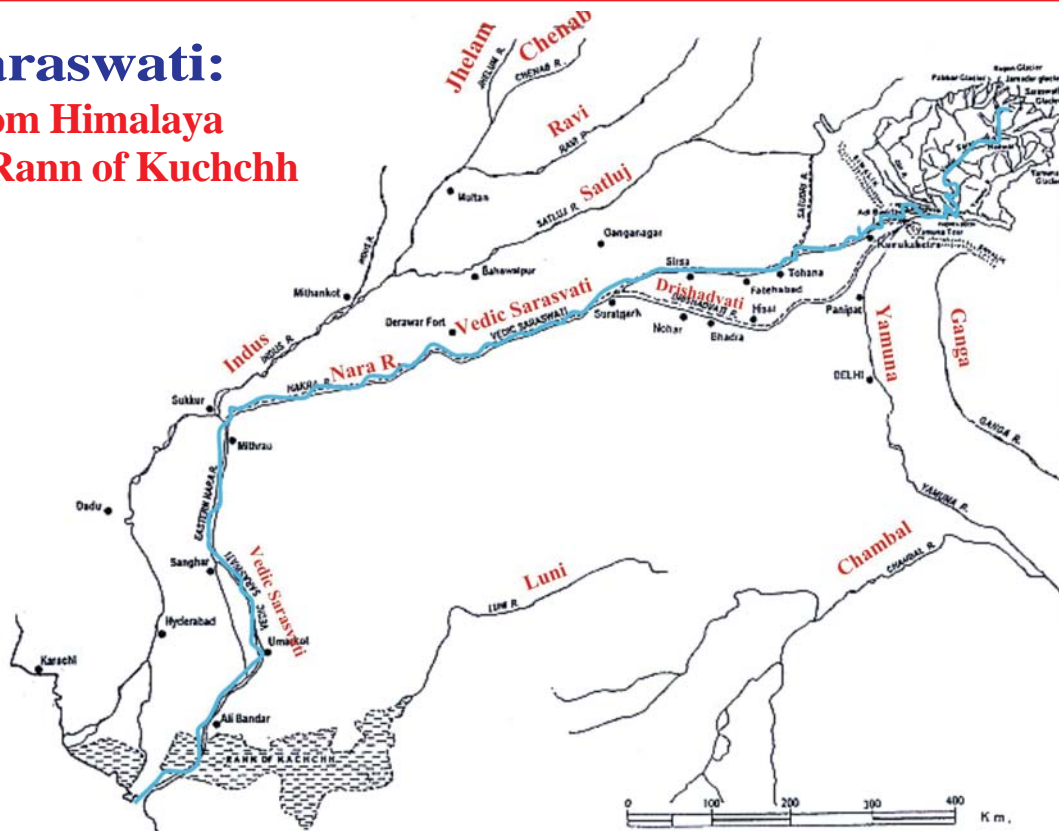
A modern myth is that satellite imagery 'rediscovered' the river in the 1970s. Actually, it only confirmed what had been known for over two centuries: As early as in 1760, a map from The Library Atlas published by Bryce, Collier & Schmitz showed the Saraswati (spelt 'Soorsuty') joining the Ghaggar ('Guggur') in Punjab; indeed, even today a small stream called 'Sarsuti' seasonally flows there. In 1778, James Rennell, a noted English geographer and

cartographer, published a Map of Hindoostan or the Mogul Empire with similar details. In the early 19th century, several topographers surveyed the bed of the Ghaggar, a seasonal river that flows down from the Shivalik hills, and found it much too wide for the paltry waters it carried during monsoons. The first scholar to propose that the Ghaggar-Saraswati combine was the relic of the Vedic Saraswati was the French geographer Louis Vivien de Saint-Martin, who authored in 1855 a massive Geography of India's North-West According to the Vedic Hymns. Subsequently, nearly all Indologists, from Max Müller to Monier-Williams or Macdonell (and later Louis Renou) accepted this thesis. Geologists such as RD Oldham (1886) joined in, followed by geographers such as the Indian Shamsul Islam Siddiqi (1944) or the German Herbert Wilhelmy (1969).

The Indus Civilization

The story of the Saraswati's rediscovery would thus have ended long ago if archaeology had not sprung a major surprise by redefining its role in antiquity. In the 1920s, cities of the Bronze Age like Mohenjodaro and Harappa came to light. Initial findings were limited to the Indus Valley and Baluchistan. But in 1941, the intrepid explorer Sanskritist Marc Aurel Stein conducted an expedition in the then Bahawalpur State - today's Cholistan, a

Saraswati: From Himalaya to Rann of Kuchchh



very arid region of Pakistan which is technically part of the Thar desert. The Ghaggar's dry bed continues there under the name of 'Hakra', and had long been known to be dotted with numerous ruined settlements. Stein's contribution, encapsulated in his paper titled 'A Survey of Ancient Sites along the Lost Saraswati River', was to show that some of those sites went back to Harappan times. So the Saraswati, too, had nurtured the 'Indus civilization', which prompted a few archaeologists to propose the broader term of 'Indus-Saraswati civilization'.

Indeed, decades of further explorations both in India and Pakistan have established that the Saraswati basin was home to about 360 sites of the Mature Harappan Phase (the urban phase that saw cities thrive, from about 2600 to 1900 BCE). This includes settlements such as Bhirrana, Rakhigarhi, Kunal or Banawali (all in Haryana), Kalibangan (Rajasthan) or Ganweriwala (Cholistan) - altogether, almost a third of all known urban Harappan sites. (Gujarat was also host to over 300 of them, another indication that the term 'Indus civilization' is something of a misnomer.)

Again, that the Ghaggar-Hakra was the Saraswati's relic was accepted by most archaeologists, including

Mortimer Wheeler, Raymond Allchin (both from Britain), Gregory Possehl, JM Kenoyer (both from the US), Jean-Marie Casal (France), AH Dani (Pakistan), BB Lal, SP Gupta, VN Misra or Dilip Chakrabarti (India).

The Aryan Issue

Despite the broad consensus, scholars such as Romila Thapar, Irfan Habib and the late R. S. Sharma started questioning this identification in the 1980s. What prompted this rather late reaction? It was a new development: A study of the evolution of the pattern of Harappan settlements in the Saraswati basin now revealed that in its central part - roughly southwest Haryana, southern Punjab and northern Rajasthan - most or all Harappan sites were abandoned sometime around 1900 BCE, a period coinciding with the end of the urban phase of the Indus civilization. Clearly, the river system collapsed - which archaeologists now saw as a factor contributing to the end of the brilliant Indus civilization.

Why was this a problem? We must remember that the Saraswati is lavishly praised both as a river and a Goddess in the Rig Veda, a collection of hymns which mainstream Indology says was composed by Indo-

Aryans shortly after their migration to India around 1500 BCE. However, by that time, the Saraswati had been reduced to a minor seasonal stream. How could the said Aryans praise it as a 'mighty river', the 'best of rivers', 'mother of waters', etc? There is a chronological impossibility. Hence, the objectors asserted, the Ghaggar-Hakra was not, after all, the Saraswati extolled in the Rig Veda. While some (Rajesh Kochhar) tried to relocate the river in Afghanistan, others (Irfan Habib) decided that the Saraswati was not a particular river but "the river in the abstract, the River Goddess"; but both theses ran against the Rig Veda's own testimony that the river flowed between the Yamuna and the Sutlej.

However, what should have remained a scholarly issue now turned into an ideological and often acrimonious battle. On the one hand, those who stuck to the identity between the Saraswati and the Ghaggar-Hakra concluded that the composers of the Rig Veda must have lived in the region during the third millennium BCE at the latest - but as the only settlements known of that period were Harappan ones, they often held that the Harappans were part of the Vedic people. Cultural evidence such as a Harappan swastika, yogic postures, figurines in namaste and more was pressed into service to bridge the Harappan and the Vedic worlds. On the other hand, scholars who continued to swear by an Aryan immigration in the mid-second millennium BCE, and therefore a pre-Vedic

Harappan civilization, accused the former of 'chauvinism', 'jingoism' or worse, conveniently

forgetting that dozens of Western scholars had, for a century-and-a-half, accepted the same location for the Saraswati river.

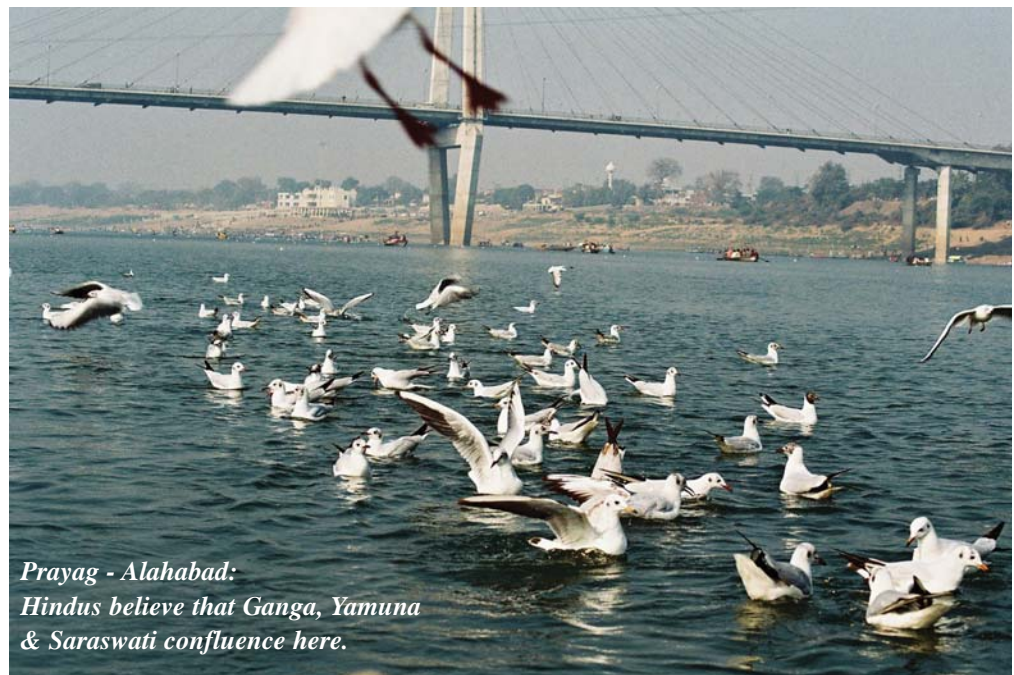
New Research

Leaving aside the controversy, we now have scientific research combining geology and river studies. Satellite imagery is another useful tool, but cannot

by itself date the numerous buried palaeo-channels (ancient waterways) it has brought to light; anyone can today access websites such as Google Earth and view the well-marked bed of the Ghaggar, but when did a perennial river last flow through it, and where did it draw its waters from?

Several recent studies have thrown new light on the ancient river, though sometimes with contradictory findings. Thus, in an article of April 2011 published in the noted magazine Science, A Lawler claimed that "the Ghaggar-Hakra was at most a modest seasonal stream... from 2500 BCE to 1900 BCE," that is, at the height of the Harappan civilization. This ran against the notion of a mighty, or simply perennial, Saraswati flowing during mature Harappan times. Lawler based himself on recent independent studies piloted by geologists Sanjeev Gupta, Peter Clift (both from the UK), and Hideaki Maemoku (Japan), which suggested that the river had largely dried up long before Harappan times. But Clift had, in a paper of September 2009 in Geoscientist, found that "between 2000 and 3000 BCE, flow along a presently dried up course known as the Ghaggar-Hakra river ceased, probably driven by the weakening monsoon and possibly also because of headwater capture into the adjacent Yamuna and Sutlej rivers."

Clift's multi-national team, using sophisticated methods to date zircon sand grains and identify their



Prayag - Alahabad:
Hindus believe that Ganga, Yamuna
& Saraswati confluence here.

provenance, published in the journal *Geology* of 2012 a paper which showed that the Yamuna once flowed into the Ghaggar-Hakra, but switched eastward tens of thousands of years ago; the Sutlej also contributed to the Ghaggar system but abandoned it 10,000 years ago or earlier. But the paper remained non-committal as regards the precise time for the drying of the Ghaggar itself.

More recently, in March 2012, a similar team of geoscientists published in *Proceedings of National Academy of Science* a paper entitled 'Fluvial landscapes of the Harappan civilization' (its lead author was Liviu Giosan, with Clift as second author). The team disagreed that "large glacier-fed Himalayan river watered the Harappan heartland on the interfluvies between the Indus and Ganges basins"; rather, "only monsoonal-fed rivers were active there during the Holocene" (that is, the last 10,000 years or so). In particular, "rivers were undoubtedly active in this region during the Urban Harappan Phase". Indeed, the geoscientists found "sandy fluvial deposits approximately 5,400 (years) old at Fort Abbas in Pakistan. And recent work on the upper Ghaggar-Hakra interfluvies in India also documented Holocene channel sands that are approximately 4,300 (years) old." In other words, the Ghaggar-Hakra was active during the mature Harappan period, although not fed by glacial sources; it was a monsoon-fed river, like rivers of central or southern India: "Reliable monsoon rains were able to sustain perennial rivers earlier during the Holocene, (which) explains why Harappan settlements flourished along the entire Ghaggar-Hakra system without access to a glacier-fed river." While this conclusion of a perennial but monsoon-fed Saraswati in Harappan times may be provisionally accepted, further studies surveying larger areas may slightly alter it, since we know from a 15th century Islamic chronicle that the Sutlej and Ghaggar systems were still connected in medieval times, and therefore sands of Himalayan provenance carried by the Sutlej should be identifiable in the Ghaggar's central and lower basin.

But that is, after all, a detail: What matters is the acknowledgement of a perennial Ghaggar's role in sustaining numerous Harappan urban settlements, and the coincidence between its dwindling down and the withdrawal of Harappan sites from its central basin. This is further supported by another 2012 study,

directed by Indian geologist Rajiv Sinha and published in *Quaternary International*, which mapped palaeo-river sedimentary bodies in the subsurface by measuring their electrical resistivity (water-bearing sediments having a lower resistivity than dry ones). The study offered "the first stratigraphic evidence that a palaeochannel exists in the sub-surface alluvium in the Ghaggar valley. The fact that the major urban sites of Kalibangan and Kunal lie adjacent to the newly discovered subsurface fluvial channel body suggests that there may be a spatial relationship between the Ghaggar-Hakra palaeochannel and Harappan site distribution."

Such a conclusion had been reached by archaeologists long ago, since Kalibangan, for instance, shows no evidence of independent water supply; unlike Mohenjodaro, it had very few wells, and unlike Dholavira, no reservoirs, yet it was continually occupied for several centuries: For its water supply through the year, it must therefore have depended on the Ghaggar, on whose left bank it lay (with entries into its fortified areas facing the riverbed). A convergence of archaeological, geological and climatic studies is thus on the horizon, and we may soon be in a position to better understand the reasons for the decline of the Indus civilization. As regards the Saraswati river, allowing for some metaphorical inflation in the Vedic hymns, nothing in the recent research contradicts the river's break-up and gradual extinction as depicted in India's ancient literature. We are thus back to the original problem: If we accept the Vedic hymns' description of a river flowing from the mountain to the sea and located between the Yamuna and the Sutlej, the Ghaggar remains the sole candidate; but as we now know, this description can only apply to the third millennium BCE or earlier, an epoch that does not fit with the conventional scenario of a second millennium Aryan migration into India. We still have to wait for the last word on India's protohistory. ■

The writer is the author of 'The Lost River' On the Trail of the Sarasvati (Penguin, 2010) and a long-time student of Indian protohistory; he is currently guest professor at IIT Gandhinagar and visiting professor at IIM Ranchi

URL: <http://dailypioneer.com/home/online-channel/top-story/103112-the-lost-river.html>

तमिल हिंदी के बीच सेतु है संस्कृत

विषय प्रवेश

सभी प्रबुद्ध टिप्पणीकार पाठकों की उत्साह-जनक टिप्पणियों के कारण ही, इस विषय को और आगे बढ़ाने का विचार दृढ़ हुआ। पर यह मैं भी अनुभव करता रहता था, कि, अनेक भारतीय तमिल भाषा की ओर, कोई परदेशी भाषा की दृष्टि से, जैसे की वह कोई हवाईयन भाषा ना हो, देखा करते हैं। इस लिये भी, इसी विषय पर और अधिक लिखकर कुछ मात्रा में भ्रम-निरास करने का प्रयास आवश्यक समझकर, विषय को और आगे बढ़ाने का विचार किया।

हमारी फूट का कारण :

ऐसे भ्रम का कारण कुछ मात्रा में मिशनरी काल्डवेल महाशय का षड़यन्त्रकारी काम भी है। उनके विषय में कुछ जानकारी 'मानसिक जातियाँ' नामक मेरे द्वारा लिखे गये तीन लेखों में प्रस्तुत की जा चुकी है। इसी लेख के अंत में, संदर्भित लेख की कड़ी दी है। इसी विषय पर, विद्वान डॉ. एच बालसुब्रह्मण्यम, जो सुप्रसिद्ध तमिल हिन्दी अनुवादक और लेखक हैं, उनका भी मत इसी सच्चाई की पुष्टि करता है।

शब्दों की सादृश्यता

सूचि के, शब्दों की सादृश्यता परखते परखते, एक पहेली सुलझाने जैसा, रंजक अनुभव भी, माँ वीणा वादिनी की कृपा से, अनुभव कर रहा हूँ। आप को भी ऐसा ही रंजक अनुभव हो। हिन्दी और तमिल के बीच एक सेतु है, 'संस्कृत के शब्द' जो राष्ट्रीय एकता में, रामसेतु ही सिद्ध होंगे, ऐसा विश्वास हो रहा है। वैसे, जोड़ने वाले शब्द जो संस्कृत कहे जा रहें हैं, वे तमिल (द्रविड़) मूल के भी हो सकते हैं। पर, इस आलेख में, हमें उस की, समान कड़ी का शोध ही, लक्ष्य है।

तमिल के संस्कृत शब्द

तमिल के संस्कृत मूलक शब्द परखने में कुछ कठिन लगते हैं। कारण है, उन शब्दों का तद्भव, या बदला हुआ रूप। और दूसरा कारण है, तमिल भाषियों का (अॅक्सेन्ट) स्वराघात। सरल शुद्ध संस्कृत का शब्द 'संन्यास' सन्न्यासमं बन जाता है। सत्याग्रह - सत्तियागिरहम्, और समुद्र - समुदिरम् हो जाते हैं, और यह भ्रांत मान्यता कि तमिल भाषा अलग ही है, तो समझने

का प्रयास भी नहीं होता। कठिनाई दोनों ओर है। सोचने पर, आप को ऐसे और कारण भी, निश्चित दृष्टिगोचर होते चलेंगे।

वैसे हमारी उत्तरी भाषाओं में भी स्नान का नहाना, क्षत्रिय का खत्री, आचार्य का आयरियाणं, ऐसे ऐसे परिवर्तन हो चुके हैं। क्या नहाना पर अहिंदी भाषी भांप सकता

है, कि नहाना स्नान का प्राकृत रूप होगा ? या आयरियाणं सुनकर अनुमान कर लेगा, कि उस शब्द का मूल शुद्ध आचार्य है ? लगता नहीं है। एक और कारण है, तमिल लिपि की उच्चारण विशेषता, जो अगले परिच्छेद में स्पष्ट की जाएगी।

तमिल लिपि की उच्चारण विशेषता

तमिल लिपि की उच्चारण विशेषता, उस लिपि में कम वर्ण होने के कारण है। तेलुगु, कन्नड और मल्लयाळम् की ऐसी समस्या नहीं है, वे लिपियाँ देवनागरी की प्रतिकृतियाँ ही मानी जाएंगी।

ऐसी समस्या और किसी भी भाषा की नहीं है। माना जाता है, कि मल्लयाळम्, तेलुगु और कन्नड तीनों में संस्कृत शब्द ७० से ८० प्रतिशत हैं। केवल तमिल में यह प्रतिशत ४० से ५० तक माना जाता है। शब्द कोश के कुछ प्रतिनिधिक पृष्ठोंपर छपे हुए, शब्दों की गिनती कर, भाषा वैज्ञानिक ऐसा सांख्यिकी निष्कर्ष निकालते हैं। इस भूमिका से सज्ज होकर, आप निम्न सूचि का, एक चित्त होकर, अवलोकन करें। आप को अनुभव करने में कठिन नहीं होगा, कि तमिल में भी काफी संस्कृत मूल के शब्द हैं।

स से प्रारंभ होने वाले शब्द

स से प्रारंभ होने वाले शब्दों की ही सूचि लेते हैं। निम्न सारणी में बाईं ओर हिन्दी / संस्कृत शब्द देकर - की दाहिनी ओर तमिल शब्द और कोष्ठक में (पर्यायवाची हिंदी/संस्कृत)

डॉ. मधुसूदन



शब्द दिये हैं। शब्दसूचि में, जो शब्द संस्कृतजन्य प्रतीत हुआ, उसी का चयन किया गया है। ४० से ५० प्रतिशत का अनुमान भाषा वैज्ञानिकों का है। मैं मेरी अपनी जानकारी के लिए, कुछ ठोस प्रमाण चाहता था। जो मिला, उसी को आप के समक्ष रख रहा हूँ। तत्सम और तद्भव दोनों प्रकार के शब्द लिए हैं।

हिंदी / संस्कृत - तमिल (हिंदी/संस्कृत)
संकट - संकड़म्,
संगीत - संगीदम्,
संग्राम (युद्ध) - युद्धम्,
संचार - संचरित्तल
संतति - संतति, कुळन्दै (कुल में जन्में)
संताप - मनक्कष्टम् (मन-कष्ट), वेदनै (वेदना)
संतुष्टि - तिरुप्ति (तृप्ति)
संदर्भ - सन्दर्बम्,
संदेश - समाचारं (समाचार)
संन्यास - सन्नियासमं:, सन्यासम्।
संन्यासी - सन्नियासि।
संप्रदाय - परम्परै (परम्परा), सम्प्रदायम्
संबंध - संबंदम्
संरक्षक- पोषकर,
संरक्षण - पोषणै, संरक्षणै: संरक्षणै
संवारना - अलंगरिक्क:
संवेदना - अनुताबम् (अनुताप)
संशय - संदेहम्
संस्कार - शुद्धिकरित्तल: (शुद्धिकर)
संस्था - स्तापनम् (स्थापनं)
संस्थापक - स्तापकर: (स्थापकर)
आरंभिप्पवर् (आरंभ प्रवर?)
सख्ता (कठोर) - कडिनमान (कठिनमान?)
सच्चा - योगियमान: (योग्य) असलान (असल)
सजा - दंडनै
सजाना - अलंगरिक्क

सजावट - अलंगारम्
सतर्क - जागिरदैयान (जागृतिवान)
सतर्कता - जाक्किरदै (जागृति?)
सत्कार - उपचारम्: (औपचारिक व्यवहार)
सत्ता - अदिगारम्, (अधिकारं)
सतू - सत्तु मावु
सत्याग्रह - सत्तियागिरहम्,
सत्संग - भजनै गोष्ठि, (भजन गोष्ठी)
कताकालक्षेपम् (कथा काल क्षेपं)
सदुपयोग - नल्लु (अच्छा) उपयोगम्
सफ़र - यात्तिरै (यात्रा) पिरयाणम् (प्रयाणं)
सभा (परिषद, समिति) - सबै,
सभ्य - नागरिगमान (नागरिकमान)
सभ्यता - सिविलिजेशन नागरीगम्
समता - (सादृश्य, बराबरी, संतुलन) -
समतुवम्, (समत्वं)
समय - समयम्, तरुणम्
समर - युद्धम्,
समर्थ - समर्तियमुळ्ळ (सामर्थ्य मूलक)
समांतर (समानांतर) - समानान्तरमान
समाचार - समाचारम्
समाज - समूगम् (समूहं) समाजम्
समाधान - समाधानं
समालोचक - विमरिशकर्
समिति- कुळु: (कुल), कमिट्टि (कमेटी)
समुदाय - समूगम्, (समूह) समुदायम्
समुद्र -समुदिरम्,
समूह - कूट (ढेर)
सम्मान - मरियादै (मर्यादा)
सम्मेलन - सम्मेलनम्,
सम्राट - चक्करवर्ति (चक्रवर्ती)
सरकार - सक्कार्,
सरल - सुलबमान, (सुलभमान)
सरोकार - संबन्दम् (संबन्धम्)
सर्जन - शिरुष्टि (सृष्टि), आक्कल (सर्जन की प्रतिभा)

सर्प - सर्पम्
सर्वांगीण - पूरणमान
सहानुभूति - अनुताबम् (अनुताप)
सहृदयता - कनिन्दमनम्, करुणै (करुणा)
साजन - ऐजमान्:, (यजमान)
सादर - मरियादैयुडन् (मर्यादा युक्त?)
सादा - सादा
साधना - उपासनै,
साधारण - सादरणमान:
साधु - सादु, महात्मा:
साध्य - साद्वियमान:
साफ - शुद्धमान:
साबुन - (सोप) - सोप्पु
सामर्थ्य - सामर्तियम्
सामर्थ्यशाली - सामर्तिय-शालियान (सामर्थ्य शाली)
सामाजिक - समूगत्तिय (सामूहिक)
सामान्य - सादारणमान:
साम्राज्य - साम्राज्यम्
साम्राज्यवाद - एकादिपत्तियम् (एकाधिपत्यं)
सामूहिक - समूगत्तिय
सार - सारु:, सारांशम्
सारांश - सारांशम्
सार्थक - अर्तमुळ्ळ (अर्थ मूलक)
साहूकार - पेरिय वियापारी, (बड़ा व्यापारी) लेवादेविक्कारन् (लेन देन कार)
सिंगार (श्रृंगार) - अलंगारम्
सिंदूर - कुंगुमम् (कुम कुम)
सिंहनाद - शिंगत्तिन् गर्जनै: (सिंह की गर्जना)
सिंहासन - शिंगासनम्:
सितारा - नक्षत्रिम्
सिद्धान्त (थीअरी) - तत्तुवम् (तत्त्वं)
सीधा - कपडमट्ट: (कपटहीन) सुलबमान (सुलभमान) मट्ट का अर्थ हीन होता है।

सुख - सुगम्, सौकरियम् (सौकर्य)
 सुझाव - योशनै, शूचने:
 सुधा - अमिर्दम्, (अमृतम्) अमुदम्
 सुधीर - दैरियशालि (धैर्यशाली)
 सुर - स्वरम्:
 सुराही - कूजा
 सुविधा - सुलभम्:, (सुलभम्)
 सूत्र - सूत्रिम्:
 सूरख - दुवारम् (द्वारं)
 सूर्य - सूरियन् (सूर्यन)
 सेठ - दनवान्, (धनवान)
 सेना - सेनै
 सेनापति - सेनापति
 सैनिक - सेनै संबन्दमान: (सेना से संबंधित)
 शिप्पाय (सिपाही?)
 स्तंभ - तूण्, (स्थूणा) कंबम्, (खंबा)

स्तब्ध - बिरमित (विरमित रुका हुआ)
 स्तुति - तोत्तिरम् (स्तोत्रं)
 स्थायी - शासुवदमान् (शाश्वतमान)
 स्थिर - स्तिरमान,
 स्मृति - जापग शक्ति, स्मृति
 स्रष्टा - शिरुष्टिकर्ता, (सृष्टिकर्ता) बिरम्म देवर्
 (ब्रह्मदेव)
 संक्रान्ति - संकिरान्ति, परुवकालम्
 (पर्वकालम्) दक्षिणायन/ उत्तरायण/ आरंभम्
 (आरंभं) स्वतंत्रता - सुदन्दिरम्।
 स्वभाव - सुबावम्।
 स्वर्ग - सोर्ग लोगम्।
 स्वस्थ - आरोगियमान,
 स्वाद - रुचि
 स्वादिष्ट - रुचिकरमान.
 स्वामित्व - आदिवक्कम् (आधिक्यम्, प्रभुता,

आधिपत्य सभी के लिए प्रयुक्त)
 स्वामी - ऐजमान, (यजमान)
 स्वास्थ्य - आरोगियम् (आरोग्यम्) ■
 मधुसूदनजी तकनीकी (Engineering) में
 एम.एस्. तथा पी.एचडी. की उपाधियाँ प्राप्त
 की है, भारतीय अमेरिकी शोधकर्ता के रूप
 में मशहूर हैं, हिन्दी के प्रखर पुरस्कर्ता,
 संस्कृत, हिन्दी, मराठी, गुजराती के अभ्यासी,
 अनेक संस्थाओं से जुड़े हुए। अंतर्राष्ट्रीय हिंदी
 समिति (अमरिका) के आजीवन सदस्य हैं;
 वर्तमान में अमेरिका की प्रतिष्ठित संस्था
 UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS
 (युनिवर्सिटी ऑफ मॅसाचुसेट्स निर्माण
 अभियांत्रिकी) में प्रोफेसर हैं।

Non-Hindus to sign faith form to enter Tirumala temple

Continued from page 10 K S Srinivasa Raju, non-Hindus must necessarily sign the declaration form at the Vaikuntam queue complex before having the darshan of the Lord. Though the practice had been in vogue for several decades, it was only followed as a tradition and not a rule by only those who volunteered to give the declaration.

Now, the TTD authorities have made it compulsory as per the government order (GO MS No. 311 of AP Revenue Endowments-1) under Rule no. 16. "It is now a mandatory rule for all those belonging to various faiths other than Hinduism to sign a declaration form before entering the hill temple stating that they have faith in the presiding deity," Raju said.

For the convenience of devotees, the declaration forms would be available at all sub-enquiry offices, besides the Peshkar and JEO's office.

The TTD also took a serious note of the attempts by certain people representing evangelist organizations to propagate Christianity on the Tirumala hills. Last week, the TTD vigilance authorities caught red-handed three TTD employees who were in possession

of literature, CDs and pictures pertaining to Christianity. The employees were found to be clandestinely propagating Christianity among the pilgrims coming from different parts of the country. The TTD authorities transferred them to the head office in the Tirupati down the sacred hills.

In the last one week, the TTD authorities made extensive study of the background of the people working on the Tirumala hills in various capacities. It is learnt that at least 100 persons, including a few employees and contract workers of the TTD, were from other religions. A few months ago, the TTD authorities caught three hotel workers staying in staff quarters right behind the temple having pictures and literature belonging to other religions. They were arrested and sacked from the jobs. "We will take serious action against those indulging in preaching of other religions on Tirumala hills. Right now, the vigilance authorities are making thorough searches to weed out the people of other faiths on the hills," TTD executive officer L V Subrahmanyam said. ■

URL: <http://indiatoday.intoday.in/story/non-hindus-to-sign-faith-form-to-enter-tirumala-temple-in-andhra-pradesh/1/210621.html>



World Hindu Council of America (VHPA)

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*Home Telephone: _____ *Email Address: _____
Cell Phone: _____ Work Telephone: _____
*Age Group 18-35 ☐ 36-50 ☐ 51-65 ☐ 65+ ☐ (Minimum age for becoming a member is 18 years)

Membership Desired: (select one)

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see overleaf

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