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## HINDU VISHWA

### VOICE OF HINDUS IN NORTH AMERICA

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## VISHWA HINDU PARISHAD OF AMERICA, INC.,

### OBJECTIVES:

- TO UNITE HINDUS WITH A VIEW TO INSTILL IN THEM DEVOTION TO THE PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICES OF HINDU WAY OF LIFE.
- TO CULTIVATE IN THEM A SPIRIT OF SELF RESPECT FOR THEMSELVES AND THEIR WAY OF LIFE AND RESPECT FOR PEOPLE OF ALL COLORS, CREEDS, RACES AND RELIGIONS.
- TO ESTABLISH CONTACTS WITH HINDUS ALL OVER THE WORLD

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Hindu Vishwa is very much interested in publishing articles that demonstrate the benefits of Hindu way of Life to people living in these modern stressful times. Articles on Vegetarian food, meditation, Yoga, and environment are most welcome.

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**RESOLVE FOR HINDUS ABROAD**

**SUSTAIN AND STRENGTHEN HINDUNESS BY FOLLOWING THE PRINCIPLES OF DHARMA**

- **ANY THOUGHT SPEECH OR ACTION THAT PROMOTES HARMONY AND GROWTH IN LIFE SHOULD BE VIEWED AS DHARMA. ANYTHING ELSE AS ADHARMA.**
- **HARMONY WITHIN ONE'S SELF MEANS AN INTEGRAL APPROACH TO BODY, MIND AND SOUL -- KEEPING INTACT THE TOTAL SELF.**
- **HARMONY IN A SOCIETY IS SUSTAINED BY DEVELOPING A DEEP SEATED UNDERSTANDING OF THE PRINCIPLE OF EVER EXPANDING SELF FROM EGOCENTRICITY TO BRAHMAN. NON--DUAL SELF IS THE ROCK--BOTTOM TO ARRIVE AT ANY GO, NO GO SIGNALS FOR SOCIAL BEHAVIOR.**
- **KEEP GROWING AS AN INDIVIDUAL: KEY TO GROWTH: FROM PHYSICAL TO MENTAL TO SPIRITUAL IS THE DIRECTION OF GROWTH. AN INDIVIDUAL BECOMES OLD WHEN HE CEASES TO GROW.**
- **PRACTICE MEDITATION AND YOGA EITHER ALONE OR PREFERABLY WITH FAMILY. CONTACT RIGHT PERSONS TO LEARN THESE PRACTICES.**
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- **BE WILLING TO HELP OTHERS: THE JOURNEY TO ACHIEVE THE GOAL OF SELF-UNFOLDMENT IS FACILITATED BY SERVING OTHERS AS ONE'S OWN-SELF. A SELF - LESS SERVICE TO ANY LIVING BEING WILL BE THE REAL SOURCE OF JOY IN YOUR LIFE.**
- **EXPAND YOUR HORIZONS: TRANSCEND THE NARROW VIEWS OF SECTS AND LINGUISTIC GROUPS: BE ONE WITH THE ENTIRE HINDU SOCIETY AND WITH ALL BEINGS AROUND YOU.**
- **MEDITATE ON BHARAT, THE MOTHER OF HINDU CULTURAL LIFE, THE GANGA OF SPIRITUALITY, THE SOURCE OF INSPIRATION FOR BLISS.**

**SHLOKA ABOUT HINDUSTHAN**

I came across a very beautiful Sanskrit Shloka from Baarhaspatyua Samhita describing India which reads in Roman script as follows :

**Himalyam Samarabhya  
Yavadindusarovaram  
Tam Deonirmitam Desham  
Hindusthanam Prachakshate**

Meaning : The country which starts from Himalayas and the borders of which reach till the Indian Ocean (Indu Sarovaram), has been created by Gods and its name is Hindusthan.

Just for sharing with you all. Namaste. G. V. Ashtekar

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## WHAT WE NEED TO KNOW ABOUT AYODHYA

N.S. Rajaram

There already exists a good deal of literary and archaeological evidence relating to the existence of temples at the disputed site.

The Allahabad Bench of the Uttar Pradesh High Court has directed the Archaeological Survey of India to excavate in the disputed site at Ayodhya to determine whether the Babri Masjid was built after demolishing a temple that was already. This is a welcome development, for we will soon have a scientific investigation of the claims and counterclaims in full public view and under official direction. It is important to note however that there have been previous investigations, both literary and archaeological, that pretty much establish the pre-existence and destruction of temples at the site where the Babri Masjid was built by Mir Baki on Babar's orders. This was drowned in all the noise generated in the emotionally charged climate following the destruction of the disputed structure on December 6, 1992. I will present some of this material from sources that are well known to experts, but not the public.

### Literary

There are basically two kinds of literary sources- written records and inscriptions. Both these are available at Ram Janmabhumi at Ayodhya. One major inscription is that of Mir Baki himself, apparently placed on the Masjid wall when it was built in the 16th century. Another was discovered following the demolition on December 6, 1992. I'll look at it later. There are numerous literary records by Hindu, Muslim and British authors. When we survey even a small part of this vast literature, we find that until recently, until some politicians created the so-called 'controversy', no author- Hindu, Muslim, European or British official-questioned that

a temple existed on the spot, which had been destroyed to erect the mosque. We may begin with a couple of references from European writers from published sources that are widely available.

A. Fahrer in his *The Monumental Antiquities and Inscriptions in the North-Western Provinces and Oudh*, Archaeological Survey of India Report, 1891, PP 296-297 records: "Mir Khan built a Masjid in A.H. 930 during the reign of Babar, which still bears his name. This old temple must have been a fine one, for many of its columns have been utilized by the Musalmans in the construction of Babar's Masjid."

H.R. Neville in the *Barabanki District Gazetteer*, Lucknow, 1905, PP 168-169, writes that the Janmasthan temple "was destroyed by Babar and replaced by a mosque." Neville, in his *Fyzabad District Gazetteer*, Lucknow, 1905, PP 172-177 further tells us; "The Janmasthan was in Ramkot and marked the birthplace of Rama. In 1528 A.D. Babar came to Ayodhya and halted here for a week. He destroyed the ancient temple and on its site built a mosque, still known as Babar's mosque. The materials of the old structure [i.e., the temple] were largely employed, and many of the columns were in good preservation."

One could cite many more in similar vein, but these examples should suffice for recent European records. When we reach back in time, what we find particularly interesting are the accounts attributed to Guru Nanak. He was a contemporary of Babar, and an eyewitness to his vandalism. Nanak condemned him in the strongest terms. The

historian Harsh Narain in his book *The Ayodhya Temple Mosque Dispute: Focus on Muslim Sources*, writes: "Guru Nanak, according to Bhai Man Singh's *Pothi Janam Sakhi*, said to have been composed in 1787 Anno Vikrami/1730 A.D., visited Ayodhya and said to his Muslim disciple Mardana: 'Mardania! eh Ajudhia nagari Sri Ramachandraji ki hai. So, chal, iska darsan kari'e. Translation: 'Mardana! this Ayodhya city belongs to Sri Ramachandra Ji. So let us have its darsana.' "

This indicates that Nanak visited Ayodhya shortly before the destruction of the Rama temple by Babar. Another work by Baba Sukhbasi Ram gives a similar account, again suggesting that Nanak visited Ayodhya before the temple was destroyed by his contemporary, the Mughal invader Babar. Muslim sources also give a similar account. In 1855, Amir Ali Amethawi led a Jihad for the recapture of Hanuman Garhi, situated a few hundred yards from the Babri Masjid, which at that time was in the possession of Hindus. This Jihad took place during the reign of Nawab Wajid Ali Shah of Oudh. It ended in failure. A Muslim writer, one Mirza Jan, was a participant in that Jihad. His book *Hadiqah-i-Shuhada* was published in 1856, i.e. the year following the failed Jihad. Mirza Jan tells us:

"â€œwherever they found magnificent temples of the Hindus ever since the establishment of Sayyid Salar Mas'ud Ghazi's rule, the Muslim rulers in India built mosques, monasteries, and inns, appointed mu'azzins, teachers and store-stewards, spread Islam vigorously, and vanquished the Kafirs. Likewise they cleared up Faizabad and Avadh, too from the filth of reprobation (infidelity), because it was a great center of worship and capital of Rama's father. Where there stood a great temple (of Ramajamasthan), there they built a big mosque, ... Hence what a lofty mosque was built there by king Babar in 923 A.H. (1528 A.D.), under the patronage of Musa Ashiqqan!" Even more impressive

is a Persian text known as *Sahifah-i-Chihal Nasa'ih Bahadurshahi* written in 1707 by a granddaughter of the Moghul emperor Aurangzeb, and noted by Mirza Jan in his Urdu work *Hadiqah-i Shuhada* just cited. Mirza Jan quotes several lines from her work which tell us:

"...keeping the triumph of Islam in view, devout Muslim rulers should keep all idolaters in subjection to Islam, brook no laxity in realization of Jizyah, grant no exceptions to Hindu Rajahs from dancing attendance on 'Id days and waiting on foot outside mosques till end of prayer ... and 'keep in constant use for Friday and congregational prayer the mosques built up after demolishing the temples of the idolatrous Hindus situated at Mathura, Banaras and Avadhâ€œ"

Other Muslim authors than Mirza Jan also cite the work, which appears to have been widely available in the 18th and 19th centuries. Then there is the evidence of the three inscriptions at the site of the mosque itself, at least two of which mention its construction by Mir Baqi (or Mir Khan) on the orders of Babar. Babar's Memoir mentions Mir Baqi as his governor of Ayodhya. Some parts of the inscription were damaged during a riot in 1934, but later pieced together with minor loss. In any event, it was well known long before that, recorded for instance in Mrs. Beveridge's translation of *Babur-Nama* published in 1926.

#### **Discoveries at the site I: The Temple City of Ayodhya**

While this evidence is strong, the archaeological evidence is still stronger. This is what Dr. S.P. Gupta (former director of the Allahabad Museum), has to say about recent excavations at Ayodhya: "At Ayodhya, Professor Lal [B.B. Lal. Former Director General of ASI] took as many as 14 trenches at different places to ascertain the antiquity of the site. It was then found that the history of the township was at least

three thousand years old, if not more... When seen in the light of 20 black stone pillars, 16 of which were found re-used and standing in position as corner stones of piers for the disputed domed structure of the 'mosque', Prof. Lal felt that the pillar bases may have belonged to a Hindu temple built on archaeological levels formed prior to 13th century AD..."

On further archaeological and other evidence, Lal concluded that the pillar bases must have belonged to a Hindu temple that stood between 12th and the 16th centuries. (See pictures.) What this means is that Lal had found evidence for possibly two temples, one that existed before the 13th century, and another between the 13th and the 16th centuries. This corresponds very well indeed with history and tradition. We know that this area was ravaged by Muslim invaders following Muhammad of Ghor's defeat of Prithviraj Chauhan in the second battle of Tarain in 1192 AD. This was apparently rebuilt and remained in use until destroyed again in the 16th century by Babar.

### **The Hari-Vishnu inscription**

The demolition on December 6, 1992 changed the picture dramatically, providing inscriptional support to the traditional accounts- both Hindu and Muslim. The most important of these is the Hari-Vishnu inscription. It is written in 12th century AD Devanagari script and belongs therefore to the period before the onslaught of the Ghorids (1192 AD and later). It was later examined by Ajay Mitra Shastri, Chairman of the Epigraphical Society of India who

gave the following summary. "The inscription is composed in high-flown Sanskrit verse, except for a very small portion in prose, and is engraved in chaste and classical Nagari script of the eleventh-twelfth century AD. It was evidently put up on the wall of the temple, the construction of which is recorded in the text inscribed on itâ€ Line 15 of this inscription, for example, clearly tells us that a beautiful temple of Vishnu-Hari, built with heaps of stones ... , and beautified with a golden spire ... unparalleled by any other temple built by earlier kings ... This wonderful temple ... was built in the temple-city of Ayodhya situated in Saketamandala. ... Line 19 describes god Vishnu as destroying king Bali ... and the ten headed personage (Dashanana, i.e., Ravana)." The inscription confirms what archaeologists Lal and Gupta had earlier found about the existence of a temple complex. I have given a copy of the Hari-Vishnu inscription. New archaeological finds ordered by the court are likely to yield more such riches but unlikely to change the historical picture.

The reaction of 'secularist' scholars aired from their favorite platform of SAHMAT is intriguing to say the least. First they say that no excavation should be carried out because that would open a can of worms leading to disputes at other sites also. This is not very different from the objection raised by Pope Innocent against Galileo's discoveries. Not so long ago, the same worthies were telling us that no temple was destroyed by Babar when the mosque was built. If they were telling the truth, why should they fear excavation?

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Dr. N.S. Rajaram is a mathematician, linguist and historian. He has written several books on India including Profiles in Deception: Ayodhya and the Dead Sea Scrolls.

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## Power of the Indian mind: our heritage & asset

by Jagmohan

The frontiers of knowledge are ever-expanding. This is an age of great many revolutions - revolutions that are moving at revolutionary pace. There is revolution in space, electronics, information and genetics. There is no branch of human knowledge which is not witnessing rapid changes. More and more vistas and more horizons are becoming known to mankind. To peep into these new vistas and new horizons, we have to soar high and higher in search of knowledge and truth. Our approach has also to be innovative and creative. It must never be superficial, as superficiality could be the worst enemy of an educated man. India, as a whole, needs to shake off its current culture, which is predominantly superficial and soft, and replace it by a new culture which should be predominantly creative and constructive. Strands of imitation must give way to storms of originality which can bring in fresh breeze to sweep the dust and haze that hangs around us these days. Distinct style: In this connection, the greatest heritage and asset of India is the power of its mind. Unless this power is regenerated, India can neither exploit its potential to the full nor evolve a distinct style of its own - a style which its current social, economic and political requirements as well as its "ancient nobility of temper" and spiritual heritage warrant.

Every nation has its own special attributes. The special attribute of Germany is its organization, of the USA its enterprise, of Japan its adaptability and of Great Britain its balance. The hallmark of India has been the power of its mind. It was this power of mind which found expression in its pre-eminent philosophy, religion, culture and way of life which led Will Durant, the celebrated American historian, to conclude: "India was the mother of our philosophy; mother of much of our mathematics; mother, through the Buddha, of the ideals embodied in

Christianity; mother, through the village community, of self-government and democracy. Mother India is in many ways the Mother of us all..." Similar was the salute of Max Mueller to this power of the Indian mind. He wrote: "If I were asked under what sky the human mind has most fully developed the choicest gifts, has most deeply pondered on the greatest problems of life, I should point to India." In the same strain, Voltaire has observed: "I am convinced that everything has come down to us from the banks of the Ganges, astronomy, astrology, metempsychosis, etc. It does not behoove us, who were only savages and barbarians when these Indian and Chinese peoples were civilized and learned, to dispute their antiquity." Great products: In support of my proposition about the power of the Indian mind, I would take up, as illustrations, three of its great products - (i) the concept of the Universe being an organic cosmic web; (ii) the concept of ecological balance; and (iii) the concept of Karmayogi.

One of the finest pieces of evidence which shows how powerful and insightful was once the Indian mind was its clear and correct understanding of the pattern of human existence on this planet and beyond. It perceived the "non-dual reality" that lies behind the smoke-screen of "surface duality" and realized that the universe was an organic web in which every item of life and nature was inextricably enmeshed with every other item. It also understood that this web was permeated with a cosmic force of which man and nature are the constituents as well as the contributors. This deep perception, this great realization and this subtle understanding of the Indian mind so impressed the renowned American poet and philosopher, Emerson, that he wrote a beautiful poem, titled "Brahma", in which he gave expression to the concept of non-duality thus: "They reckon ill \ who leave me

out;\ When me thy fly, I am the wing;\ I am the doubter and the doubt,\ And I the hymn that Brahma sings. The indivisible, this interpenetrative relationship amongst all elements of existence; this phenomenon of "One in All and All in One", this omnipresence of invisible cosmic force in the entire network of the web have all been found to be valid by the epoch-making formulations which, in the 20th century, have emerged out of the theories of relativity and quantum physics. Mass of energy:

These formulations have made it clear that the matter is nothing but a mass of energy; that ultimate particle or sub-atomic particle is not a thing but mere inter-connection, something that exists but can be seen only through a mind's eye; and that the universe is a web, a complex web, in which mind and matter, life and nature, are woven as an organic entity by way of hosts of interconnection. Organic web: Clearly, what the Indian mind discovered, centuries earlier, by virtue of its perceptive power and its higher level of consciousness, was discovered by the modern science only recently. The profundity of the concepts of the universe being an organic web, as evolved by the Indian mind, in the heydays of its power, can best be brought home if we look in depth on the world around and note its paradoxes and perplexities. Indisputably, the contemporary world has seen a great revolution in science and technology and also an unprecedented increase in the wealth of some nations.

Of late, human knowledge has been doubling every ten years. Information, communication and digital technologies are moving forward and converging very fast. The power of the computer is doubling every 18 months and that of internet every year. New discoveries and inventions are being daily made. Take, for example, the medical sciences. Many dreadful diseases are being contained or eliminated. Heart bypass surgery has become a routine. Gene transplant from higher organisms

holds the promise of raising the physical and intellectual level of mankind. Chemists have already synthesized over eight million compounds. Electronic mail has practically conquered time and distance. The science of "cloning" has opened new vistas.

Never before in history have such all-pervasive improvements taken place! Fair & just system: Why, with phenomenal knowledge and skills at mankind's command, should things be falling apart? Why, despite unprecedented affluence in the present-day world, should there be widespread hunger, disease and death? Why are the United Nations and its agencies failing to attain their objective and coming under the domination of a few? And why are ideologies of the time proving inadequate in creating a fair and just system by fair and just means?

The answer to these questions lies essentially in the total disinclination of the modern man, particularly the "power elite's" in the developed as well as the developing countries, to attend to the "Great Truth" about the organic nature of life, which the power and profundity of Indian mind had laid bare hundreds of years ago and which was subsequently confirmed by the theories of relativity and quantum physics. The modern "man" has consciously or sub-consciously remained under the influence of such philosophies as materialism and existentialism and entertained such views as propounded by historian Westfall: "The world is a machine, composed of inert bodies, moved by physical necessity, indifferent to the existence of thinking beings." He has, in practice, refused to take a holistic view of reality; and help in developing a system in which requirements of body, mind, intellect and soul are integrated in a balanced and harmonious pattern and in which human societies function, not as separate, but as complementary and mutually reinforcing units of the same universe. He has not understood that if one or two aspects of human personality or one or two arenas of

human society alone are catered to, or are not accompanied by a proportionate advance in complementary spheres, then negative results will accrue. It is because of the above disinclination and lack of understanding that the Western man and his institutions have created a world which is scientifically and technologically advanced but morally and socially retarded. All the complexities and contradictions to which I have referred earlier are due to this peculiar "mix" of advancement in one arena and retardation in the other.

**Ecological balance:**

The Indian mind was the earliest to grasp the significance of maintaining the ecological balance. From time immemorial, our sages and saints have been propagating: "The Earth is our Mother and we are its Children." One of the earliest Vedic hymns, composed over 4,000 years ago, gave the message of what is now termed as sustainable development: "Whatever I dig of you, O Earth, \ May you of that have quick replenishment! \ O Purifying One, may my thrust never \ Reach right unto your vital points, your heart!" The carrying and recouping capacities of the earth were reverentially recognized and given a strong spiritual underpinning. That is why India, for centuries together, has remained a treasure- house of natural and cultural wealth. Unfortunately, this long tradition of respecting nature and living in harmony with it has, of late, been mutilated hue to onslaught of unbridled materialism and other negative forces. It has become too effete to have any decisive impact on the ground. Like anywhere else in the world, though hymns in praise of sustainability are repeatedly sung at every symposia and seminar, declarations seldom get translated into deeds.

**Concept of Karmayogi:**

I do not think a more lofty, a more elevating, a more solid and sound concept of work than that of `Karmayogi' has been evolved

in any other system of thought anywhere in the world. Resting as it is on detachment, dedication and complete selflessness, it cannot but ennoble the holder of power. A work undertaken by a state functionary necessarily involves exercise of power. If this exercise is actuated neither by weakness for reward nor by any other subjective consideration, it cannot lead the functionary astray, and no corruption, malpractice or injustice would ensue. The work gets performed honestly, objectively and effectively. In the circumstances, the individual, the society and the state advance, materially as well as spiritually. Inner strength: An officer may be highly intelligent and knowledgeable. But if his personality is not warmed by inner strength, his actions would generally tend to be selfish, narrow, partisan or even corrupt. What is, therefore, required is nobly physical and mental efficiency but also spiritual and character- efficiency. And this requirement would be fulfilled only if the ideal of `Karmayogi' is taken as a guiding star. Pursuit of this ideal alone uplifts a knowledgeable and intelligent person to a wise and perceptive one, a casual and negative mind to a creative and positive mind, and a politician and ruler to a statesman and a Rajasri. "Without wisdom", Bertrand Russell has rightly observed, "increased knowledge would produce more sorrow for man." Sri Aurobindo has put it still more perceptively: "Knowledge is so much of the truth, seen in a distorted medium, as the mind arrives at by groping; wisdom is what the eye of divine vision sees in the spirit....What men call knowledge is a reasoned acceptance of false appearances. Wisdom looks behind the veil and sees." Waning of the power:

As illustrations of the power of the Indian mind, I have provided glimpse of three great concepts evolved by it. Unfortunately, with the passage of time, this power began to wane and the Indian culture suffered a decline, though occasional flashes of it were seen in great thinkers and reformers like Sankara, Vivekananda and Gandhi. Overall,

the desertification of the Indian mind still needs to be arrested and its green pastures restored.

**Failure of Post-1947 India:**

In 1952, Arnold Toynbee, the celebrated historian of civilizations, observed: "In fifty years, the world would be under the hegemony of the USA, but in the 21st century, as religion captures the place of technology, it is possible that India, the conquered, will conquer its conquerors." The first part of Toynbee's observation has practically come true. But, at the moment, there is little likelihood of the second part of his observation coming true. This is because the post-Independence India has frittered away a historic opportunity to recapture and reconstruct the fundamentals of her civilization and work out a model for herself and also act as a pace-setter for adoption of new civilisational norms by other countries. After August 15, 1947, a powerful, creative and constructive mind should have been our main instrument in building a new civilization, a new culture, a new nation. But we were lured by the ideologies of others and started imitating models set up by socialism or capitalism or combination of both. No wonder, we find

ourselves today in the worst of both the worlds. The social, economical and political weaknesses, acquired by our system due to the decay and decadence of our once great civilization, are getting compounded by some of the worst features of the western civilization. And in the international order, our influence is marginal.

**Need for regaining the power:**

It is time we realized the grave omission in our post-1947 outlook and approach and make a determined bid to recapture the power of the Indian mind and use this power as a base for building a new edifice - an edifice whose planks should be shaped primarily by India's ancient nobility of temper, her values of contentment and compassion, her ideals of Karmayogi, her concept of universe being an organic entity and of one dynamic equilibrium continuously replacing another, and her belief in man's capacity to acquire greater and greater insight and move from a lower level of truth to a higher level of truth. In this combined venture in the realm of ideas and in the realm of practice, the youth have to play a pivotal role. This is not a short-term venture. The efforts have to be continuous and long-drawn.

The writer is Union Minister of Tourism and Culture.

<http://www.tribuneindia.com/2003/20030223/edit.htm#1>

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**COVERT GENOCIDE OF HINDUS IN BANGLADESH**

By: Narain Kataria

A delegation comprising of Jiten Roy, Ph.D., President, and Bidyut Sarkar, General Secretary, respectively, of International Federation of Bangladeshi Hindus & Friends, Mohini Sarin, a Human Rights Activist, Dr. Narinder Kukar, former National President of the Association of Indians in America and N. Kataria, Founder of Indian American Intellectuals Forum, called on Deputy Ambassador, Indian Mission, Mr. A.

Gopinathan, at New York on January 20, and presented to him a memorandum documenting the pitiable plight of Hindus who are being subjected to relentless torture, ghastly murder, gang rape and forcible conversion to Islam. The memorandum urged the Indian Mission at U.N. to take up this matter seriously with the Government of India and find a permanent solution to the state sponsored campaign

aimed at ethnic-cleansing of Hindus in Bangladesh. The memorandum, inter alia, stated that Bangladesh, where 11,000 of its 64, 000 madrassas are constantly producing jihadis, "has become a safe haven for Islamic terrorists - - including Taliban and Al Qaeda fighters fresh off the boat from Afghanistan." (The Time Asia Magazine Oct. 16, '02; Far Eastern Economic Review (April 4,2002); The Wall Street Journal April 2'02); Office of the Coordinator for Counterterrorism/US Department of State, May 21, 2002; Country Reports on Human Rights Practices for 2001: Bangladesh, March 2002) Time Asia Magazine, CNNNews (Dec. 21, '01) New York Times (Nov. 27, '01) etc.

In the past one and half years, ever since the ruling coalition of "Islamic hardliners" (The Guardian, Oct. 2, '01) assumed power with an absolute majority, the Islamic extremists have gained enormous strength demonstrating that they are capable of enacting several Balies, if not 9/11s. Earlier, using the Babri Mosque incident as a ploy to teach Hindus a befitting lesson, Jehadis had killed 15 Hindus, raped 2600 Hindu women, razed 3,600 temples and rendered 200,000 Hindus homeless. Militant Islamists have looted, razed and in many cases set ablaze dwelling houses, businesses, temples, imposed infidel protection tax, gang/mass raped [e.g. nearly 200 Hindu women were mass raped by the Muslims in Char Fashion in a single night (The Daily Star, Nov 16, 2001); mother and eight-year-old daughter were gang-raped together subjecting the

helpless father/husband to watch such ghastly scene], brutally tortured, murdered, and left with the ultimatum:" Go to India, where you rightly belong."

Incidents of rape remain generally underreported because of the stigma attached to it, yet among the 228 rape cases reported within the day of election 225 or 98.68 % of the rape victims were Hindus and the perpetrators belonged to the ruling parties (see, e.g., The Daily Janakantha, Feb. 17, '02). When the victims of rape approach the police station to press charges against the gang of rapists, the commanding officers not only refuse to accept their cases but in some cases also persecute the victim by detaining them in the precinct lockup (see, e.g., The Daily Janakantha, Feb. 17, '02). As a result of the above-mentioned systematic persecution, Hindu population in Bangladesh has decreased from 35% in 1947 to 10% in 2003 Hence, the Hindus of Bangladesh have no other alternative but to demand a permanent solution of this problem, by creating a protected region. If the Bosnian Muslims, East Timorese Christians, Srilankan Tamils, Iraqi Kurds deserve international attention, the Bangladeshi Hindus, 25 million of whose people have been driven out of the country and 2.5 million acres of whose land confiscated, deserve help find a permanent solution to their problem, too. Such a solution can never be achieved unless India intervenes, like it did in 1971

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## HOW TO SURVIVE A HEART ATTACK ALONE

Let's say it's 6:15 p.m. and you're driving home (alone of course), after an unusually hard day on the job. You're really tired, upset and frustrated.

Suddenly, you start experiencing severe pain in your chest that starts to radiate out into your arm and up into your jaw. You are

only about five miles from the hospital nearest your home; unfortunately you don't know if you'll be able to make it that far. What can you do? You've been trained in CPR but the guy that taught the course neglected to tell you how to perform it on yourself. Since many people are alone when they suffer a heart attack, this article

seemed to be in order. Without help, the person whose heart stops beating properly and who begins to feel faint, has only about 10 seconds left before losing consciousness.

However, these victims can help themselves by coughing repeatedly and very vigorously. A deep breath should be taken before each cough. The cough must be deep and prolonged, as when producing sputum from deep inside the chest. And a

cough must be repeated about every 2 seconds without let up until help arrives, or until the heart is felt to be beating normally again. Deep breaths get oxygen into the lungs and coughing movements squeeze the heart and keep the blood circulating. The squeezing pressure on the heart also helps it regain normal rhythm. In this way, heart attack victims can get to a hospital.

Tell as many other people as possible about this, it could save their lives!

Karen Pfaffinger

The Tyler Lewke Team, 100 N. Walkup, Crystal Lake, IL 60014  
(815)444-6790 Office; (815)356-6641 Direct Line

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### **VHPA STRONGLY CONDEMNS MASSACRE OF KASHMIRI PANDITS**

VHP OF AMERICA (VHPA) strongly condemns the massacre of 24 Hindus including eleven women and two children in cold blood on 23rd march 2003 in village Nandimarg of Pulwama district in southern Kashmir. The fifteen heavily armed terrorists disguised in army uniform and pretending to be looking for terrorists themselves, in an act of cowardice, assembled the villagers and started firing indiscriminately killing 24. Such acts of barbarism in Kashmir by Islamic terrorists have become routine and no incident, however gruesome, can be termed as the worst act of its kind any more. Continual acts of bloody violence against Hindus in Kashmir only exposes the callousness if not complicity of the state and local authorities. Failure of the government in Kashmir for last 14 years has led to the genocide of over 60,000 people and to the ethnic cleansing of more than 350,000 Hindus.

We convey our deepest sympathies and condolences to the bereaved families. We demand that the central and state governments take immediate measures to end the incessant murderous attacks on Hindus.

We pray to Ishwara (God) to give enough strength to the families of the victims.

Vishwa Hindu Parishad (World Hindu Council) of America Inc.  
National Office: PO Box 441505, Houston, TX 77244,  
(281)-496-5676  
<http://www.vhp-america.org>

#### **Contact:**

Gaurang Vaishnav, General Secretary  
Day: (732)754-1727 Eve: (732)603-7740 Email: [gensecy@vhp-america.org](mailto:gensecy@vhp-america.org)

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## Book Review:

**The Gift of Education Author: Radhika Sharma Publication: India Currents Date: December 2, 2002 URL:**

[http://news.indiacurrents.com/news/view\\_article.html?article\\_id=18d9f1a41990e1331b977782cc33709d](http://news.indiacurrents.com/news/view_article.html?article_id=18d9f1a41990e1331b977782cc33709d)

It is said that in any aspect of life, the difference between the numbers one and zero is greater than the difference between the numbers two and one; nowhere is it as clearly illustrated as in the case of education, where a little bit can go a long way in improving the quality of life.

The Ekal Vidyalaya Foundation of India (EVFI) is one such concept that hopes to empower young tribal children in India through education. The premise of EVFI is "Ek Shikshak, Ek Vidyalaya," which means "one teacher for every school." Founded 15 years ago, by Shyamjee Gupta, EVFI focuses attention on tribals and tries to bring non-formal education within their reach. Currently EVFI is running over 8,000 schools in remote and tribal villages all over India and hopes to reach a target of 100,000 schools by the year 2010.

Ekal Vidyalayas offer five years of free non-formal education to village children aged 5-14 years in groups of 30 to 40. For every school a local teacher is identified. An organizer is assigned for each cluster of 10 schools. The teachers are locally educated youths who have passed grades 8 or 9 and have been trained specifically for the purpose. Many NGOs are also closely connected with the functioning of these Vidyalayas. These village schools also serve the ancillary function of a meeting point for the entire community wherein ideas regarding health and better lifestyle are discussed. Classes are held under a tree or in a hut and lessons are taught through different modes like kathas (story telling sessions), natakas (dramas), lok-geets (folk songs), and pravachans (religious discourses), etc. This informality induces even the errant students to turn up for class.

The curriculum is designed by educationalists to cater to special local needs and is taught in the regional language of the state. It includes alphabetic and numerical knowledge as well as moral education. The girl child is also well represented: 50 percent of the students and teachers are female. About 20 percent of all students go on to higher education and some of them eventually return to serve the organization that helped their growth. The EVFI has been able to keep capital costs to a minimum; one-time set up cost involves a blackboard, a chair for the teacher and banners, etc. The villagers chip in with gifts in kind in order to cement their emotional bond with their children's schools and quite often supply many of these requirements.

Around 3,500 Ekal Vidyalayas have been identified all over India, and are ready for adoption by donors. The EVFI undertakes activities like "Van Yatra" in towns and cities in India, exhorting urbanites to adopt a school. For those in the U.S., a contribution of \$1 dollar a day suffices to keep a school running. Gupta, who is also the national coordinator of the Ekal Vidyalaya Foundation of India, has developed a special affinity for tribals over the years. Says Gupta, during an awareness-building trip to the U.S., "In all my experiences with tribal people, especially in Orissa, I have seen that they are very simple and have traditionally been exploited. It is important that they be given their due now-for one of the reasons that India has prospered industrially is because these tribals gave up their land and natural resources to the government."

The Ekal Vidyalaya Foundation in the U.S. works primarily to help raise money from NRIs and people of Indian origin and has headquarters in Los Angeles and Houston. The foundation has found patrons in the U.S. who help by fund-raising or simply volunteer services. One such passionate advocate is Sucheta Kapuria, entrepreneur and TIE founder member. Kapuria's take on charity is simple; "Many of us first generation immigrants came to the U.S with nothing but our education, our intellectual capital. Therefore now, when we are well

off, it is time to ensure that we help return the benefits of that education back to India." Her future plans for EVF include helping to expand the seven-zone U.S set up to have chapters all over the country. Chandra Jaiswal, an engineering manager at Adaptec adds, "As a volunteer, it is very heartening to see so many people moved by the images of the movement, and eager to help and part with their dollar a day." And as Ekal Vidyalaya shows, a little help can go a long way.

For more information go to [www.ekalvidya.org](http://www.ekalvidya.org) Radhika Sharma is a freelance writer based in Milpitas, CA.

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### **AHAD Claims Partial Victory in American Eagle Outfitters Flip Flop/ Lord Ganesh Depiction Issue**

American Eagles Outfitters enraged and insulted the global Hindu community by designing flip flops with the image of Lord Ganesh (Ganesha) on the in-sole. AHAD was informed of this issue on April 23, and its members launched an informal campaign to have the flip flops withdrawn. On April 27, AHAD launched a formal campaign against American Eagle Outfitters for putting Lord Ganesh on Flip Flops (shoes). This has been the fastest growing protest petition in AHAD history, with more than 4200 online signatures in 36 hours supplemented by 250 signatures on paper. The signatures and the protest campaign is available at : <http://www.hindunet.org/ahad/americanagle/>

American Eagle Outfitters have offered a formal apology to the Hindu community. However, we have discovered yet another product (a handbag) from American Eagle Outfitters which ridicules Lord Ganesh. Our call for recall of this product has gone unheeded so far. AHAD protest against American Eagle Outfitters continue, until ALL the products depicting Hindu deities in a derogatory fashion are withdrawn. We want to sincerely thank the Hindu

community for coming together and protesting the denigration of Hindu symbols. Our task is NOT OVER yet, and we request the Hindu community to continue signing the petition.

Here is the apology letter from American Eagle Outfitters -----  
Pursuant to your request, this letter follows up on the email to you yesterday from our customer service department which confirmed that American Eagle Outfitters will remove from its stores the flip flop shoe that include a likeness of Lord Ganesh (Ganesha). Our goal at American Eagle Outfitters is to make AE brand merchandise that is fashionable and affordable for our customers in an inclusive and equitable environment. We value diversity and respect the ideal of freedom of expression of all religious and cultural beliefs. On behalf of American Eagle Outfitters, please accept this letter as our formal apology for our use of the image resembling Lord Ganesh on this product. Again, this letter confirms that we will remove these flip flop shoes from our stores in order to maintain the good will and our customer relations with the Hindu community. We appreciate your

interest in the AE brand and hope that you will continue to be satisfied customers of American Eagle Outfitters.

Very truly yours,  
Neil Bulman, Jr.  
Vice President and General Counsel -----  
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American Hindus Against Defamation is a coalition of major Hindu organizations in North America. It is sponsored by World Hindu Council of America (VHP-A). AHAD was at the forefront in protesting the offensive Aero smith album cover for Nine Lives, inappropriate inclusion of Bhagwad

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Gita shloka in Eyes Wide Shut, treatment of Hindu deities in Xena : Warrior Princess, representation of Hindu deity on shoes by Fortune Dynamics, representation of Hindu deities on toilet seats by Sitting Pretty etc. For more information about AHAD, please contact Ajay Shah (Convener AHAD) [ahad@hindunet.org](mailto:ahad@hindunet.org), phone 858 442 5668, or Pratap More [sriraam@worldnet.att.net](mailto:sriraam@worldnet.att.net)., American Hindus Against Defamation <http://www.hindunet.org/ahad/> Email : [ahad@hindunet.org](mailto:ahad@hindunet.org) Phone : 858 442 5668 Issue Web site : <http://www.hindunet.org/ahad/americanagle/> -----

## **Letters To The Editor:**

### **INDIA IS A HINDU NATION**

Prof. Amartaya Sen's opinion in an ethnic Indian newspaper that "there is no Hindu nation" in India, is based on erroneous and unsubstantiated assumptions, and devoid of factual historical data. It is mischievous, misleading and designed to deprive Hindus of their rightful heritage. It is a travesty of truth that Indians who have gained name and fame in the world are at the center stage of this lurid drama of divesting Hindus of their legacy. Pathetic intellectuals of Marxist bent, like Prof. Amartaya Kumar Sen are alienated from their cultural roots. They have surreptitious agenda to denigrate and demoralize Hindus. We have to challenged and take them to task.

India is geographically, historically, culturally, religiously a Hindu nation. The names of rivers - the Ganga, the Yamuna, the Sarasvati, the Brahmputra, the Godavari, the Kaveri, and the Ravi have Hindu origin. From Kashmir to Kanyakumari, from Assam to Gujarat, the entire area is inhabited by Hindus. Lord Ram, Lord Krishna, Lord Shiva and Lord Ganesha are worshiped by Hindus whether they live in Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Bengal or any other province in India. Hindus living all

over India revere the Vedas, the Geeta, the Upnishadas, the Ramayan, the Mahabharat, and the Puranas. Places of Hindu pilgrimages are spread throughout the length and breath of India. In South, it is Rameshvaram, in West it is Dwarka, in North it is Badrinath and in East it is Puri. The names of the Hindus all over Hindustan are more or less same with a little variation here and there. In North, it is Ram, in South it is Ramachandran, in North it is Krishna, in South it is Krishnan, in North it is Narayan, in South, it is Narayanan, in North it is Mahadev, in South, it is Mahadevan, etc. All over India, Hindus adore Sarasvati Devi, Kali Devi, Lakshmi Devi, Durga Devi, etc. with the same devotion and faith. All the centers of power, like the capitals of Chola and Pandya kingdoms, the Pataliputra of Chandragupta, Ujain of Vikramaditya, Pratishtan of Shalivahan, Devagiri of Yadavas and Vijayanagar of Harihar and Bukka have the stamp of Hindu nation. Entire India is dotted with the Hindu holy places like Ayodhya, Mathura, Maya, Kashi, Kanchi, Haridwar, Avantika, Dwaraka, Puri, Madurai, etc. In modern India, Hindustan Steel, Hindustan Aeronautics Limited, INS Godavari Rajya Sabha, Vidhan Sabha,

missiles Prithvi, Agini, Sagrika, all bear the stamp of Hindu nation. One can go on and on. In the backdrop of what has been stated above, it is crystal clear that Prof. Sen's opinion is preposterous, silly and should be dismissed with the scorn it deserves.

Prof. Sen has not only offended the sensibilities of millions of Hindus but also made himself a laughing stock. I would request Prof. Sen to concentrate more on economic issues rather than dabbling in the

arena which is beyond his grasp and comprehension. It has become a fashion for people who get the Nobel Prize to instantly start spouting on completely unrelated topics as if they have been genetically endowed with omniscience. They only hold themselves up to ridicule, and Prof. Sen has exactly done that through his shallow and slanted expression. Dear Professor, India is not a Hindu state but, certainly it is a Hindu nation.

Narain Kataria - 41-67 Judge Street (#5P) Elmhurst, New York 11373 (718) 478-5735

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### **VEDANTA IS FOR 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY**

A few years ago, when I was working for one of the largest U. S. Companies, we were called in for a meeting and they told us that from now on we are going to follow a new culture, which they told us is a "Holistic Culture". After listening, my Indian colleague and I both agreed that this new culture is part of the Hindu Philosophy. After further inquiry, the company informed us that they had assigned us into five men committees to investigate and solve company problems and become more efficient. I approached one of the men in charge of organizing the groups. He told me that they researched many cultures and scriptures and finally when they got to Vedas and Upanishads, they found that they were the most useful material for individual and group harmony. The philosophy inspired growth and was most relevant to the 21<sup>st</sup> century. This new culture, which they called a "Holistic Philosophy" was more like Dharma. I was surprised when I heard that they were including the 3<sup>rd</sup> eye in the "Holistic Approach" involving business.

Let us review the problems that many U. S. companies experienced which made them look outside their paradigm. It included poor quality, inefficiency, excessive supervision,

high manufacturing costs, etc. Also, in their research they discovered that the Japanese take more time deciding what action to take but less time finishing the job at hand. In comparison, in the U.S they take short time deciding what to do and long time doing it. The Japanese work in teams. Another observation was that the Japanese required six people to do a job that the British required 14 people to do and that Americans required 21 people to complete the same job. In our company, there were many layers of supervision. All the ideas came from the top management, but in Japan, the ideas were coming from the teams at the bottom. In Japan, the culture offered empowerment to the people doing the work.

At that point, our company started the "Holistic Approach" and implemented teamwork. All departments were gathered and we spent a weekend together playing games with each other, to get to know each other and develop brotherhood.

This new culture is an old culture and it is the culture of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The Holistic Approach to doing business brings consciousness into the work environment and promotes harmony.

Bharat Gajjar, Hockessin, DE.

## **HINDUISM IS CHANGING**

Recent reports say that there are over 16 million Americans who now practice Hindu activities, such as Yoga, Meditation, Mantras, Kirtan amongst others, and about 35% of Americans believe in Reincarnation.

New India Times printed this on 3/29/02, "Johannesburg - He used to be a devout Christian until curiosity took him to a Hindu Temple in Lenasia town, about 25 miles south of Johannesburg. Four years later, Meshack Jantjes, 35, is South Africa's first black African to become a Hindu priest. Not only does the Deputy resident priest at the Siva Gnana Sabay temple have a large following, but with tremendous effort, he is also mastering Tamil language. The African priest said after being appointed as the priest of the temple, "when I stand before the Hindu people here and lead the prayers, I feel that I am with my family."

A few days ago, a young man called a Hindu organization and said, "I met a Muslim girl, we are in love and we got married. She wants to become a Hindu. Can you help us? She was initiated with Yagna. She has accepted Hindu Dharma

Bharat Gajjar, Hockisson, DE.

## **MEAT IN PASTA**

I'd like to report an incident to you which I think is worthy of being in your news magazine. I'm a Hindu Indian American who is a strict vegetarian. A month ago, I was eating a Lipton pasta product. It had a very "meaty" taste to it. I checked the ingredients again and there were no meat products listed. However, it did have a "natural flavors" listing, where I thought meat could be. When I called the company, a representative basically told me that if I wanted to avoid eating meat, I shouldn't eat Lipton pastas, and that most probably there was meat in the natural flavors. I complained to her and asked why that was

with love and she took a spiritual name of Gayatri. His family in India has welcomed her.

I run a Hindu center since 1966 in Delaware and have initiated many Americans in the Mantra Recitation. Last year, a South Korean young man told me that he wanted to be a Hindu. I initiated him in the Mantra ceremony and gave him the spiritual name of Haridas. I also had a South American man come to me and tell me he wanted to become a Brahmin. I said, "Do you know what you are asking me to do? Do you feel you are qualified?" He said he was ready and more than qualified. I gave him Diksha and named him Gopala. To me both these young men are more Hindus than many Hindus and Brahmins we know.

There are some Hindus who are so arrogant and feel so superior and clean that they will not accept others into Hindu fold. They are now becoming a minority.

You are what you choose to become and life you live, and the thoughts you believe in, not where you were born.

legal and she told me because meat is not a common allergen, they do not have to reveal that a meat product is in the natural flavors, artificial flavors, or flavors listing. I asked her how this could be of any comfort to strict vegetarians like me, or those who are restricted in what meat they consume, like Hindus, Jains, Muslims and Jews but she really didn't have a response. I complained in a letter to Lipton and three weeks later, received a response from management telling me the same thing that the phone representative told me.

On a hunch, I began contacting other companies. Most of them either use the excuse that their recipes change too often to keep track of what's in their "flavors" listing, (an excuse that should be very unnerving to any consumer, vegetarian or not), but others have told me whether their flavors are meat based.

One of the most shocking finds was the Campbell's Company. They own Prego spaghetti sauces and many other labels. I was told that there is NOT a single Prego spaghetti sauce that is "U.S. Vegetarian," and only TWO soups are vegetarian. A brief excerpt of that letter, that should be of

interest to your readers, is enclosed at the end of my letter.

Finally, in conducting further research, I've found an organization of attorneys that has been in the process of petitioning the FDA to force companies to fully disclose what their flavors consist of. The link is <http://www.veggielawyers.org/>.

As Hindu Vishwa is a socially-conscious source of news of interest to Hindus in North America, I felt the need to inform you. I hope you can provide another public service in spreading the news, increasing awareness, and protecting thousands of your readers.

Sincerely,  
Supriya Kelkar  
42010 Baintree Circle, Northville, Mi 48167.  
(734) 678-6888

-----M/M  
*Supriya Kelkar, we received your message and appreciate your taking the time to contact Campbell Soup Company about our Prego Pasta Sauce.*

*Because product ingredients change frequently, we cannot maintain current lists of products which lack certain ingredients.*

*However, the following products are considered vegetarian:*

*Campbell's Tomato Juice  
Pace Picante Sauce  
Pace Thick & Chunky Salsa  
R&W Vegetarian Vegetable Soup  
Soup At Hand Classic Tomato Soup  
Swanson Vegetable Broth  
V8 Juice  
V8 Splash Juice*

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**Reader Comments:**

**Is Hinduism on Sale?**

**Dr. Asanga Bharati**

I read the article by Dev Mukerji in the Hindu Viswa Jan-March 2003 issue on 'Improving Knowledge of Hinduism amongst Westerners'. I just am amazed at the

intrinsic inferiority complex with which the so called Hindus suffer about their Dharma. I have said 'so called' because in fact they are Vedic Hindus as all the nationals of

Hindustan that is Bharat that is India, are Hindus –Vedic-Hindus, Muslim-Hindus, Christian- Hindus, etc. whatever may be their mode of worship. Their ancestors were the same followers of Vedic Dharma, and if genetic theory is true, same blood flows in their veins as of the Vedic Hindus. The Gotra System of geneology of the Vedic Hindus goes to prove that.

The PRACTICAL ideas suggested by Mr. Mukerji are frivolous and a reflection of the utter inferiority complex Vedic Hindus are suffering almost in every field, not only Dharma. Vedic Hinduism is not a religion in the sense modern religion is understood these days. Hindus, that is Indians, have no faith in anything of theirs- be it religion, literature, culture, civilization, even themselves, unless they get the seal of Westerners to approve it. How ridiculous it appears when a well-known Indian author says, “Kalidas as the Shakespeare of ancient Sanskrit literature or people calling Gita the Bible of Hindus.” This is the result of 1500 years of slavery of the unfortunate land, Bharat, that slavery has become ingrained in their DNA. And it has become more so after the political Independence of the country.

Why should Mr. Mukerji ask a Muslim or a Christian about Hinduism? He should ask them about their own religion. How many of them know true Islam and true Christianity? Ask them Who is Allah? Where does He reside? How do they know Him? Who are you? Where from you have come? What is God? How to know God? Are they going to be reborn? Where will they go from here after death? Where is the Court of Allah where they will get the sentence of punishment for their bad deeds? Not even their religious leaders have any idea about their true religion, I can tell you. Or else there won't have been terrorism, violence in the name of religion. They would not go about recruiting Muslims and Christians from other faiths, mainly Hinduism. The Churchman's and the Mullahs are running a business of religion.

Ask even an illiterate Indian in Bharat, he will tell you, What is Brahman?, Who is Shiva, Vishnu, Brahma? Who is Ram, Krishna, Durga, Ganesha. It is because Vedic Hinduism has a philosophy of life which the people live. There is no philosophy behind Islam or Christianity. They have only commandments on the authority of some individuals called Prophet. There are no commandments in Vedanta but commitments which instill self-discipline amongst the Hindus. If somebody tells you of Gujarat riots or Babri Masjid in India, it is not because of teachings of Vedic Hinduism but because what they have learnt from Muslims and Churchman's – to pay back in their own coin.

What a funny suggestion Mr. Mukerji makes of marketing Hinduism amongst Westerners? Vedic Hinduism is not a marketing commodity, he should know. It is Dharma, a Faith in the Almighty. Vedic Dharma is not on sale. Temples are not the Malls where you display the Idols of Deities. They are Gods, they are the Reality, the Truth beyond the understanding of the common Westerners or Muslims. Muslim–Hindus and Christian- Hindus understand that. They may not profess or confess openly but most of them have belief in these Deities. I had a old Muslim mason to work in my House in Delhi. He told me that “ I believe in Devi, Devtas. My grand daughter had small pox. She was miserable. I, then, prayed to the Mata and she got better.” I have seen Christian-Hindus going to Hanuman Temple for worship. What I mean to say that the faith in the ancient Vedic Dharma is there in the simple and virtuous Hindus of all denominations in India. The environment created by the dirty politics has perpetrated the divisions created by the foreign rulers for their own ends.

I would like the Vedic Hindus to know that Vedic Hinduism or Vedanta is not a narrow lane with cul de sac. It is a open multilane highway. Every one has a choice to choose his or her lane to drive at his/her own speed to reach their destinations. The highest goal

is to attain the Supreme Truth, Brahman. Many who have other goals, will definitely reach their goal as Bhagwan Krishna has said in Gita in Chapter 7/ 20-23:

Many, their knowledge plundered away by so many desires, resort to other deities, undertaking this and that observance, impelled thereto by their own nature.

Whatever form or aspect of mind a devotee wishes to worship with faith, towards that very form or aspect of Mine I establish his unshaken devotion.

Endowed with that faith, he endeavors to practice the worship of the same; thereby he gains the fulfillment of those very wishes provided by Me.

But the fruit of theirs, whose wisdom is thus limited, comes to an end. Those who sacrifice to the deities go to the deities. Those who are devoted to Me come to Me.

My advice to the Vedic Hindus is shed off the inferiority you suffer from because of the ignorance about the ancient eternal Vedic Dharma. All the religions of the world have emerged from it. The grains of those faiths lie in Vedanta – be it Christianity not Churchianity, be it Islam or any other. Acquire true and deeper knowledge of your own Dharma. It is said that the wife of another person appears more attractive than your own. 'Duar ke dhol suhavne' – distant drums sound melodious.

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## **Back to Basics: Nature Talk INDU JAIN**

My maternal aunt is 90. To this day she continues to offer water to the Tulsi plant in her courtyard, every morning. It's touching. It shows how the concept of 'living with nature' is woven into our lives.

Concern for the environment may appear a new concept today, but we in India have been worshipping/ revering Nature since time immemorial. The hymns of the Vedas extol the great power and life-giving attributes of Nature.

Whether it is a tulsi chaura in a courtyard or the worship of Vat Vriksha by married women praying for a happy conjugal life or the planting of a Peepal tree before one's home — they are all part of the fabric of our life. We have a hoary tradition of venerating trees, plants and vegetation.

Our seers and saints gave us key mantras for our happy survival on this planet. They customized the worship of vegetation in religions rituals. We have been traditionally offering prayers to and worshipping plants of great medicinal value, like the tulsi, amla and neem. Our ancestors must have come

to know of their importance through experience and collective wisdom. But they were also scholars who understood human psychology. They knew that if dictated to, no one would take care to consciously safeguard the environment. Preaching hardly brings the desired results — as we can see, speeches delivered by political and other leaders haven't really made much impact in stirring people into protecting the environment.

The guiding force of life for us is dharma. Dharma shows us the right path. It keeps us on the right track. So regard for the environment was made part of our dharma. The ancients made it a religious duty to adore plants and vegetation. When it is your religious duty, you do not question its relevance, you do not argue about why you should do it. You simply follow instructions. Thus, we protected our jungles not because some leaders had launched a campaign to do so — we did so simply because this is the way we were taught to live life.

Our ancestors taught us to love all living creatures and animals around us. Our love and concern for Nature is not confined to plants and vegetation only; it shows deep

feeling for all the creatures around us. We even worship them. In Hindu mythology, gods have incarnated into different animals. The cow, the monkey, even the small rat, ugly owl and dancing peacock — all of them are either avatars of our gods or are related to them in some way. The snake, the crow — the list is endless and covers almost all members of the animal kingdom.

Today, there is a tendency among some 'activists' to trivialize the important issue of animal protection by using publicity gained for self-aggrandizement. However, genuine concern for animals needs to be encouraged and greater public awareness should be created to enable wider participation in eco-friendly activity.

Our love and concern for animals emerge out of two basic postulates of Indian philosophy. One, that like us, every plant

and living being is the ansha or part of the one Param Brahma, the Omnipotent One, and two, that born of the one earth mother all of them have equal right on all resources. So they are like our own siblings. All life forms have a symbiotic relationship — we are all linked together and our actions are bound to have an effect on our environment and other living beings.

We will have to re-inject this philosophy into our lifestyle — of venerating Nature, of protecting and respecting other life forms and our environs. Political grandstanding and symbolic gestures simply won't do. We will have to eternalize the basic mantra that we will survive only when all others survive on this earth.

*(The article was published in Times of India on June, 5 to celebrate Environment Day)*

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## **NEWS ITEMS OF INTEREST**

### **Balinese Hindus Celebrate "Nyepi" with Living People**

Source: The Age (Melbourne)

JAKARTA, INDONESIA, April 2, 2003: His trial has yet to begin, but a giant effigy of alleged Bali bomber, Amrozi, was facing ritual execution by fire last night on the eve of the Hindu festival of Nyepi. Normally the giant bamboo and papier-mâché monster dolls burnt across the Hindu island of Bali represent figures from Balinese and Hindu stories. But the events in Bali on October 12 have provided an addition to the villains in this year's celebrations, according to I Wayan Suarjaya, the director-general of Hindu and Buddhist affairs in Indonesia's Department of Religion. This year appeared to be the first time some of the terrifying dolls, called Ogoh-ogoh, were modeled on living people, including Amrozi. Mr. Wayan Suarjaya said he believed the inclusion of Amrozi was "probably because the bomb that rocked Bali has deeply scarred the Balinese." Although Indonesia is overwhelmingly Muslim, with just 2 per cent of people Hindu, the whole country enjoys Nyepi, as everyone gets a public holiday. But only in Bali will the start of this Hindu new year, called Saka 1925, be celebrated according to the set of austere traditions. On the streets, traditional Balinese security men will ensure nothing disturbs the serenity of Nyepi, when everyone observes a day of silence. Hindus throughout the country are expected to spend the day reviewing their lives and the course of their religion in preparation for a fresh start to the year.

### **A Handy Guide and Description for Blessing Your Car**

Source: <http://members.tripod.com/~jap5/newcar/carpuja.html>

NEW YORK, USA, May 25, 2002: Hindus bless all implements or items to be used for daily life, protecting them from bad influences and blessing them in God's name. This is true of things like homes, cars and motorized vehicles of all types. Emigration hasn't hampered the tradition, and

every temple in the US is prepared to do such blessings, one of the most popular of which is for a new car. At this website a devotee shares an instructive step-by-step description of her car blessing ceremony, complete with photos.

**How The Bhagavad-Gita Gita Influenced Romantic Poets**

<http://sulekha.com/redirectnh.asp?cid=307870>

ALLAHABAD, INDIA, April 21, 2003: Romantic poets like Wordsworth, Coleridge, Shelley, Keats, Byron, Blake, Southey and Walter Scott were influenced by the philosophy of the Bhagavad-Gita Gita, according to a 20-year study undertaken by a scholar of English Literature. "Bhagavad-Gita Gita and the English Romantic Movement, a Study in Influence," authored by Dr. Krishan Gopal Srivastava and published by Macmillan India, is receiving rave reviews. It has already sold more than 500 copies following its release last year. The book presents evidence linking romantic poetry with the Gita. Many obscure passages of romantic poets become clear when understood in the light of the Gita. The concept of rebirth, karma, universal soul, immortality and incarnation make the fascination of romantic poets with the Gita apparent. The book establishes that all the great romantics like Blake, Wordsworth, Coleridge, Shelley and Keats had not only read Wilkins Gita, but imbibed its spirit, which found creative expression in their great poems.

**New Delhi Turns to Ancient Practice of Rainwater Harvesting**

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A42725-2003Apr26.html>

NEW DELHI, INDIA, April 26, 2003: With a current population of 14 million and growing by at least 500,000 each year, New Delhi's need for water has become paramount. If current rates of water consumption continue, conservationists predict that groundwater will be depleted by 2020. In an effort to find a solution, municipal water authorities are encouraging everyone to participate in rainwater harvesting, an elegant but simple practice rooted in the traditions of ancient India. Rainwater harvesting involves channeling water from rooftops or storm drains into sand-lined underground boxes called soak pits. Water that would otherwise run off through storm sewers then percolates through the soil, replenishing natural aquifers several hundred feet below the surface. Krishan Saigal, a former official at a United Nations-funded environment agency, heads a resident's association in Panchshila Park where they have tried rainwater harvesting. Mr. Saigal says, "The project has been so successful that the water table has risen three feet in less than a year. I would never have believed it, but it works."

**Ayurveda Newsletter Available Online**

Source: <http://chakrapaniayurveda.com/newsletter.html>

Produced every two weeks and available for free subscription at "source," this newsletter focuses on "Improving and popularizing Ayurveda and all the holistic systems of medicine." This October 1 edition features an article written by Dr. Vijay Shekhar Annambhotla on the concept of immunity in Ayurveda. Doctor Annambhotla categorizes immunity into three types: Sahaja or congenital and natural; Kalaja or the time of day, season and one's age; and Yuktikruta or acquired. Quoting the article, "Yuktikruta Bala represents acquired immunity in which disease can be defended against through Ayurveda. Ayurveda focuses on three plans for enhancing immunity."

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**Support A Child:** A project of VHP-A since 1985, this program provides safe home, education and basic medical care to young needy children, mostly in Vanvasi (tribal) areas of Bharat. It costs \$250 per year per child. You will get a picture and details of child's progress. Please send your tax deductible contribution to: Support A Child, VHP of America, 217 Deerfield Dr., Berlin, CT 06037.

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