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Shaka Samvat: 1947  
Vikram Samvat: 2082

# HINDU VISHWA

Vishwa Dharma Digest

**HONORING A LEGACY OF  
DHARMA AND LEADERSHIP**

## AHILYABAI HOLKAR

The 300th Birth Anniversary of Rajmata  
Ahilyabai Holkar Celebrated in Atlanta



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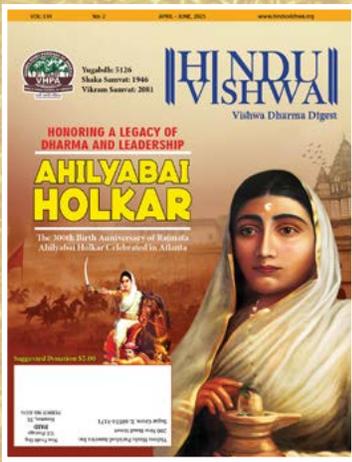
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गतसङ्गस्य मुक्तस्य ज्ञानावस्थितचेतसः |  
यज्ञायाचरतः कर्म समग्रं प्रविलीयते || 23||

- श्रीमद्भगवद्गीता 4.23

**gata-saṅgasya muktasya jñānāvasthita-chetasah  
yajñāyācharataḥ karma samagraṁ praviliyate**

They are released from the bondage of material attachments and their intellect is established in divine knowledge. Since they perform all actions as a sacrifice (to God), they are freed from all karmic reactions.

- Bhagvad Gita, 4.23

## ABOUT THE HINDU VISHWA

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

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IN THIS ISSUE

Respecting Nature



29

In Search of Hindu Icons in Kashmir



31

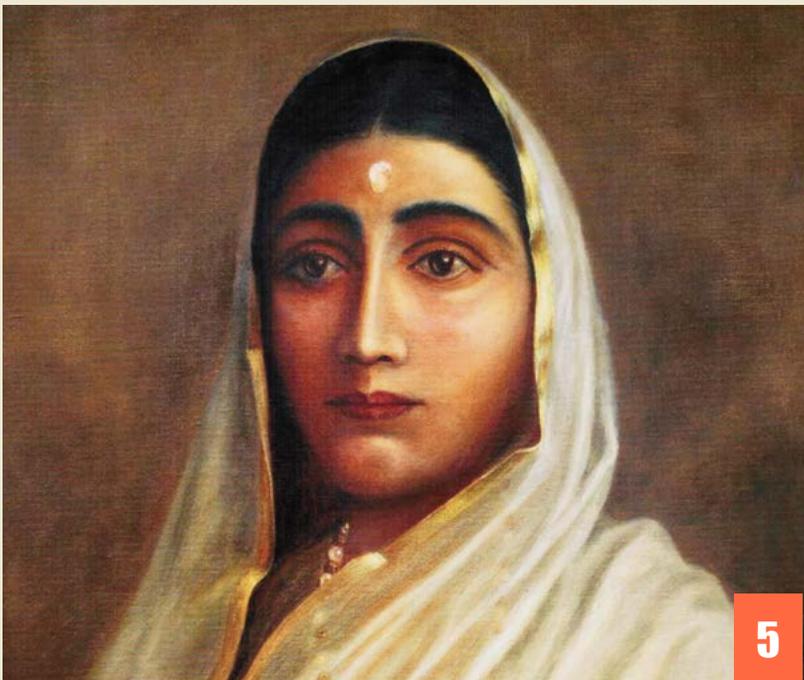
Bhagwad Gita for Children V



39

Editorial	3
Digital Delusion and the Influence Paradox A 21st Century Reckoning	9
The Hindu Manifesto A Civilizational Call to Action	12
Hindu Heritage Day in Boston Celebrates Nari Shakti	14
Uttarakhand The New Epicenter of Wellness Tourism	16
Durga Nama Mala	20
The Path to Happiness	25
Karma and Rebirth	27
VHPA Starts Balvihar in Tampa	37

Honoring a Legacy of Dharma and Leadership Ahilyabai Holkar



5



# NAVIGATING THE LABYRINTH

## SWAYAMBODH (SELF-AWARENESS) AND SHATRUBODH (ENEMY-AWARENESS)

Many Hindu students, celebrated for their academic prowess, often enter higher education without a robust foundation in their own historical and spiritual traditions. The secularist and socialist framework adopted after India's independence openly fostered hostility to Hindu values.

In an increasingly complex world, Hindu students face unique challenges in preserving their cultural and spiritual heritage. Many are left bewildered, some even seeing their careers jeopardized by falling prey to the insidious currents of leftist and Islamist propaganda, as devastatingly witnessed most recently at MIT with the case of Megha Vemuri and countless others before her. Dominant ideological currents, particularly within academia, relentlessly misrepresent or actively undermine traditional Hindu values, creating an environment where self-awareness and a nuanced understanding of history are the first casualties.

For decades, influential intellectual movements like postmodernism and critical theory have profoundly shaped academic and social discourse. Within this warped lens, deeply ingrained family values are scornfully dismissed as "tribalism," and conservative viewpoints are instantly branded as "regressive." A



particularly pervasive and insidious trope, "all religions are the same," has profoundly disoriented Hindu youth. This simplistic perspective, while deceptively benign, fundamentally overlooks the profound philosophical and historical distinctions between

diverse faith traditions. The core Hindu ideal, emphasizing moksha—victory over the self and one's inner vices—stands in stark contrast to Abrahamic interpretations that have historically, and repeatedly emphasized victory and domination over others. This



“

A particularly perplexing phenomenon is the open, malicious alliance between leftist and Islamist movements. While leftist ideologies vigorously claim to champion social progressivism and secularism, they conspicuously refrain from challenging Islamist doctrines, most of which are demonstrably illiberal or authoritarian. It is a striking paradox: leftist movements thrive and demand freedoms in secular societies, yet they exhibit a negligible presence and rarely advocate for similar freedoms within Islamic nations, where authoritarian regimes routinely suppress any free expression lest any dissent.

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fundamental divergence in theology should decisively put to rest any notion of conflating dharmic values with philosophies of domination. Such hegemonic philosophies have caused immense, quantifiable harm, from the horrors of the slave trade and the brutality of colonization to the relentless religious conflicts scarring the world at large, as ceaselessly observed throughout history.

Many Hindu students, celebrated for their academic prowess, often enter higher education without a robust foundation in their own historical and spiritual traditions. The secularist and socialist framework adopted after India's independence openly fostered hostility to Hindu values. This historical context has created a generation of Hindu parents who, despite their brilliance, are often ill-equipped to guide their children through the insidious ideological undercurrents prevalent in academia. Consequently, Hindu students become tragically vulnerable to narratives that savagely critique their heritage while simultaneously glorifying other perspectives. Humanities departments, frequently dominated by leftist ideologues, cunningly reshape viewpoints under the guise of "freedom of expression," even as they ironically and mercilessly silence dissent through the chilling mechanisms of "cancel culture."

A particularly perplexing phenomenon is the open, malicious alliance between leftist and Islamist movements. While leftist ideologies vigorously claim to champion social progressivism and secularism, they conspicuously refrain from challenging Islamist doctrines, most of which are demonstrably illiberal or authoritarian. It is a striking paradox: leftist movements thrive and demand freedoms in secular societies, yet they exhibit a negligible presence and rarely

advocate for similar freedoms within Islamic nations, where authoritarian regimes routinely suppress any free expression lest any dissent.

Genuine coexistence demands mutual respect and the recognition of each group's undeniable right to exist and flourish. However, leftists and Islamists actively deny this fundamental right to others, thereby deliberately sabotaging any genuine efforts toward peace. A deeper, more honest understanding of historical events—from the geopolitical complexities of global flashpoints to the tragic exodus and ethnic cleansing of non-Muslim populations in various parts of the world—unquestionably reveals the entrenched root causes of recurring tensions. Superficial calls for harmony without addressing these foundational injustices are utterly futile.

To effectively counter this pervasive ideological indoctrination, it is crucial to equip Hindu students with potent intellectual tools for critical discernment. Promoting values like Swayambodh—a profound understanding of one's own heritage, values, and strengths—and Shatrubodh—a clear-eyed recognition of ideologies and narratives that actively seek to undermine one's identity—can empower them to critically evaluate prevailing narratives with unwavering clarity. Encouraging deep engagement with historical facts, fostering balanced and intellectually honest discourse, and consciously reinforcing a strong, positive cultural identity are vital, indeed indispensable, steps. By empowering Hindu students with this clarity and conviction, we can help them navigate the challenges of the modern world with an unshakeable confidence and profound pride in their rich heritage. ■



# Honoring a Legacy of Dharma and Leadership **AHILYABAI HOLKAR**

## The 300th Birth Anniversary of Rajmata Ahilyabai Holkar Celebrated in Atlanta

**R**ajmata Ahilya Bai Holkar's 300th Birth Anniversary was celebrated with reverence and grandeur at the Indian Consulate at Atlanta on May 31st 2025. A visionary ruler, a devout Hindu, and a timeless symbol of strength and compassion, Ahilyabai's legacy as a beacon of dharmic governance was brought to life in an uplifting community event that highlighted her incredible achievements as well as her profound humility. From music and poetry to dance and motivational reflection every element of the program echoed Ahilyabai's message of strength, service, and celebrated her unshakable faith in Hindu Dharma that guided her every single action.

The event was made possible with the efforts of volunteers of Ahilya Bai International, VHPA Atlanta Chapter, Hindu Women's Network, Ambaji Shree Shakti Mandir, HSS and other local organizations. Guests were



also treated to a traditional vegetarian lunch, generously provided by Ambaji ShreeShakti Mandir, adding warmth and fellowship to the day's festivities.



## A Tapestry of Devotion and Culture

The program opened with a melodious Ganesh stuti by Janani Raghunathan, invoking auspicious blessings for the event. Shridhar Venkat of Ahilya Bai International delivered a warm welcome speech. As a representative of VHPA Atlanta chapter and the Hindu Women's Network, I was honored to emcee this momentous celebration, and to get an opportunity to reiterate HWN's unwavering stand that "women empowerment" was a western concept and that the women of Bharat and Bharateeya origin were born empowered, Ahilya bai being a shining example of this legacy of empowered women!

**Students from Sangeet Bitan School then offered a series of devotional bhajans and beautiful patriotic songs transporting the audience to a space of devotion and warm memories of Punya Bhumi Bharat. Rikhia Saha and her students Anushka Saha, Arin Sammaddar, Shaina Das, Sharayu Aher, Debasmitta Dutta, Shourya Chippa, and Shivanya Kar, in their melodious voices captured the spirit of the woman they came to honor—a ruler who began every day with prayer before taking up matters of state.**



The celebration took off to a grand start with a powerful Ganesh Vandana "Tandava Nritya Kari", by Pragnya Rampalli with Abhignya Vuppu as "Vinayaka," students of Sri Dutt Raga Dance Academy. This was followed by an address from the Consul General of India, Hon'ble Consul General Shri Ramesh Babu Lakshmanan who spoke eloquently on Ahilyabai Holkar's remarkable life - her ethical leadership, her invaluable contribution to temple architecture and her highly successful policies that increased economic activity and brought prosperity to her people. He also reemphasized that Bharateeya

tradition has always honored and revered women, that they are, indeed, empowered. He noted that the Govt of India has numerous programs that aim to bring about development with women in the lead.

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**The program then shifted into reflection and inspiration with a motivational talk by Rekha Radhakrishnan, a life coach, singer, and speaker. Rekha ji offered a modern interpretation of Ahilyabai's message, urging today's women and youth to lead with empathy, resilience, and purpose-qualities that defined the queen's legacy.**

”

captured the spirit of the woman they came to honor—a ruler who began every day with prayer before taking up matters of state. While Ahilya Bai was the Queen of Malwa, her work restoring and building Hindu temples across the length and breadth of Bharat, made her a true daughter of Bharatmata.

Smt. Geetha from Chinmaya Mission provided deeper context through a thoughtful talk on Ahilyabai's life. She traced the queen's life through a series of inspiring stories - from a young child growing up in a small village to the sovereign of Malwa, her unflinching resolve to defeat adversaries, her all women unit of army, her tireless temple-building efforts across the Indian subcontinent, and her compassionate and ethical rule from a simple wooden throne.

Adding a musical dimension to the celebration was a stirring performance of a powerful song on Ahilyabai Holkar, sung by Sripriya Srinivas and Jyotsna Rao. Sripriya, an accomplished classical singer, and Jyotsna, a certified music therapist with diverse training, lent their voices to a moving tribute that brought Ahilyabai's story to life through melody.

Dr. Dilawar Singh, President of International Business Council of Australia and President of the International Shri Ram Vedic and Cultural Union, leading the construction of the largest Ram Mandir in the world spoke briefly on the life and legacy of Ahilya Bai, and also shared his vision of the Ram Mandir and cultural center being built in Australia.

A high-energy Kuchipudi dance followed, presented by Aadya Ketireddy of Sri Dutt Raga Dance Academy. Dancing to the hymn “Bho Shambho”, Aadya embodied Ahilyabai's devotion to Lord Shiva—the divine presence that guided the queen's reign. The choreography, rooted in classical





precision and expressive storytelling, was both spiritual and striking.

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Ahilya Bai Holkar, a devout Hindu, led an administration guided by Dharma. She understood the profound role dharmic institutions and symbols play in building a strong community and made it a mission to restore temples and sacred river ghats across Bharat. In a lyrical tribute, Preeti Gupta and Dr. Vasudha Mishra, educators and dedicated volunteers of VHPA Balvihar, engaged the audience with powerful poetry on Ahilyabai's life. These verses celebrated her exemplary life, marked with bravery, diplomacy and a profound sense of service.

Singer Janani Raghunathan returned to the stage, enthraling the audience this time with a heartfelt bhajan, "Bho Shambho." Her soulful rendition resonated deeply, celebrating the queen's unshakable spiritual foundation—one that saw Hindu Dharma not just as belief, but



as a lived truth.

The event's cultural crescendo came in the form of a captivating Bharatanatyam performance, presented by Prarthana and Nandita Bharadwaj, students of Kalaivani Dance Academy, who presented "Anand Natmedum" praising the many attributes of Shiva. The dance was a fitting final homage to the queen, who was known for her benevolent rule, much like the Shiv Shambho she worshipped, who could never turn a devotee away!

A Moment of Gratitude and a Call to Action

The program concluded with a warm Vote of Thanks from Jayant Daftardar, VP Seva, VHPA, who extended heartfelt thanks to the Consul General and CGI staff for their

support, Shreedhar Venkat whose initiative made this event happen, and Ambaji Shree Shakti Mandir for the delicious food. He closed the day with sincere appreciation, acknowledging every speaker, performer, volunteer, and partner organization.

As attendees enjoyed the delicious lunch prasad, conversations flowed around the enduring power of Ahilyabai Holkar's story. Her simple words—"Dharma is the foundation of true leadership. A ruler must serve, not dominate"—felt especially poignant in our times. Whether in civic life, social service, or the quiet leadership of the home and heart, the message was clear: we are all capable of leading with compassion and purpose, our actions rooted in Dharma. ■

## About the Author

**Smita Daftardar** is a volunteer for VHPA Balvihar Atlanta, Hindu Women's Network, and the Sharda Hindu Scholarship Selection Committee. She holds the position of Convener of the Balvihar Program of VHPA.

Smita is a Chemical Engineer from IIT Mumbai, who has reinvented herself as a Heritage Language Educator with a second Master's degree in Hindi-Urdu Pedagogy. She worked as faculty for Hindi in the School of Modern Languages, Georgia Institute of Technology.



# Digital Delusion and the Influence Paradox

## A 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY RECKONING

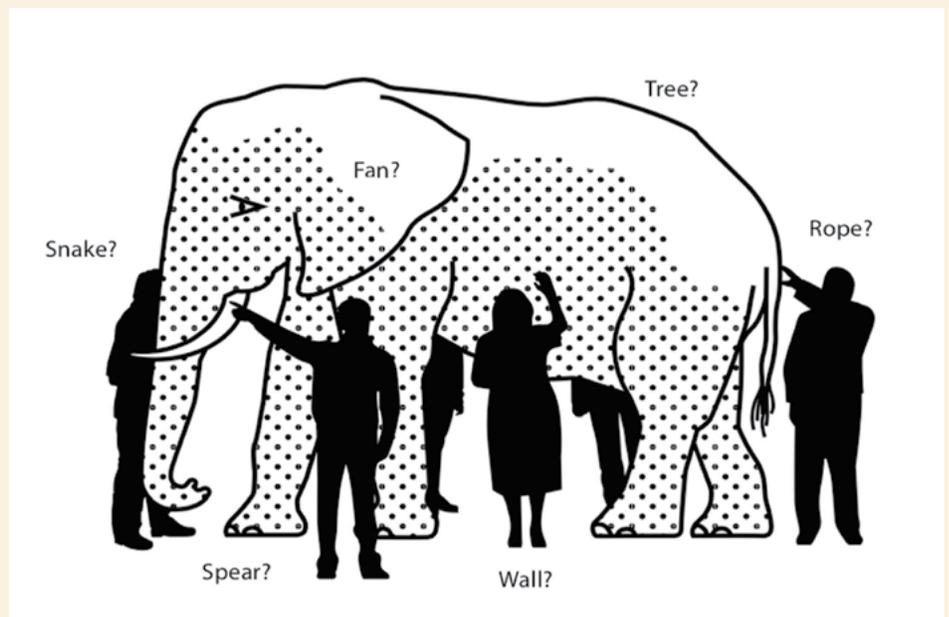
● By Sarika Jaswani

Social media is no longer peripheral to conflict; it is central to how conflicts are perceived, debated, and, in some cases, escalated. Future policy must consider media literacy, digital regulation, and ethical standards in managing the volatile intersection between public discourse and national security.

Protesters rally to protect those who entered illegally, arguing that compassion should override law—because enforcing borders, it seems, is just too unkind. They call for open arms, even if it means closed eyes to the legal system.

Opponents of the war on terror demand peace without conflict, trusting that dialogue alone can stop those who thrive on violence. They reject military action, confident that goodwill can outmatch armed extremism. All of this signals a deeper shift in global political currents—a resurgence of populism shaped not by conventional political strategy, but by memes, media manipulation, and digital charisma.

Meanwhile, TikTok thrives, its user base swelling into the billions—



even as governments issue stark warnings over data privacy and national security. Despite bans,

investigations, and geopolitical concerns, the app remains embedded in daily life, a digital opiate offering



entertainment, escapism, and virality.

Social media is no longer peripheral to conflict; it is central to how conflicts are perceived, debated, and, in some cases, escalated. Future policy must consider media literacy, digital regulation, and ethical standards in managing the volatile intersection between public discourse and national security.

Across all these seemingly disconnected events runs a common, disturbing undercurrent—a pattern that reflects something deeper about our species. In a world governed by screens and scrolls, reality is no longer what is, but what trends. Social media has become our mirror and our mold, distorting truth while shaping perception. This “innate human reel-ty”—a reel-based version of reality—is the emotional herd immunity we cling to, shielding us from uncomfortable truths. In many ways, the substantiality of the 21st century no longer rests on what is right or wrong, but on a perpetual exchange of attention, influence, and agenda—a quid pro quo of validation and virality.

This raises urgent, uncomfortable questions: What is the role of influencers, content creators, and online opinion leaders in this age of blurred boundaries? How much of our reality is crafted by those who have simply mastered the art of digital engagement? When every fourth person on social media identifies as a content creator, and platforms reward emotion over fact, is objective truth even relevant anymore?

## The Theater of Conflict: The Ubiquitous War

Consider the geopolitical implications of this trend. India and Pakistan, two nuclear-armed nations with a history of conflict, now find themselves not only facing off at the border but on every social platform. During critical flashpoints like the 2016 Uri attacks or 2019 Pulwama-Balakot episode, social media witnessed a sharp spike in engagement. Twitter, Facebook, WhatsApp—all flooded with patriotic hashtags, real-time reactions, war cries, and disturbing misinformation.

Almost instantly, hashtags like #IndiaStrikesBack and #PakistanZindabad trend, reducing complex geopolitical scenarios into binary battles of pride and perception. People replace their profile pictures with national flags; influencers release emotional tributes to fallen soldiers; and anonymous trolls unleash coordinated digital barrages across borders.

And yet, beneath this performative nationalism lies a dangerous reality: misinformation spreads faster than missiles. Doctored videos, recycled footage from video games, AI-generated clips—all circulate as “live updates,” stoking fear, confusion, and at times, hatred. Encrypted



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platforms like WhatsApp and Telegram, shielded from scrutiny, become breeding grounds for hysteria and rumor.

Caught in this storm are the journalists and influencers—many of whom walk a treacherous tightrope between factual reporting and audience appeasement.

## The Age of Influencers and Influence

In this media-driven war of words and images, social media is no longer peripheral to conflict. It is central—a weapon, a shield, and a theatre. How wars are perceived, debated, and potentially escalated now depends as much on digital virality as on military strategy. This is no longer speculation; it’s strategic reality.



scrolling, liking, sharing, consuming. And consuming what? The curated lives of others. The illusion of relevance. The dopamine-fueled gratification of digital connection.

And with 127 million influencers worldwide, and 25% of users identifying as content creators, we've reached a curious saturation point. If one in every four people is creating, who's left just watching? Perhaps that's the tragedy: the rest of us are watching, passively absorbing, subtly reshaped by the very content we think we're just "scrolling past."

### Where Do We Go From Here?

We live in an era where content creators shape consciousness, and the scroll wheel holds more emotional power than any policy document. This isn't just about tech addiction or cultural shift. It's about reality itself being rewritten—subtly, daily, invisibly.

Which begs the final, existential question:  
**Are we really that lonely?**

Is our need for connection, for belonging, for affirmation, so profound that we willingly surrender our attention—and with it, our agency—to a digital feed that rarely reflects our lived truth?

Have we traded substance for spectacle, facts for filters, nuance for narratives?

The 21st century has ushered in not just a new era of communication, but a new currency of influence. If we are to reclaim our sense of reality—personal, political, and collective—then the time has come to demand better: media literacy, ethical regulation, and a critical reexamination of our digital lives.

Until then, we scroll on—together, yet alone. ■



That said, the implications of this influence extend far beyond warzones. The average person today spends two to two and a half hours per day on social media, which amounts to over 36 days per year—a month's worth of

### About the Author



Doctor by profession. **Sarika Jaswani** is a Crochet Artist, Art Tutor, Writer of Children's Stories. A philanthropist at heart she runs a non-profit by selling her fiber art on Etsy. A published poet who passionately reads & writes poetry. An art Lover, bird lover, she's a dreamer and blogger. Her poetry has been received well by various online literary magazines and anthologies.



# The Hindu Manifesto

## A Civilizational Call to Action

● Reviewed by Sarika Jaswani

**Swami Vigyananand's vision blends ancient wisdom with modern governance in a bold proposal for India's future**

**S**wami Vigyananand, a revered spiritual leader and scholar, is no ordinary monk. An alumnus of IIT Kharagpur, ordained into the Dasnami Sannyasa tradition at the prestigious Kailash Ashram, and an erudite scholar of Panini's grammar, Vedanta, and Eastern philosophy, he stands at the rare intersection of science and spirituality. His latest contribution, *The Hindu Manifesto*, released by RSS Sarsanghachalak Mohan Bhagwat in April 2025, is a sweeping call for India's civilizational renewal.

This book isn't a political party's agenda—it is a cultural, philosophical, and spiritual charter designed to recalibrate India's national direction through the lens of Sanatan Dharma.

### A Journey from Monkhood to Manifesto

Swami Vigyananand's path was shaped by intense self-inquiry and national service. From walking barefoot across Bharat to helping revive the Amarnath Yatra post-terrorist disruption in the 1990s, he has been a steadfast advocate for Hindu resurgence. As Joint General Secretary of the Vishva Hindu Parishad (VHP) and founder of the World Hindu Economic Forum (WHEF), he has tirelessly championed the cause of Hindu empowerment—economically, culturally, and spiritually.

His conviction? "Economic empowerment is essential for spiritual growth and cultural revival."

### The Hindu Manifesto: A Vision Beyond Politics

At its core, *The Hindu Manifesto* proposes a Dharma-driven framework for governance, social order, and national progress. Drawing deeply from the Vedas, Mahabharata, Ramayana, Bhagavad Gita, and Arthashastra, the book argues that the Indian state must be re-rooted in its

civilizational ethos.

Rejecting both Western capitalism and socialism, Swamiji proposes a Dharma-centric economic model—one that encourages wealth creation without greed, and governance with moral clarity.

### Eight Sutras: The Pillars of the Manifesto

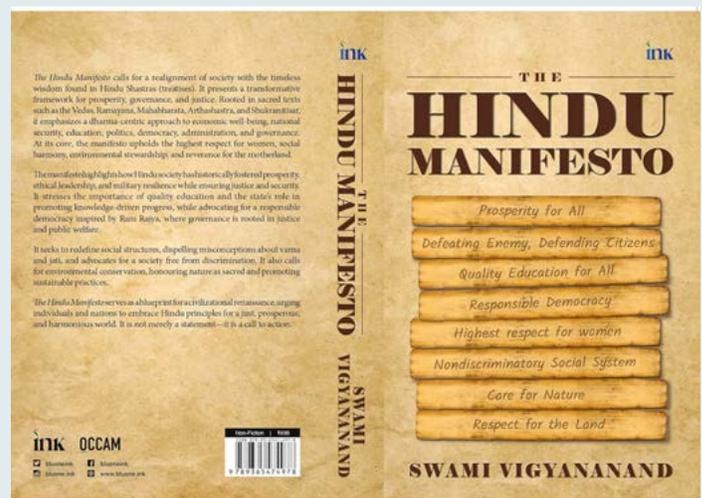
The manifesto is organized around eight sutras, or principles—four to build national strength, and four to sustain cultural values:

#### 1. Prosperity for All (Sarvajan Hitaya)

- Advocates ethical capitalism rooted in Dharma.
- Promotes self-reliance, rural entrepreneurship, and sustainable development.

#### 2. National Security

- Calls for a proactive defense strategy, both military and cultural.
- Draws from Kautilya's Mandala Theory to address modern threats.





### 3. Quality Education

- Integrates ancient Indian knowledge systems into the modern curriculum.
- Urges a break from “Eurocentric distortions” in history and pedagogy.

### 4. Responsible Democracy

- Encourages Dharmic leadership and citizen accountability.
- Positions democracy as a moral duty, not just a political form.

### 5. Respect for Women (Nari Shakti)

- Celebrates the divine feminine and demands justice for crimes against women.
- Pushes for women’s leadership in all spheres.

### 6. Social Harmony

- Redefines caste as fluid and occupation-based, challenging colonial interpretations.
- Promotes Samajik Samrasta (social cohesion) over division.

### 7. Sacredness of Nature

- Advocates an ecologically conscious Hindu worldview.
- Encourages traditional environmental practices and reverence for nature.

### 8. Pride in Heritage

- Reclaims India’s civilizational narrative and calls out colonial distortions.
- Champions pride in Indic languages, scriptures, and traditions.

## Scriptural Depth, Policy Application

Swami Vigyananand supports his vision with a scholarly backbone: Kautilya’s Arthashastra for statecraft, Shukranitisar for ethics, and the Bhagavad Gita for leadership. He cites scriptural limits on taxation, advocates for farmer and artisan dignity, and promotes value-based education rooted in 32 types of ancient vidyas.

Whether addressing GDP growth, judicial reform, or education, The Hindu Manifesto offers scripturally grounded policy recommendations.

## Support, Critique, and Controversy

While lauded by the Sangh Parivar and Hindu intellectuals, the manifesto has also drawn criticism:

- **Secularism Concerns:** Critics worry that the manifesto blurs the line between religion and state.
- **Minority Representation:** The document’s Hindu-centric vision leaves some questioning its inclusivity.
- **Historical Revisionism:** Its redefinition of caste and educational history has sparked academic pushback.

- **Practical Gaps:** Though visionary, some argue it lacks granular policy details.

## A Global Hindu Vision

One of the manifesto’s boldest assertions is its universal applicability. Swamiji insists that Hindu civilization isn’t confined by geography. Its values—self-restraint, ecological balance, spiritual inquiry, and collective harmony—offer an ethical counter-model to both Western liberalism and Marxist ideologies.

In his words:

“If our ancestors could excel under foreign rule, what stops us in an era of tech and opportunity?”

“Economic empowerment is essential for spiritual growth and cultural revival.”

“This book is not nostalgic. It is a forward-facing civilizational playbook.”

“The Hindu Manifesto is India’s boldest intellectual intervention in recent history.”

“Dharma is not just spiritual—it’s structural.”

## Why This Book Matters

The Hindu Manifesto is not a nostalgic exercise—it is a forward-looking civilizational playbook. As India grapples with internal strife and external threats, the ideas presented—economic dharma, cultural confidence, and spiritual resilience—couldn’t be more timely.

- To Hindu thinkers: A rallying cry for cultural assertion
- To policymakers: A treasure trove of scripturally grounded proposals
- To critics of Western hegemony: A fresh, ancient alternative
- To students and seekers: An entry point into India’s spiritual-political legacy

## Conclusion: Dharma as Destiny

In The Hindu Manifesto, Swami Vigyananand has created more than a book—he’s delivered a philosophical intervention in India’s future. It calls for not just reform, but a renaissance, grounded in the soul of a 5,000-year-old civilization.

It may be India’s most important civilizational document of the 21st century.

*For those ready to rethink India’s future not just through economics or politics, but through the enduring light of Dharma—this manifesto offers both inspiration and instruction. ■*

*The Hindu Manifesto is available at Amazon.*



# Hindu Heritage Day in Boston Celebrates **NARI SHAKTI**

● By Jaya Asthana

On May 10, starting at 3 PM, over 2000 people thronged the halls of Marlborough Middle School, Marlborough, MA, to enjoy yet another very successful Hindu Heritage Day.



**S**tarted in 1997 as a way to celebrate our great Hindu Culture and Heritage, Hindu Heritage Day has grown to include something for everyone, and many people look forward to celebrating the day with their families and friends and renewing acquaintances they may not have met for a long time.

The theme of this year was Nari Shakti, celebrating the Woman in all her aspects. Hindu philosophical traditions beautifully emphasize the complementary nature of masculine and feminine energies, highlighting that true creation emerges from the harmonious union of Prakriti (feminine principle) and Purush (masculine principle). The divine feminine deities—Durga, Lakshmi, Saraswati, and Parvati—are not merely consorts but powerful entities who

complete and empower their male counterparts.

Throughout history, from the Indus Valley civilization to contemporary times, Hindu women have been pivotal contributors across social and economic domains. Scholars, warriors, and leaders like Gargi, Rani Lakshmi Bai, Ahilya Bai Holkar, Rani Naiki Devi, Savitri Bai Phule, and several more unnamed women exemplify women's intellectual prowess, courage, and administrative excellence.

As soon as you entered the school, you were greeted by various stalls of local vendors selling jewelry, clothes, Indian ethnic wear including shoes, books for children and adults, beautiful artwork, information about summer camps and local activities, plus local non-profit businesses giving you information about their services.



Going a little further, your senses got assaulted by the delicious aroma emanating from the cafeteria, where people sampled savory snacks and delicious delicacies, not to mention fresh juices like sugarcane and chikoo juice, which was a treat.

At the beautifully decorated photo booth, people delighted in taking pictures with their family and friends, a timeless memento of the day.

The Cultural Program was a wonderful representation of the theme. In the auditorium, there was a wonderful variety show going on, showcasing all the talents that New England has to offer. There were dances by area dance schools, presented by children and adults in the various classical dance forms, some dances in Bollywood style, area schools of music and tabla presenting their best items, children from several Balvihars performing plays based on the theme, from plays depicting the different stories of the Hindu tradition such as the Shiva-Parvati Katha and Mahishasur Mardini, to a historical play about a little-known Hindu warrior queen, Rudramma Devi of Warangal. There was even a dance drama on the favorite childhood story of the Fox and the Grapes, performed and sung in Sanskrit by young children. The audience really enjoyed the show, which was expertly guided by two adult emcees and one high school emcee.

One of the highlights of the day was the Painting exhibition. The artwork created by the children (ages 3-15) was truly remarkable, reflecting not only the depth of their talent but also the meaningful stories they chose to tell. It was heartening to witness how the next generation saw Nari (Women) through the rich lens of our culture. Since it was Mother's Day, many of the paintings were based on the theme of the Mother, honoring



all the incredible mothers who have nurtured such thoughtful and creative young minds.

As part of Hindu Heritage Day, there was a Storytelling contest and a Trivia quiz on Hindu Heritage, held a few weeks before the actual HHD. The participants of all three contests, Storytelling, Trivia and Painting, were felicitated on stage, all were given a certificate of participation, and the winners of all three contests were announced.

There was also a kite-flying event

planned, which unfortunately didn't happen due to the rain.

The program was well supported by Media partners Gunjan Radio and Lokvani.

As the volunteers wrapped up cleaning, there was the satisfaction of job well done. The enthusiastic participation of the local community surely invigorated them to start thinking about planning for next year's event on the third week of May. ■



# UTTARAKHAND

## The New Epicenter of Wellness Tourism

• By Subhasish Chakraborty

Apart from Haridwar and Rishikesh, which is referred to as the Yoga Capital of the world, if you move upwards towards the Himalayas, quaint hill stations like Mussorie, Kausani, Almora, Ranikhet, Lansdowne, Chopta etc. are beautifully evolving as ideal destinations for concepts like Slow Tourism, Carbon Neutral Tourism and Experiential Tourism.

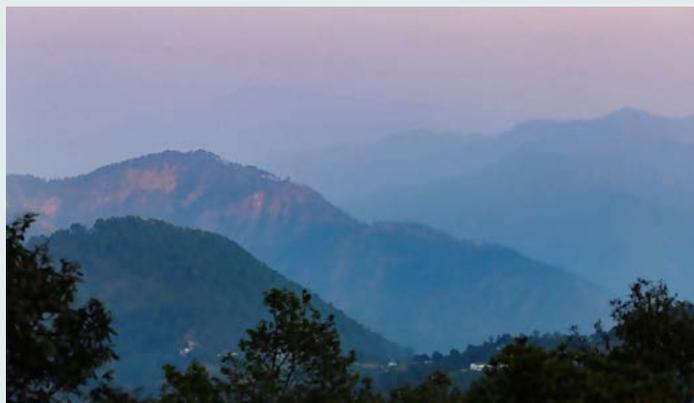
Ten years back, a longtime family friend of ours - Chandan Singh Koranga, a native Kumaoni from Almora in Uttarakhand had predicted about the emergence of Uttarakhand as the next big thing in India's burgeoning tourism industry, to which I paid no attention; only to realize now how true his prediction was.

Last month I was on a visit to Uttarakhand; this time to attend the marriage ceremony of Chandan's sister. With Kolkata experiencing extreme heat wave, an escape to Kumaon Himalayas was just what the doctored ordered. And nothing compares to the joy of being immersed in a traditional "Pahadi Wedding" - the ancient rituals, cuisine and the reverberations of joyful vibes that only the Himalayas can offer.

### Abode of Gods

Let me inform you, Uttarakhand is India's "Devbhumi" or the abode of Gods and is fast gaining popularity as the new global Wellness epicenter of India. Offers of bewildering array of wellness products like Yoga, Ayurveda, Naturopathy, Siddha and spiritual practices has catapulted Uttarakhand into a big league of holistic destinations.

Apart from Haridwar and Rishikesh, which is referred to as the Yoga Capital of the world, if you



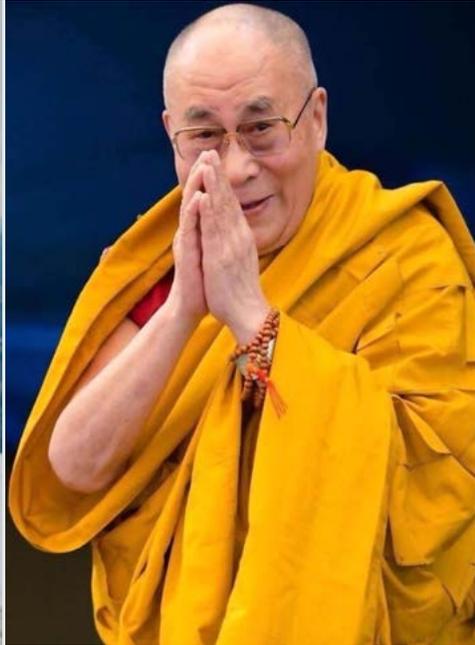
move upwards towards the Himalayas, quaint hill stations like Mussorie, Kausani, Almora, Ranikhet, Lansdowne, Chopta etc. are beautifully evolving as ideal destinations for concepts like Slow Tourism, Carbon Neutral Tourism and Experiential Tourism.

### Dalai Lama's Tibetan Connect

Wait a moment! Not many are aware that His Holiness the Dalai Lama, who now resides in Dharmshala in the neighboring state of Himachal Pradesh from where he monitors the Tibetan Govt. in Exile; he had in fact chosen Mussorie, renowned for its mesmerizing Himalayan panorama as his first residence in India, as he escaped that infamous Chinese Red Army's persecution way back in 1959.



Come to Kumaon when you are under "STRESS".



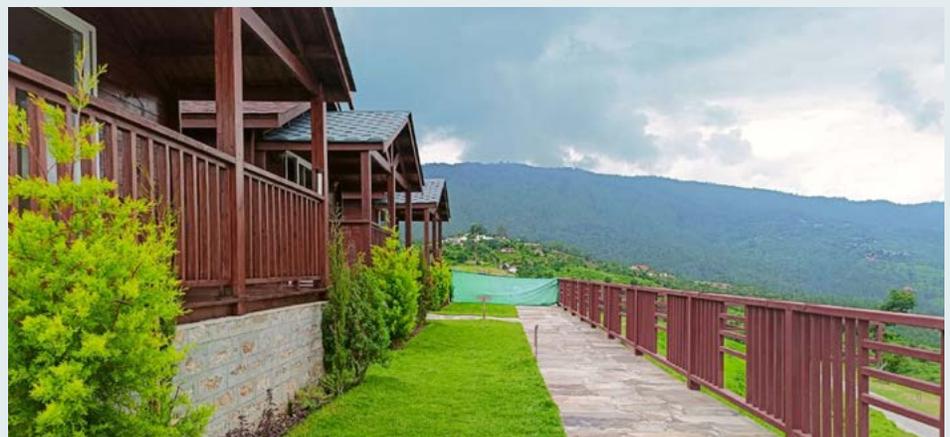
Thus, from a purely Tibetan Buddhist perspective and Dalai Lama's worldwide acceptability as one of the world's greatest living spiritual ambassadors, the Uttarakhand connection is every bit inspiring; and his love affair with the state's peace-loving Himalayan folks continues unabated even today.

In Uttarakhand's charming hill station of Mussorie, there is an exclusive Tibetan zone, popularly referred to as Happy Valley, where the great spiritual messiah The Dalai Lama lived for a year, before relocating to Dharamshala.

Countless visitors from across the world come to visit this hill station and walk on the footsteps of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and bask in the spiritual glory of this great soul. In fact, Mussorie finds a mention in his autobiography, Freedom in Exile, in which he described the first year in exile as a time of immense struggle and uncertainty.

## Visionary Tourism Policy

What is the power behind this phenomenal evolution of Uttarakhand in the competitive global tourism arena? As a travel writer and a diehard Himalayan aficionado, I for one believe that it is the Uttarakhand government's futuristic vision, smart tourism-friendly policies and integration of India's rich ancient spiritual foundations that has been the catalyst of this paradigm shift in the fortunes of Uttarakhand's tourism industry.



In the post COVID era, the demand for eco-friendly surroundings and destinations that prioritize environmental protection are hugely preferred by today's new age travelers and the tourism industry in Uttarakhand under the stewardship of Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhama have aligned their resources with the basic tenets of Wellness Tourism.

Consider for instance, a sleepy Himalayan hamlet of Dhamas near Almora. I stayed in a rustic Woods Villa cottage for 3 days and each day was like having a "Date with Divinity",

Out here at an elevation of 1424m/4672feet, an eerie silence pervades the Villa landscape. All the windows and balconies offered 360-degree uninterrupted views of the stunning snow-covered Himalayan peaks. In the cozy confines of the Wood Villas, the good old times resonate gracefully.

## Himalayan Serenity is the USP

As the red molten ball dips across the Himalayan vistas, it is time to huddle together besides



the crackling fireplace, strumming your Guitar, and indulge in your favorite tipple. The all-pervading peace inside and the snowfalls outside is nature's invitation to you, reminding you yet again those immortal words of Roger Ebert – "The very fact of snow is such an amazement".

Uttarakhand's natural beauty and serene environment make it a perfect place for meditation and mindfulness practices. No wonder that global hospitality giants like The Marriott, Hyatt, The Taj, Six Sense have all invested aggressively, and more investments are in the pipeline.

The best part of Uttarakhand's growth story is that the leading hospitality chains are crafting outstanding immersive journeys by involving local communities, thereby creating culturally authentic and inclusive Himalayan experiences.

The local mountain folks are more often than not are the repositories of deep knowledge of the region's socio-cultural contours. Involving them in the overall tourism phenomenon ensures access to hitherto exclusive locales that are off the beaten path.

### Fusion of ancient wisdom with modern amenities

I for one was absolutely taken aback by the Six Senses Retreat at Dehradun. My love for things Tibetan, especially their ancient traditional system of medicine, which I was familiar with since my childhood days in India's North East, meant that I

couldn't resist the temptation of visiting this retreat in Dehradun, renowned for their wide array of Tibetan natural healing therapies.

From the moment you step inside this vast "Sanctuary of Peace" on the foothills of the Himalayas, you know you are in a fortunate place.

Apart from Ayurveda, Yoga and Natural Healing Therapies, I was impressed by

Sowa Rigpa school of Tibetan holistic science. This is perhaps the only retreat in India where guests have access to the Sowa Rigpa school of Tibetan Medicines.

### Indigenous and Immersive Experience

Another facet of Uttarakhand's Luxury Wellness landscape I found very inspiring was their focus on things Indigenous.

Embarking on Indigenous Tribal Tours in Uttarakhand Himalayas could be life changing and transformative. Out here, travel is slow. The essence is on immersion and engagement with the local folks. The roads are intimidating, yet, the natural vistas, flora and fauna are just fabulous. Sometimes, you keep hiking for hours together with not a soul to be seen!

No wonder, the Kumaon Himalayas (Almora & surroundings) blessed as it is with the majestic Himalayan peaks, is also the melting pot of tribal/indigenous people – Tharus, Bhutiyas, Jaunsaris, Buksas and Rajis, whose fascinating lifestyle, belief systems, cuisine, jewelry design and folklore have all endeared themselves within the minds of today's



discerning travellers.

The new breed of ecologically conscious real estate chalet & wood villa developers are the real game changers for Uttarakhand's long term tourism prosperity. They are combining time honoured craftsmanship with contemporary innovations and thereby delivering properties that are not just robust but stunning to look at from outside. You literally experience this déjà-vu feeling – “India has arrived on the world stage”!

### A Far-sighted Chief Minister

Uttarakhand's Chief Minister Shri Pushkar Singh Dhama's trip to UK to attract investors was an outright hit and MOUs worth Rs.12,500 crores were signed. The resurgence of India at the competitive global business landscape is very palpable and has a lot to do with the sustained campaigns like Atmanirbhar Bharat, Transforming India, Make in India etc. by dint of which smaller states like Uttarakhand too are able to carve a niche for themselves and create positive imprints on the minds of global investors.

The gung-ho mood of Chief Minister Dhama finds reflection in his press conference - "There are almost no incidents of labor dissatisfaction in the industries operating in the state of Uttarakhand. The loss of human labor in industries due to labor dissatisfaction is the lowest in India. This is the reason why the tagline of the Global Investors Summit has been made Peace to Prosperity". He further stated that along with "Ease-of-doing business", there is also "Peace-of-doing business" in Uttarakhand.

Uttarakhand's topography is challenging, with the mountainous state of Himachal Pradesh to the Northwest, Tibet to the Northeast, Nepal in the Southeast and the state of Uttar Pradesh in the South. Both the Greater Himalayas and the Lesser Himalayan zones fall in Uttarakhand. It isn't surprising that some



of India's highest peaks like Nanda Devi (7817m) and Badrinath (7138 m) too are located in Uttarakhand.

#### The Austrian Alpine Touch

The stupendous progress that Uttarakhand's Mountain Tourism is witnessing, reminds me of Austria's Tourism industry.

With time, Austria's rugged and exclusive Alpine environment has marvelously evolved with the quintessential agenda of harnessing the local vernacular architectural grandeur of Old Austria with that of the New. Many of the hütten in Austria employ local carpenters to create outstanding mountain huts that has become the cynosure of mountain aficionados worldwide.

Drawing inspiration from Austria's Alpine Tourism, Uttarakhand today is on the radar of hoteliers and hospitality brands; and with a pro-active government offering incentives to investors, there has never been a better time for investments in the state's burgeoning hospitality landscape. ■

### About the Author

Subhasish Chakraborty is a Travel Writer & Consultant Tourism.



# DURGA NAMA MALA

● By Ankur Nagpal

**The heavenly tree that grants any boon] to the devotees. We have come to your refuge, so now there is no desire left in our mind to get anything. We have got everything. Still, on your order, we want to ask you something for the welfare of humanity. O Almighty Goddess! What is that remedy by which you get pleased so soon and protect a person in trouble? O Mother! Even if it is very secret, please tell us.”**

**O**nce upon a time, Brahmā and other deities worshipped Goddess Durgā with flowers and other offerings. Pleased, Durgā, the destroyer of all evils, said: “O Deities! I am satisfied with your worship. Ask for whatever you wish for! I will give you even the rarest of boons.” Hearing these words of the Goddess, the deities said: “O Mother! You have killed our enemy Mahiṣāsura—the biggest obstacle for the three realms. Now, the entire world has become healthy and fearless. It is only by your grace that we have regained our positions. You are like Kalpaṛkṣa viz. the

heavenly tree that grants any boon to the devotees. We have come to your refuge, so now there is no desire left in our mind to get anything. We have got everything. Still, on your order, we want to ask you something for the welfare of humanity. O Almighty Goddess! What is that remedy by which you get pleased so soon and protect a person in trouble? O Mother! Even if it is very secret, please tell us.”

On this humble request, the compassionate Goddess replied: “O Deities! A series of my thirty-two secret names destroys all sorts of troubles. There is no other hymn like this in the three realms. Those names are as follows:

दुर्गा दुर्गातिशमनी दुर्गापद्मिनिवारिणी ।  
दुर्गमच्छेदिनी दुर्गसाधिनी दुर्गनाशिनी ॥  
दुर्गतोद्धारिणी दुर्गनिहन्त्री दुर्गमापहा ।  
दुर्गमज्ञानदा दुर्गदैत्यलोकदवानला ॥  
दुर्गमा दुर्गमालोका दुर्गमात्मस्वरूपिणी ।  
दुर्गमार्गप्रदा दुर्गमविद्या दुर्गमाश्रिता ॥  
दुर्गमज्ञानसंस्थाना दुर्गमध्यानभासिनी ।  
दुर्गमोहा दुर्गमगा दुर्गमार्थस्वरूपिणी ॥  
दुर्गमासुरसंहन्त्री दुर्गमायुधधारिणी ।  
दुर्गमांगी दुर्गमता दुर्गम्या दुर्गमेश्वरी ।  
दुर्गभीमा दुर्गभामा दुर्गभा दुर्गदारिणी ॥



(1) Durgā, (2) Durgārti-Śamanī, (3) Durgāpad-Vinivāriṇī, (4) Durgama-Cchedinī, (5) Durga-Sādhinī, (6) Durga-Nāśinī, (7) Durgatod-Dhāriṇī, (8) Durga-Nihantrī, (9) Durga-Māpahā, (10) Durgama-Jñānadā, (11) Durga-Daityaloka-Davānalā, (12) Durgamā, (13) Durgamā-Lokā, (14) Durgamātma-Svarūpiṇī, (15) Durga-Mārga-Pradā, (16) Durgama-Vidyā, (17) Durga-Māśritā, (18) Durgama-Jñāna-Saṁsthānā, (19) Durgama-Dhyāna-Bhāsinī, (20) Durga-Mohā, (21) Durgamagā, (22) Durgamārtha-Svarūpiṇī, (23) Durgamā-sura-Saṁhantrī, (24) Durgamā-yudha-Dhāriṇī, (25) Durgamāṅgī, (26) Durgamatā, (27) Durgamyā, (28) Durgameśvarī, (29) Durga-Bhīmā, (30) Durga-Bhāmā, (31) Durgabhā, (32) Durga-Dāriṇī.

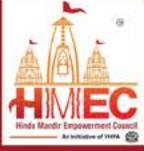
“The person who recites this Nāma-Mālā of mine will certainly be free from all sorts of fear. Whether being tortured by the enemies or trapped in terrible bondage, one will undoubtedly be free from trouble by merely reciting these thirty-two names. If the state becomes angry and sentences death or any other harsh punishment, or the enemy surrounds in war, or there is fear of ferocious animals like tigers in the forest, then by merely reciting these thirty-two names 108 times, one becomes free from fear. There is no other remedy like this to destroy fear in times of trouble. O Deities! The person who recites this Nāma-Mālā never faces any harm. The one who recites this Nāma-Mālā one thousand (1,008), ten thousand (10,008), or a hundred thousand (100,008) times himself or gets it recited by virtuous Brahmins in case of great trouble becomes free instantly. The Puraścaraṇa of this Nāma-Mālā [viz. The practice to complete the initial number of counts to fully activate the special spiritual powers in a fixed time-period] is 30,000 [+ 20% = 36,000; to compensate the Homa, Tarpaṇa, etc.]. By reciting it in this number with good conduct, a person can accomplish all his tasks in particular. The one who worships me every day never falls into trouble.”

Saying this, the Mother Goddess disappeared right there.

**Note:** As accounted in 'Tripurā-Rahasya' (Māhātmya-Khaṇḍa, Chapter 46) and recommended by the Divine Mother herself, this Nāma-Mālā is a simple, safe, yet highly potential practice. Anybody, with utmost devotion, can freely chant it at any point of time; but with a fixed number of counts for 'n' number of days [say 108 per day for at least 48 days] to generate astounding benefits. Initiation and other rituals are not mandatory, chanting with devotion is complete in itself. The suggested counts per day [viz. Between two consecutive sunrises] are: 28 or 108 on regular days, 108 or 1,008 during Navarātri; in single or multiple sitting(s) as per convenience. Let us collectively perform Śakti Sāadhanā with this Nāma-Mālā to protect our personal, religious, and national interests. ■

### About the Author

**Ankur Nagpal** is a PhD Research Scholar, Dept. of Vedanta, Shri Lal Bahadur Shastri National Sanskrit University Delhi, Bharat



## VISION

To be the network of Hindu mandirs, temples, ashrams, gurudawras, derasars and organizations to preserve, protect and promote dharma. Help mandirs build effective and sustained leadership through generations by sharing best practices

## PURPOSE

HMEC seeks to represent the American Hindu community rooted in its traditions for the benefit of the entire community

To collectively counter attacks on mandirs.

To share, learn and crystallize the vision of our sages for sustaining Sanatana Dharma with leaders like you

To address the needs and challenges of the future generation of Hindus and to guide our children, the future leaders of the American society

To capitalize on intense motivation, deep experience, and selfless service by you the natural leaders of Hindu society for the benefit of all Hindus.

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## Hindu Mandir Empowerment Council (HMEC)

HMEC is the largest annual conference for past and present executives, community leaders and scholars of Mandirs, Gurudwaras, Ashrams, Derasars and Hindu organizations in North America and the Caribbean. HMEC seeks to bring these institutions together for networking, collaboration and sharing of best practices.

### SOME OF THE RECENT HMEC ACTIVITIES:

- Publication of books on Hindu rituals and practices
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## HINDU MANDIR EMPOWERMENT COUNCIL CONFERENCE (HMEC) & HINDU MANDIR PRIESTS' CONFERENCE (HMPC) 2025

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## 18th Hindu Mandir Empowerment Council (HMEC) & 12th Hindu Mandir Priests' Conference (HMPC)

### Conference Theme:

**"Hindu Diaspora: Mahakumbh of Sanatan Traditions"**

### Date & Time:

**September 12<sup>th</sup> 2025, 5 PM to September 14<sup>th</sup>, 2025 Noon.**

### Venue:

**DFW Hindu Temple Society (Ekta Mandir), Irving, Texas.**

June 7th 2025

Namaste,

We invite you to join saints, sanyasis, scholars, priests, mandir executives and volunteers to participate in HMEC & HMPC 2025 conference.

Mandirs serve as a unifying space for Hindus of all ages, fostering a sense of community where people grow together, celebrate each other's successes, support one another in times of sorrow, encourage unity, and learn to rise above envy in all circumstances of life. The Hindu Mandir Empowerment Council (HMEC) serves as a unifying platform for Mandirs across North America, supporting their mission to nurture community, promote unity, and uphold Sanatan values across generations.

The theme of the 18th HMEC and 12th HMPC is **"Hindu Diaspora - MahaKumbh of Sanatan Traditions"**.

Inspired by MahaKumbh Mela in Prayagraj, this year's conference celebrates the unity, inclusion, and spiritual richness of Sanatan Dharma across the global Hindu diaspora. Join us as we explore how devotion and ancestral wisdom continue to shape our communities, with voices from Hindu, Jain, Buddhist, and Sikh traditions. Featuring keynote speakers from around the world.

We invite proposals for speaker presentations, panelists and workshop presentations on the topics outlined below. You are also welcome to submit articles for "Mandir Vani", HMEC publication.



॥ Narayanaya Namah, Namo Arihantanam, Buddham Sharanam Gachhami, Sat Sri Akal ॥  
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**Registration QR Code:****Conference Topics for Speakers and Panelists are:**

- 1. Temples as Anchors of Identity in Diaspora**
- 2. Reviving Sanatan Traditions in Modern Times**
- 3. Youth & Dharma: bridging Generations**
- 4. Conservation of Mandir Architecture (Sthapatya) and Vigrahas**
- 5. Global Hindu Solidarity: Temples as Connectors**
- 6. Mandir Management & Sustainability**

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**Registration & Sponsorship details:** <https://tinyurl.com/4a9y6rzy>

Category	Rates
Adult Registration	\$200 (\$150 Early Bird)
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# The Path to Happiness

● By Sakshi Awasthi

**Editor's note:** All three articles below were presented at an annual Samvaad event at a Boston Balvihar. These were presented as a speech; below are the transcripts.

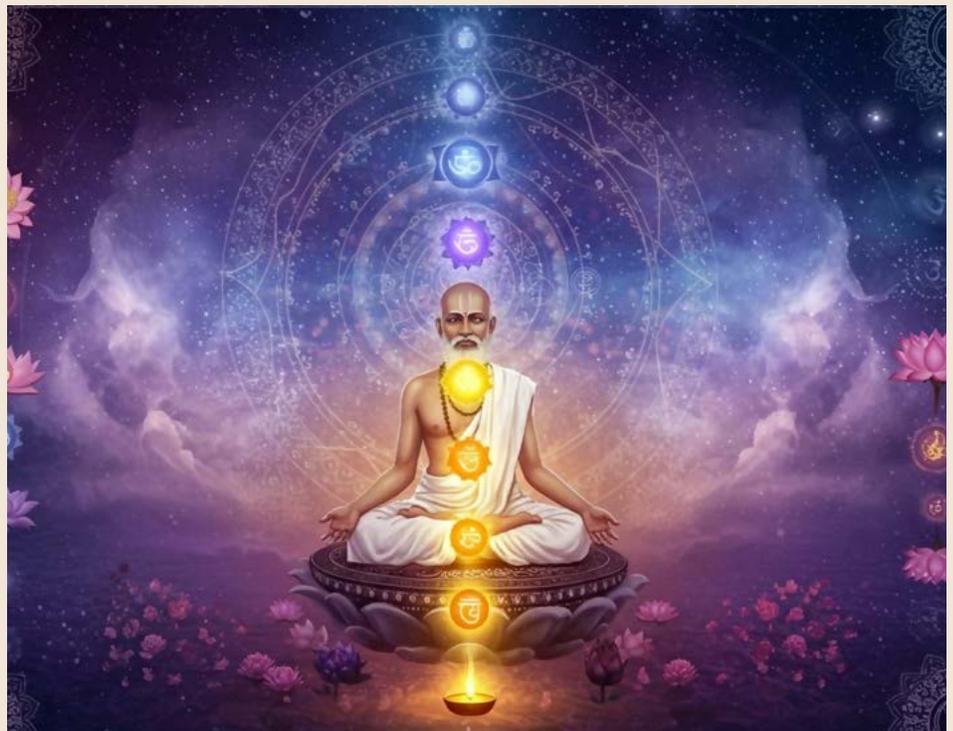
Let's start off with a fairly simple question – What makes us happy? Some people think money, power, or fame will make them happy. But have you noticed that even rich and famous people don't always seem satisfied with what they have? Most of us seek happiness in life but often fail to attain it. Why do we fail? Why do people feel miserable at all?

The answer to these questions is found in Hindu Dharma. It teaches us that true happiness doesn't come from the outside world or materialistic objects – it comes from within. The key is to connect with something deeper – our inner divine nature.

## What is Moksha?

Hindu Dharma asserts that there is an eternal unchanging consciousness that is present throughout the universe. Connecting to this consciousness can lead to limitless bliss and happiness.

However, if this energy is



present everywhere, why do we even feel sad?

This happens because we forget who we really are. The constant striving for worldly possessions, attachments, external validations, and the pressure of maintaining these materialistic illusions lead to burden, anxiety, and disconnection from our true values.

The Hindu spiritual practices

can facilitate mediums through which we can shift our thought process, make our minds calm, focused, and help revive the connection with this divine consciousness.

This state of ultimate bliss is called Moksha – the freedom from all attachments, sufferings, and liberation from the cycle of birth and rebirth.



## The Journey of the Mind

But how do we reach this state of bliss?

To find true happiness, we need to train our minds to be calm and collected. Just like athletes train their bodies to become stronger, we can train our minds to become more focused through different paths.

The first step is to discipline our minds into removing the want for material goals, and sense pleasures. To do this, we need to have a firm adherence to Dharma - the ethical foundation and code of conduct for all Hindus. Once the mind is free from distractions, it is no longer an obstacle to the enjoyment of the Divine bliss.

Hindu Dharma also prescribes different yoga paths to attain Moksha as everyone has different personal temperaments, physical and mental abilities.

The Paths to Moksha

**Karma Yoga** - This is the path of action. It means doing selfless service without expecting rewards (also known as seva). Actions such as volunteering, donating, and helping those in need soften our ego and help us see that true happiness is not found in luxuries but in caring for others.

**Jnana Yoga** - This is the path of knowledge. It's for people who love to learn and think deeply. By studying ancient texts such as the Upanishads and questioning the nature of life, people on this path try to understand who they really are beyond their possessions.

**Raja Yoga** - This is the path of meditation and self-discipline. It's for those who practice deep concentration, breathing exercises, and stillness to calm their minds. Many yogis follow this path to reach higher states of peace and awareness



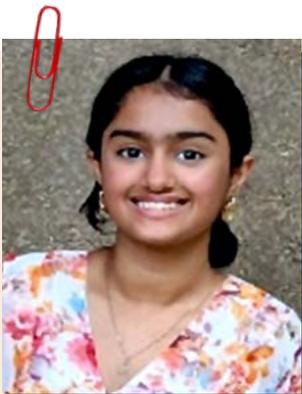
**Bhakti Yoga** - This is the path of devotion. It's for people who love to worship and feel connected to God through prayer, singing, and love. This path has no prerequisites but is also not an easy path either.

## Conclusion

While all these paths focus on different ways to connect with the divine consciousness, they are ultimately connected with each other.

For example, practicing a deep path of devotion leads to the exposure of knowledge. Similarly, devoting ourselves to Ishwar makes us want to do seva in the service of Ishwar.

No matter what path you choose, your actions determine how close or far away you are from attaining Moksha. Though it may take several different lives, everyone is bound to reach liberation as the true resting place is with our own divine nature. ■



## About the Author

**Sakshi Awasthi** is an 8th grader at Hopkinton Middle School. She enjoys Sketching, Painting and playing musical instruments like piano and violin. She also enjoys travelling with her family.



# Karma and Rebirth

● By Mridula Mukundan

Karma doesn't just shape our life, it also determines our rebirth. Our actions are driven by deep-seated habits called vasanas, which are our tendencies. We carry these from life to life. The goal of life is to escape from this cycle of birth and rebirth by exhausting our karmas. But in order to exhaust our karma, we must overcome our vasanas.

**H**ave you ever wondered why certain things happen to us? Why do some people seem to suffer while others have an easier life? Hindu philosophy explains this through karma—the law of action and consequence. Let us look at how Karma affects our lives, the role of Bhagwan in rebirth, and how we can ultimately escape this cycle.

## What is Karma?

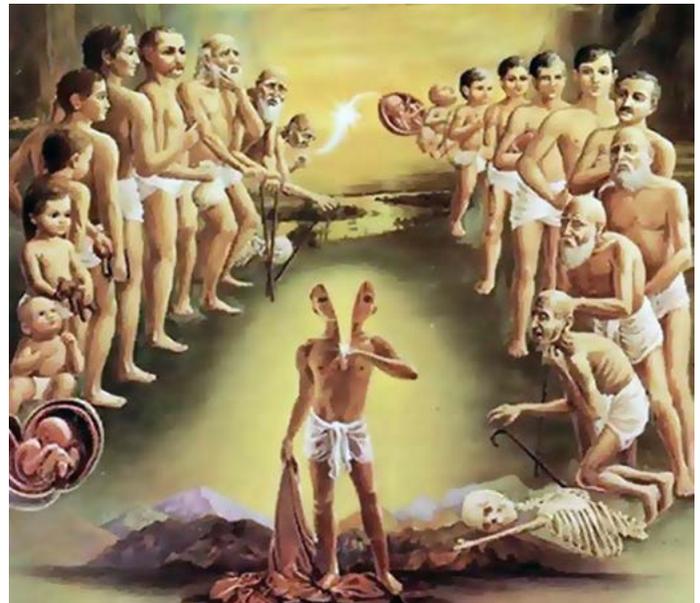
Karma means action. All actions have a consequence, whether immediate or delayed. But karma isn't just about physical actions- it is also about the intention.

There are two types of actions. Good and bad, Punya and Paap. Good intentions and selfless actions bring inner joy and fulfillment, while selfish and harmful actions result in suffering and regret. "One cannot harvest mangoes by planting a cactus". Actions determine what we experience later.

## How Does Karma Affect Our Lives?

Karma doesn't produce results instantly. Sometimes we face consequences right away, but we can also face them later—or even in a future life. That means some experiences we have now may be the result of actions from a past life.

Karma can sometimes seem random- good people may struggle, while bad people seem to prosper. We may try to live a good life, but still suffer. It doesn't make sense. Why is that so? The Law of Karma says that everything is a result of past actions, but we don't remember them. The good news? Forgetting past lives



helps us focus on our present choices, without guilt or anxiety holding us back.

## Types of Karma

All karma is not alike. Karma exists in three main forms:

1. **Sanchita Karma** – The total karma we have accumulated over all our past lives.
2. **Prarabdha Karma** – A portion of that karma, assigned to be experienced in this life—this shapes our destiny.
3. **Kriyamana Karma** – The new karma we create in this life through our choices and actions.

Let us look at it a different way. There is a warehouse full of things. This is like our past karma (Sanchita Karma). A "truckload" of this karma is selected to



be Prarabdha Karma- consequence that is bound to happen in this life. Kriyamana karma is like restocking the warehouse from the actions of this life

## Rebirth and the Role of Karma

Karma doesn't just shape our life, it also determines our rebirth. Our actions are driven by deep-seated habits called vasanas, which are our tendencies. We carry these from life to life. The goal of life is to escape from this cycle of birth and rebirth by exhausting our karmas. But in order to exhaust our karma, we must overcome our vasanas.

Our past karmas determine the parentage and environment that is best suited to help us burn through these vasanas. For example, a person with violent tendencies may be reborn as a tiger, which can express aggression without accumulating new karma, since animals act on instinct and do not accumulate new karma.

Human birth is special because we have free will. We can choose self-control and spiritual growth, or we can act selfishly and add to our karma. If we fail to exercise self-control, we may be reborn into lower life forms to exhaust negative vasanas before returning to human life.

## Escaping the Cycle of Rebirth

So how do we break free from this endless cycle of birth and rebirth? If we keep chasing our desires, we may not get the happiness we want. More desires are like the bottomless well which never gets full. The more desires we fulfill, the more we crave. Instead, spiritual evolution teaches us to accumulate good karma through:

1. **Selflessness** – Helping others without personal gain.

2. **Detachment** – Accepting life's ups and downs without clinging.

3. **Reflection** – Understanding our connection to the world.

4. **Surrender our actions to Bhagwan** – Acting without expecting rewards.

The ultimate goal is self-realization—realizing that our true nature is eternal, blissful, and universal. When we reach this state, we no longer see ourselves as the 'doer' of actions, and our karma is burned away, leading to liberation (moksha).

## Karma-predestination or responsibility?

A common misconception is that karma means our fate is fixed. But karma is not predestination- it's responsibility.

Our current situation is shaped by past actions, but our future is determined by the choices we make today. Making good choices will help in mitigating the past actions and shape the future. Understanding karma helps us stay calm and motivated even in tough times, knowing we have the power to control our own destiny.

Every action matters. Karma is not about punishment, it's about growth. By making conscious, selfless choices, we can reduce our karmic burden, evolve spiritually, and ultimately attain liberation.

So, as we move forward, let's ask ourselves: Are our actions leading us toward freedom and happiness, or are they adding more weight to our karma? Because in the end, we are the ones shaping our journey. ■

## About the Author



**Mridula** is a high school senior who has been part of the Bal Vidya Mandir family for many years. In her free time, she loves to hike, watch basketball games, do crossword puzzles, and play with her little brother Varadan.



# Respecting Nature

● By Sahasra Charkam

Nature and human beings have a relationship of mutuality. One who does not honor this relationship "lives life in vain". Nature serves humans and equally, humans are servants of Nature, not its masters or stewards. When greed and self-indulgence take over, we violate the clear teachings of our sacred texts.

**A**gain and again we hear, children are the image of Ishwar, books are divine, and we are merely the awareness that take in what our bodies do. In Hindu thought, Nature is called Dharti Ma, Mother Earth. The Isha Upanishad states that the universe is pervaded by one Supreme Being. The Rig Veda poetically describes the Divine cosmic person, with the sun from his eyes, the moon from his mind and the wind from his breath. The Yajur Veda further emphasizes that Ishwar is all might, he is not one being or one person but rather he is omnipresent, He is in all the Earth, in all waters - sacred rivers, lakes, wells and even rain. Nature is not separate from the Divine but rather one and the same and is a direct manifestation of Ishwar, emphasizing oneness with all creations. Nature is called Dharti Ma, Mother Earth, who holds us close to her bosom and provides for all our needs.

Nature and human beings have a relationship of mutuality. One who does not honor this relationship "lives life in vain". Nature serves humans and equally,



humans are servants of Nature, not its masters or stewards. When greed and self-indulgence take

over, we violate the clear teachings of our sacred texts.

The Isha Upanishad advises us



Hindu Dharma teaches us Aparigraha - which means non acquisitions, minimalism, acquiring only what is necessary. We must distinguish between our wants and our needs. Ask yourself do you really need it, and the distinction between wants and needs becomes obvious.

to enjoy nature without over consuming it, giving back and obtaining an overall endosymbiotic relationship.

But the age of capitalism and consumerism teaches us the opposite. If something does not work, buy another one and throw away the old one. Don't think about the effect it has on Mother Earth.

Hindu Dharma teaches us Aparigraha - which means non acquisitions, minimalism, acquiring only what is necessary. We must distinguish between our wants and our needs. Ask yourself do you really need it, and the distinction between wants and needs becomes obvious.

From Gandhi to MLK we have learned about nonviolence, but this was first emphasized in the Vedas and other sacred texts. They talk about ahimsa, which is not simply non-violence, but it extends beyond humans, to not harming plants, animals, and nature, not even in thought.

Who here likes stories? Well today I have a short story that encompasses what

the environment means to you and me.

### King Prithu

When King Prithu ascended the throne, a famine took over the land. The king was angry at Goddess Earth for withholding her produce and causing distress. He approached her and asked why she did that. She protested that she had been exploited for generations by his predecessors who had stolen her produce without returning to Earth what was her due. She pleaded to restore the respect due to her and to help her conserve rainwater by landscaping the ground and creating water reservoirs. When Prithu agreed and offered to protect earth as his daughter, Goddess Earth again became prolific in her produce. Earth came to be known as Prithvi, i.e., daughter of Prithu.

Associating animals with Ishwar, using flowers for Pooja, revering rivers and mountains as sacred are all examples of nature being intertwined with Hindu Dharma and attaining balance. We must do our part to make sure this balance is maintained. ■

## About the Author



**Sahasra Charkam**, a driven and dynamic sophomore at Hopkinton High School, is passionate about personal growth and community impact. She actively seeks opportunities to volunteer, whether it's teaching children, participating in 5K charity walks, or organizing showcase events. Beyond her dedication to service, Sahasra is deeply involved in public debate, HOSA (Health Occupations Students of America), and dance, reflecting her diverse interests and commitment to making a meaningful difference both inside and outside the classroom.



# In Search of Hindu Icons in Kashmir

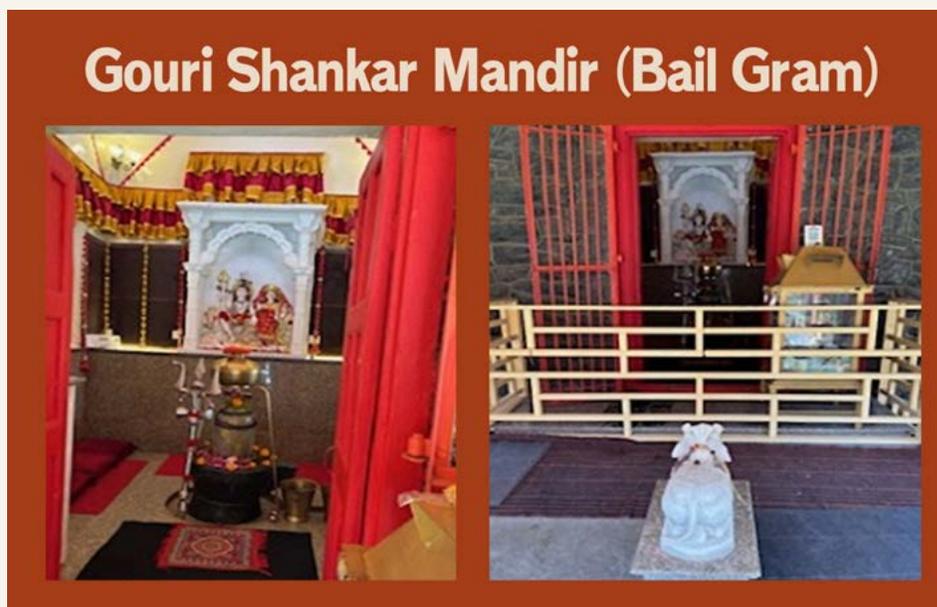
● By Renu 'Rajvanshi' Gupta

Kashmir is the land of Bhagwan Shiv and Jagdamba Parvati. It is also home of Saptrishi, the most ancient saint Kashyap ji and his wives. Maharishi Kashyap is the first rishi of all 21+ household Rishis. All the Gotra of every Hindu is derived from it. Kashmir's original name is Kashyap Mira (lake of Rishi Kashyap) which has changed to Kashmir now.

**K**ashmir has been the center of attraction, attention and assessment for all Bhartiya. We had a long-time dream to visit Kashmir region but due to continued political instability and insecurity, we waited till the removal of article 370.

Now in Kashmir I have been searching for Hindu icons wherever I am traveling. Kashmir is the land of Bhagwan Shiv and Jagdamba Parvati. It is also home of Saptrishi, the most ancient saint Kashyap ji and his wives. Maharishi Kashyap is the first rishi of all 21+ household Rishis. All the Gotra of every Hindu is derived from it. Kashmir's original name is Kashyap Mira (lake of Rishi Kashyap) which has changed to Kashmir now.

As we landed at Srinagar



airport, the name Sri Nagar struck me. According to Kalhan's Rajatarngini epic it is Shree (Laxmi) Nagar. We may all be aware of the long troublesome historical journey of Kashmir from Maurya rulers to the last brave

Hindu Queen Kota Rani, then it went in the hands of Muslims, in-between Afghans and Sikhs also took over.

■ **Pahalgam (Bull (Bail) Gram)**

Our first destination was

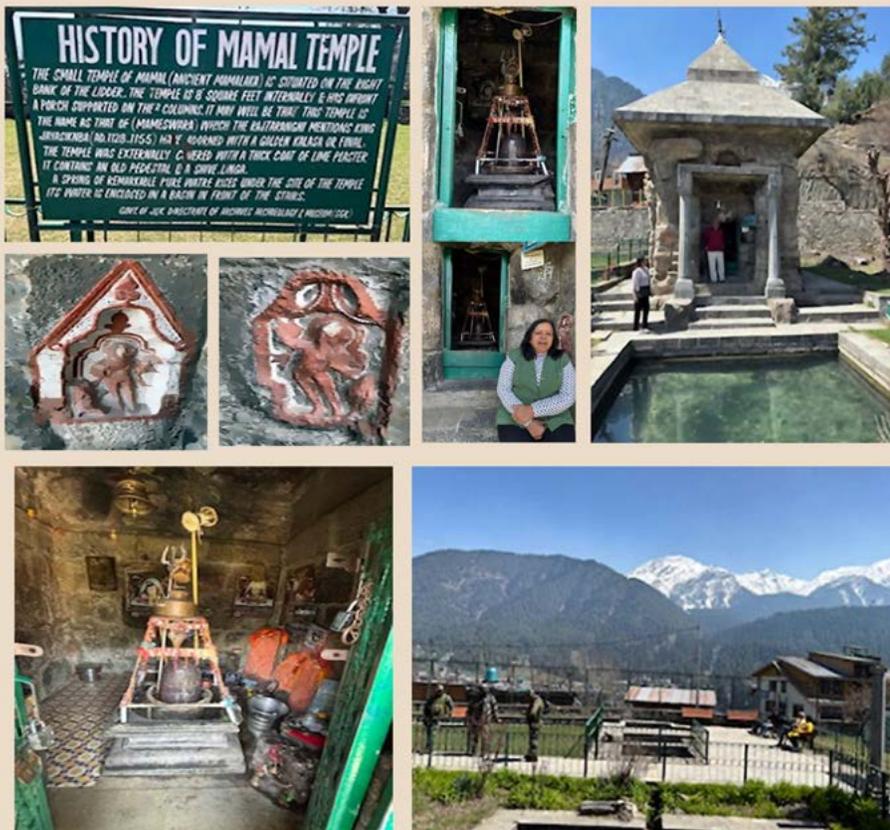


## Ancient Mandir Near Ganderbal



We visited very ancient Mammal or Mamaleshwar Mandir in Pahalgam (Bail Gram). It is situated on the banks of Lidder River at an elevation of 2,200 meters (7,200 ft). According to the history, this is the mandir where Parvati asked Ganesha to stand as a door keeper, not allowing anyone to enter the premises without her permission. This is the place where Shiva cut the head of Ganesha. There are 2 murtis inside the temple. One is a Shiva Linga at the center of the temple and a small two-faced murti of Nandi on the right corner. Mam Mal means don't go, and thus it is also known as Mammal temple. The surroundings of the mandir is very serene, it speaks of very rich and ancient glory of Hindu Dharma.

## Mamal Mandir



### ■ Ananatnag

Our next destination was Anantnag. As the name speaks, Anantnag is believed by historians to be one of the earliest settlements in the world. Dating back to 5000 BCE, the town has its mention in Nilmat Purana as well the town was also a business center at the time. There is one Parvati mandir which we could not visit, it was closed for visitors. The Martand Sun Temple in Anantnag is a testament to ancient civilization in Kashmir. Martand means sun, Mandir of Surya Bhagwan. This Mandir is also dedicated to Martand Muni. Temple is spread in a large compound with a pond, several small temples, many rooms for guests and a large office.

Pahalgam – in Kashmiri it means shepherd's village. But ancient meaning is Bail Gram (Bhagwan Shiv left his Nandi Bull here before

entering Amarnath Caves. Local Gourishankar Mandir confirms this belief; there is statue of Nandi facing the mandir.



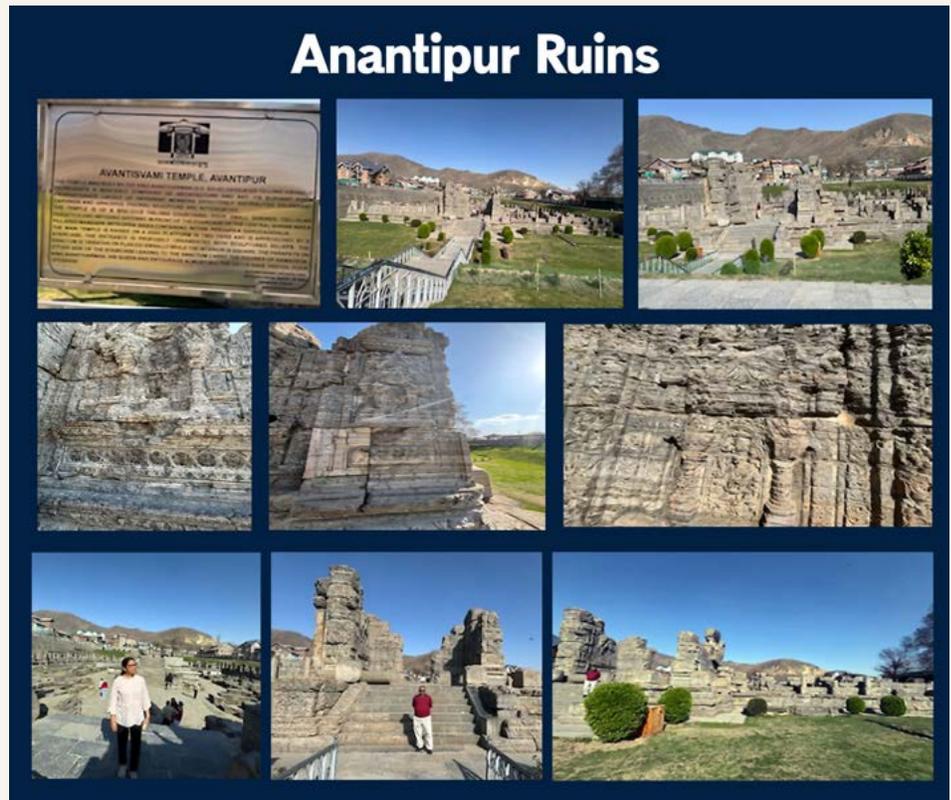
This temple was destroyed by Sikandar Shah Miri (1389-1413) in a zeal to Islamize the society under the advice of Sufi preacher Mir Muhammad Hamadani. Chief-counsel Suhabhata, a Brahman neo-convert is also responsible to spread Islam and was party to the destructions in Kashmir.

### ■ Anantapur

It is the ancient capital of Kashmir established by King Avantivarman of the Utpala Dynasty, who ruled from 855 to 883 AD. He built twin temples in Avantipur, one dedicated to Lord Vishnu, known as Awantiswami and the other dedicated to Lord Shiva known as Avantisvara. This temple was destroyed in 14th century by Sultan Shikandar. In 18th century the Avantiswamin temple was excavated by the British and rich antiquities like coins of that era, some murtis etc. were found. It is a cluster of ruined temples and broken sculptors of kings and palaces, protected by Archeological Survey of Bharat. Though small in the area, but ruins tell lots of history.

### ■ Sonmurg (Sona Marg)

As the name speaks is meadow of gold. Very beautiful with snow, mountains and forest. Sindh river flows through the valley and is believed to have originated from the pristine waters of the Amarnath Cave, a revered pilgrimage site dedicated to Lord Shiva. King Pravarasena II, who governed Sonamarg 2000 years ago, is the earliest known ruler. Following



### Mata Kheer Bhawani Mandir



him, the monarchs who ruled it alternated between Mauryas, Kushanas, Huns, Chaks, Mughals, and Sikhs, becoming a critical part of Sonamarg's past.

### ■ Kheer Bhawani Mandir

Kheer Bhawani Temple is a celebrated Hindu shrine, situated

in the Tulla Mulla village near Srinagar. The temple is constructed above a sacred spring, which is said to change its colors. Goddess Ragnya Devi – an incarnation of Goddess Durga – is the presiding deity of this temple. The temple attributes its unique name to the famous Indian dessert kheer,



## Martand Mandir



which is the main offering to the goddess.

Maharaja Pratap Singh built this temple in 1912, which was later renovated by Maharaja Hari Singh. The shrine has a hexagonal spring and a small marble shrine where the goddess' murti is installed. The compound is surrounded with residential apartments, offices and shops. Hindu devotees visit here in large number. Many old trees are testimonial to the divinity of the mandir.

### ■ Gulmarg (Gouri's Marg)

Original of Gulmarg is (Mata Parvati's Path). Sultan Yusuf Shah changed to Gulmarg (Path of roses) in 16th century. While Gulmarg is a known destination for Golf Course, skiing and honeymooners, it is also home of the Shiva and Gauri Mandir, also known as the Maharani Temple. It was built by Maharaja Hari Singh in 1915 as a royal temple for his wife, Maharani Mohini Bai Sisodia. Now the temple is going through major renovation. It was very pleasing to see so many devotees climbing 100 some stairs to worship.

## Shiv Temple of Gulmarg (Gouri Marg)



## Shri Shankaracharya ji – Srinagar



  
 प्रल्हादजी शंकराचार्य  
**SANKARACHARYA TEMPLE, SRINAGAR**  
 COMMANDING A PANORAMIC VIEW OF SRINAGAR, SITUATED ON THE GOPADRI HILL, THE TEMPLE DEDICATED TO SIVA (Latitude 34°34' 44" N, Longitude 74°50' 31" E) IS ORIGINALLY ATTRIBUTED TO YESHITHESVARA. THE HILL IS POPULARLY CALLED SANKARACHARYA AFTER THE NAME OF THE GREAT APOSTLE OF MONISM.  
 THE OCTAGONAL HIGH PLINTH ON WHICH THE TEMPLE STANDS AND THE STAIRS LEADING TO IT ARE DATED EARLIER AND MAY WELL HAVE FORMED PART OF THE BUILDING, TRADITIONALLY ASCRIBED TO KING GOADITYA. THE SUPERSTRUCTURE IS DATED LATER. THE SHRINE CONSISTS OF A CELL, CIRCULAR INSIDE AND SQUARE EXTERNALLY, WITH TWO PROJECTING FACETS ON EACH SIDE. THERE ALSO EXISTS A CELL AT A LOWER LEVEL TO THE NORTH AND A TANK TO THE SOUTH-EAST. THE SANCTUM CONTAINS A LINGA. THE FLIGHT OF STEPS FLANKED BY TWO SIDE WALLS, ORIGINALLY BORE TWO PERSIAN INSCRIPTIONS, ONE OF WHICH MENTIONS A DATE OF A.H. 1099 (A.D. 1659). THE CEILING WITH ITS COLUMNS APPEAR TO HAVE BEEN ERECTED BY SHAH JAHAN IN A.H. 1034 (A.D. 1644), AS STATED IN AN INSCRIPTION FOUND ON A COLUMN. THE CEILING IS DOME-SHAPED AND BUILT OF HORIZONTAL COURSES OF KANJURSTONE.  
 ON STYLISTIC CONSIDERATIONS, THE TEMPLE BELONGS PERHAPS TO THE SIXTH-SEVENTH CENTURY A.D.  
SHRIPSURENDRAJI ARCHAEOLOGIST  
 ARCHAEOLOGICAL SURVEY OF INDIA  
 SRINAGAR CIRCLE, SRINAGAR  
 1971.

### ■ Baramulla (Boar's Moler) "सूर की दाढ़ का स्थान",

Baramulla, the gateway to the Kashmir Valley, has a rich history dating back to ancient times. It's believed to have been founded by Raja Bhimsina around 2306 BCE. Baramulla, in the Kashmir Valley, is named after the Varaha (boar) incarnation of Lord Vishnu, and the town is associated with the Adi-Varaha shrine. The town's ancient name was Varahamula



or Varahaksetra. I requested our driver to make sure we visit this mandir. Without realizing that he was Muslim and he will never go to Varaha Mandir. He kept delaying, threatened us, demanded lots of money and warned that he will not be responsible of our safety.

■ **Srinagar (Laxmi Nagar)**

We kept the last one for Shree Nagar. In Srinagar, the "Swayambhu Devi" is commonly understood to refer to Goddess Sharika, also known as Chakreshwari Devi, who is the presiding deity of Srinagar. The eighteen-armed Goddess Sharika is regarded as the Presiding Deity (Isht - Devi) of Srinagar city. The Goddess Sharika is represented by a Swayambhu Srichakra, also called

“  
**Adi Guru  
 Shankaracharya  
 Mandir and his  
 penance platform  
 is the ultimate  
 destiny of all  
 Hindus in Srinagar.  
 After climbing  
 about 300 feet  
 straight hill, we  
 arrived at a very  
 large Shivalinga.**  
 ”



**Sharika Devi Mandir - Hari Parvat - Srinagar**





Maha Sri Yantra which consists of circular mystic impressions and triangular patterns with a dot (bindu) at the center. A large formation of Devi Sharika is covered with red cloth; it was also built by Maharaja Hari Singh ji.

Adi Guru Shankaracharya

Mandir and his penance platform is the ultimate destiny of all Hindus in Srinagar. After climbing about 300 feet straight hill, we arrived at a very large Shivalinga. Apart from having very divine experience, we admired total control and discipline of CRPF.

I wanted to visit Rosa Bal, a controversial dargah, supposed to be samadhi of Jesus Christ. I kept on insisting our driver to visit Rosa Bal, but he kept on denying it. First, he said there is no place like this, when we showed it on google, he got very upset but took us in front of the Dargah in the center of the city. He warned us to go alone at our own risk and not to mention name of Christ there.

Our driver even complained that we should have gone to Jammu to visit Mandirs, why did we come to Valley?

Valley region has predominantly stayed in the hands of Kashmiri Muslims, who take big pride of being Kashmiri. I realized during our trip that local Kashmiris now enjoy being part of Bharat, they want to avail all the benefits of being Indian, but don't want to change. They don't want people from the other parts of Bharat to settle in Kashmir; they want to ensure all the resources belong to them alone. With 90% or more Muslims, how this region will integrate with rest of Bharat, needs to be seen. ■

## About the Author

**Smt. Renu Gupta** is based in Cincinnati, Ohio and is ex Vice President of Seva, VHPA. She is currently involved in VHPA's Support-A-Child program (serving the educational needs of underprivileged children in Bharat), which continues to thrive in her able leadership and. She may be contacted via email [renurajvanshigupta@gmail.com](mailto:renurajvanshigupta@gmail.com)



# VHPA Starts Balvihar in Tampa

The last session on June 1st ended with a movie night for all, where they watched an action-filled film, Ram Setu. Children enjoyed the feeling of being in a theater where they were served popcorn, chips and soda.



**A** new Balvihar was started in New Tampa (North Tampa) on the auspicious day of Shree Ramanavami.

25 children ranging from six years to 14 years enrolled for once a week 90-minute session. This two-

month session was introductory to gauge interest of children and parents.

Children were divided into two age groups. They learned stories of our heroes, moral stories, the National anthem of Bharat and Vishwa Dharma Prayer



along with basic yoga. All the children enjoyed participating in outdoors games.

Enthusiastic parents led by Shri Vipul Dixit and Pankaj Sharma served as volunteers.

The last session on June 1st ended with a movie night for all, where they watched an action-filled film, Ram Setu. Children enjoyed the feeling of being in a theater where they were served popcorn, chips and soda.

While discussions were going on to start Balvihar, real Impetus for starting Balvihar came when two volunteer couples attended the national Balvihar workshop in Atlanta in March.

Once the Balvihar started, volunteers had a boost when Shri Sanjay Mehta (former General secretary and current Secretary, Advisory Board, VHPA) and his wife Amitababen visited Tampa. At a dinner meeting they explained nuts and bolts of running a successful Balvihar as they have been involved with running Balvihars for decades in Pittsburgh and answered questions from the volunteers.

Our volunteer team is gearing up for the next semester that will start in August to coincide with the school year. Plans are to have in place curriculum for the whole semester and give all printed material to students in advance. We will recruit more volunteers and move to a rented place to accommodate more children.

For information feel free to contact Vipul Dixit 336-521-3673 or Pankaj Chauhan 917-420-5381. ■



# Bhagwad Gita for Children V

From a series of talks by Sanjay Mehta, transcribed and  
compiled by **Jaya Asthana**

## Recap

Chapter 1 is Vishaad Yog, and Chapter 2 is Sankhya Yog. We completed that last time. But before we start Chapter 3, we need to go over the key points in the previous chapters, because that is the foundation.

Let us share the summary of Chapter 1 and Chapter 2. Chapter 2 is the key, if you understand this, you will understand all the others better.

In Chapter 1, Arjun was confused and depressed -Vishaad. He saw his family in front of him, he didn't want to fight them. This caused him to be depressed and confused. The cause of Vishaad or confusion was because of Moh – attachment. He was attached to his grandfather, his Guru, his personal desire.

Chapter 2 talks about Sankhya Yog. If you meet someone who is a college graduate, will you ask him if he went to elementary school?

No, because you take for granted that he went through all the grades. Similarly, Chapter 2 is like primary school. Unless you learn this well, you will not be able to go forward.

Chapter 2 has four main teachings. The key words here are Shraddha, Gyan, Karma, and Sthita Pragya. These are the foundational teachings.

**1st teaching: Shraddha:** Commitment, Trust in teaching, surrender seeking shelter or guidance to show Arjun the path,





which is Shreyas, or good for all.

**2nd teaching: Gyan Yog:** the foundational knowledge. What is my Swadharma? My personal duty? The main teaching is that you are not the body, you are the Atman. When you realize this, that is Gyan – self-realization.

**3rd teaching:** Karma Yog or Buddhi Yog. You should have Samatvam - evenness of mind when doing the karma (action). This is your duty, not your privilege. When doing the action, you should not think about the Karmaphal (results of your actions).

**4th teaching:** Sthita Pragya – one who has steady wisdom. Such a person gives up all Adharmic or illegitimate desires, like greed. He has Santosh, which means that he is satisfied in the Self by the Self. He is free from attachment to material possessions, free from anger resulting from unfulfillment. These are the qualities of a true Yogi.

Shraddha, Gyan and Karma help me to unite with Bhagwan, which is Satya (truth).

## Knowledge Check

### Summary of Chapter 1 and 2

#### Chapter 1 - Arjun Vishād Yoga

Arjun's depression and confusion was due to Moh-Attachment.

#### Chapter 2 – Sāṅkhya / Gyān Yoga

##### Section 1: Shraddhā Yoga

- Arjun's surrender (seeking shelter or guidance): Samarpan or Shraddhā
- Arjun's Prarthana (prayer) for Shri Krishna's guidance was to lead him to Shreyas.

##### Section 2: Gyān Yoga

- Basic or foundational knowledge (Gyān): Deha (Body) and Dehi (Atmā). Know the difference.
- Who am I? I am the Atma.
- What is my identity i.e. What is my Swadharma? One should know this before taking up any Karma/ action/task.

##### Section 3: Karma Yoga or Buddhi Yoga

- Evenness of Buddhi (intellect) during the Karma/ action, that is Samatvam.
- Karma is your duty, not a right (privilege).
- Stay away from clinging to Karma-Phal (results).

##### Section 4: Qualities of a Yogi, a person of Steady wisdom (Stitha-Pragya)

- Gives up all the adharmic (illegitimate) desires such as Greed.
- Always satisfied (Santosh) in the self by the self.
- Free from attachment (Rāg) to material possessions.
- Free from fear (Bhay) of impending failure.
- Free from anger (Krodh) resulting from unfulfillment.

**Shraddhā, Gyan and Karma help me unite with Bhagwan (who is Satya), and that is called Yoga.**

## Chapter 3: Karma Yog

In this chapter Bhagwan goes into more detail about Karma Yog. All action is karma. But when Bhagwan is talking about karma, he means the prescribed action. Suppose you have a headache, you go to the doctor, and he prescribes some medicine for your headache. You





have to take the correct medicine for what you have. If you have a headache, you will not take medicine for your stomach. Just like that, even though all action may be karma, the correct action is Karma, the prescribed action.

**Shloke 1:**

### arjun uvācha

*jyāyasī chet karmanas te matā buddhir janārdana  
 tat kim karmani ghore mām niyojayasi kēshava  
 vyāmiśhreṇeva vākyena buddhiṁ mohayasīva me  
 tad ekam vada niśhchitya yena śhreyo 'ham āpnuyām*

Arjun says: Krishna, if you consider Knowledge as superior to Action, why do you urge me to do this dreadful action, Keshav?

If Gyan is important, why are you forcing me to do this action?

Arjun is talking about War, which is the action. But Arjun does not want any part of this action, he wants to run away.

Bhagwan says: all three things are needed to be with Bhagwan: Shraddha, Gyan, and Karma.

Arjun is confused, he does not think he needs all three. He needs to think about it for a long time. Just like you eat chewing gum, you chew it for a long time and enjoy it slowly. Just like that, you think about it during the day.

A father took his son to a swimming pool to teach him how to swim, but the child was afraid of the water. When father tried to encourage the boy to get into the pool, the boy said that he could get into the pool if there was no water in the pool.

But if you want to swim, you have to get into the water. You may have the theoretical knowledge of how to swim, but that is not enough for you to learn how to swim. You have to get into the water to learn how



to swim.

Knowing about Yog is not enough, you have to know all three things: shraddha, gyan, and karma.

### Bhagwan answers his question in Shloke 3:

*loke 'smin dvi-vidhā niśhṭhā purā proktā mayānagha  
 jñāna-yogena sānkhyānām karma-yogena yoginām*

Arjun, in this world two courses of Sadhana (spiritual discipline) had been enunciated by me in the past. In the case of the Sankhyayogi, the Sadhana proceeds along the path of knowledge, whereas in the case of the Karmayogi, it proceeds along the path of action.

Bhagwan says there are two paths to reach



fulfillment in life, the path of karma (action) and the path of gyan (knowledge). They are not different, they go together. For example, there are two tracks in the railway line which are parallel. The train needs both tracks to travel, it goes on them simultaneously. Similarly, the path of gyan and karma go together, they go in parallel.

The first path is Gyan -learn, listen, meditate, and see where it fits into my life. The biggest gyan is that I am the Atma. Am I using that knowledge in my life? If I am not using it, I am not digesting that teaching. Whatever I am learning is not being transformed into the Awareness.

The second path is karma – action based on evenness of buddhi that is balanced. My intellect should always be balanced. When faced with two reasonably good choices, I should be able to make the right choice.

The purpose of both these paths is to know yourself and to be happy. Both Karma and Gyan are important. Karma or Action is valuable when guided by Gyan or knowledge.

If you use karma in isolation, it has no meaning. If gyan is present alone, it has no meaning. Both need to be together. Action is valuable only when guided by knowledge.

### Shloke 9:

*yajñārthāt karmaṇo 'nyatra loko 'yam karma-bandhanaḥ  
tad-artham karma kaunteya mukta-saṅgaḥ samāchara*

Man alone is bound by his own action except for when it is performed for the sake of sacrifice. Therefore, Arjun, do you efficiently perform your duty, free from attachment, for the sake of sacrifice alone.

There is a word here, Yagna. Yagna means sacrifice. When we do a yagna, we think of it as praying while

performing a fire ritual. We put herbs, samagri, ghee etc. into the fire. You put all your efforts into the fire. You sacrifice your time and effort. You are doing it without any expectation of return.

Sacrifice is doing something without any selfish thought or motive behind it. When we do an action for others with joy, that does not bind us. In such a case there is no attachment. The action I do just for myself binds me, it is a selfish action, so there is attachment, and this leads to desire. Nobody can guarantee that all desires will be fulfilled. When there are unfulfilled desires, that leads to anger, agitation, which in turn leads to distortion and loss of memory.

In Bhagwad Geeta, Bhagwan says all Karma is yagna. When you do an action, it is a yagna. But not just any action is yagna. When you put all your thought process, your actions, your efforts into the action, it becomes yagna. So Geeta says Karma is a Yagna. It purifies the mind. But you should do it without any attachment to the results of the action, as we saw in Chapter 2.

There is always a result of any action, but it may or may not be in your favor. When you focus on the result, it makes you anxious, your breathing changes, and you lose focus. When you focus on the action as it is, the anxiety disappears. When you perform the action with the focus that I will accept whatever comes, your action becomes a Yagna, and that is called Karma Yog.

There is a word in Sanskrit called Tyaag. That also means sacrifice. When you do something that is not just for yourself but for the good of others (Shreyas) without expecting anything in return, that is Tyaag. If you perform an action not due to selfish reasons but for the good of others, your action becomes a sacrifice, it becomes Tyaag. All actions performed with Tyaag become Karma Yog. ■



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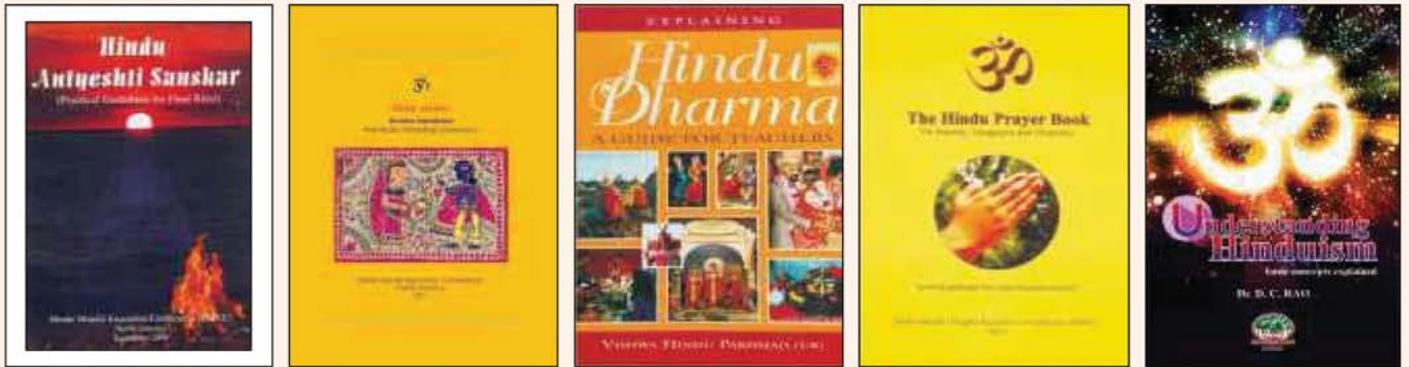
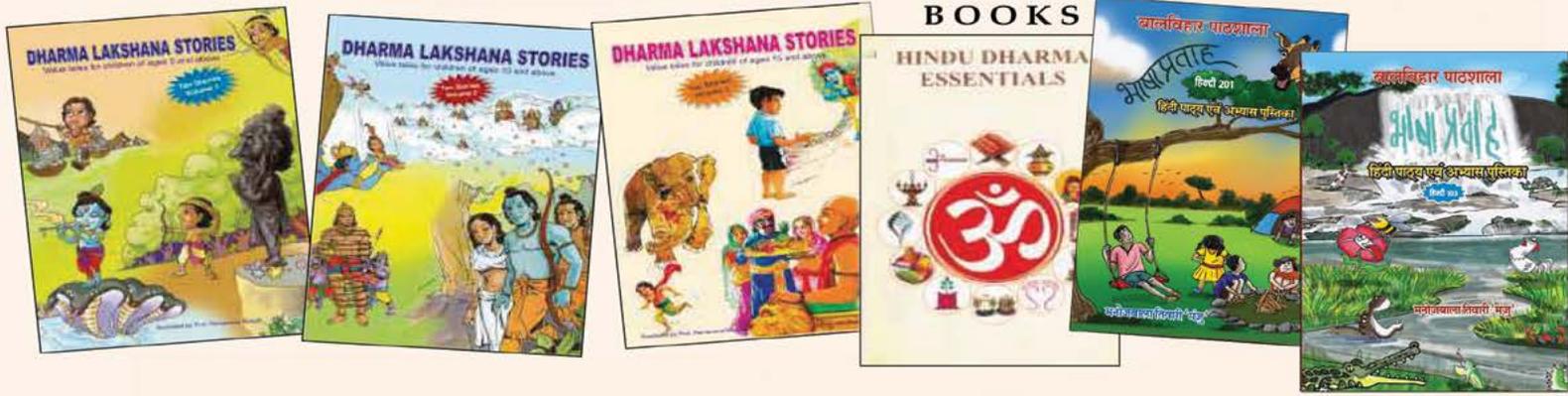


ॐ असतो मा सद् गमय । तमसो मा ज्योतिर्गमय । मृत्योर्माऽमृतम् गमय ।।

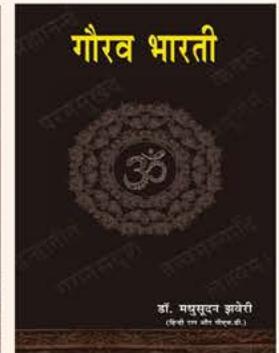
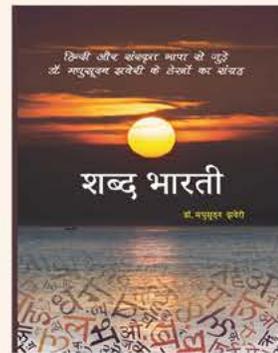
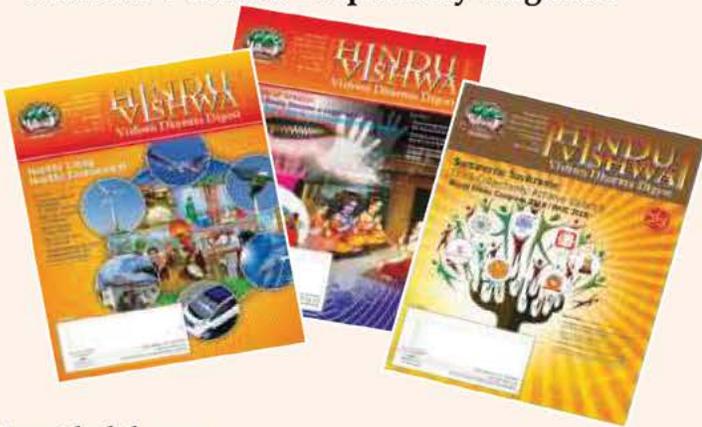
Om, Asato Maa Sad Gamaya; Tamaso Maa Jyotir Gamaya Mrityor Maa Amritam Gamaya

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