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Vol. XXXXVIII  
No. 4

October - December 2018

# HINDU VISHWA

## Vishwa Dharma Digest

## The Core of Hindu Thought

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National Office:  
P. O. Box 2009,  
Natick, MA 01760

www.vhp-america.org

Tel.: 732-744-0851  
office@vhp-america.org

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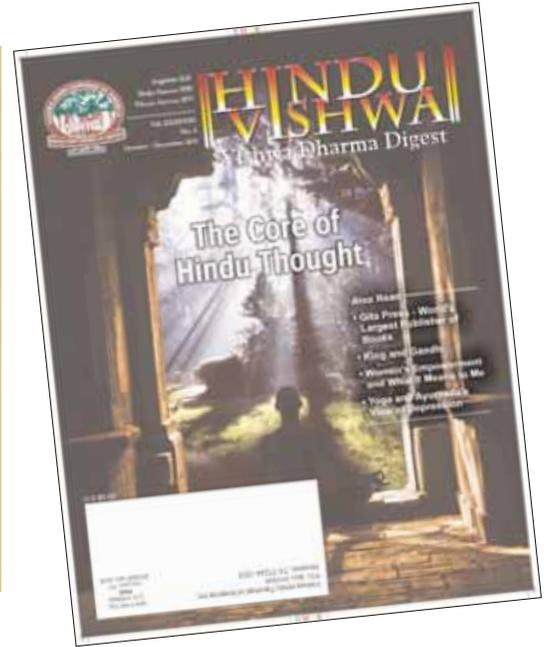
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ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय

वेदोक्तं १८-४७

*sreyan sva-dharmo vigunah para-dharmat svanusthitat  
svabhava-niyatam karma kurvam napnoti kilbisam*

**Bhagvad Gita 18.47**

Ones righteous duty imperfectly done is better than  
another's duty done perfectly; by performing actions  
predicated according to ones own nature sinful one does not  
incur sinful reactions.



## Editorial Team

**Managing Editor:** Shyam Tiwari      srtiwari@hotmail.com  
**Editor:** Ronica (Rajranee)  
Jaipershad      ronica@ronica.com  
**Copy Editor:** Sabitha Venugopal      sabitha8081@gmail.com  
**Advisor:** Dr. Abhay Asthana      abhayaji@gmail.com

## About the HINDU VISHWA

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**For Advertising inquiries please contact:**

Shyam Tiwari @ 7709622669 or email: srtiwari@hotmail.com

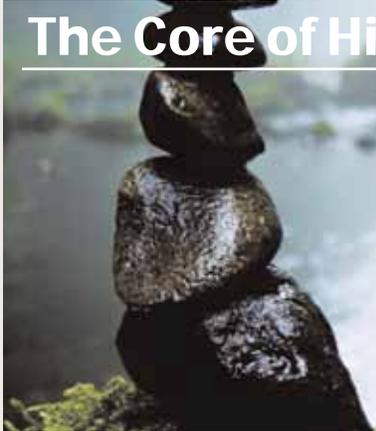
World Hindu Council of America (VHPA), founded in 1970 and incorporated in the state of New York in 1974, is an independent, nonprofit, tax-exempt and volunteer-based charitable organization serving the needs of Hindu community in USA. It aims to build a dynamic and vibrant Hindu society rooted in the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

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- ★ We are all related
- ★ Mother, Father, Teacher and Guest are Gods
- ★ God is Universe

#### Editorial

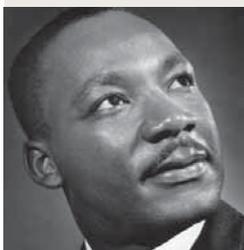
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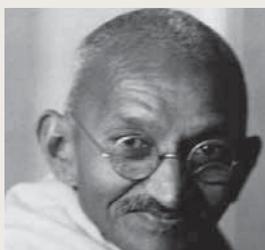
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# The significance of Truth - The "honest truth"

**T**here is a theory, "with good reason, and for a good cause, or a positive outcome", that telling a lie is ok". What are your thoughts? Is it ok to lie? When is it ok to lie? And, when is it ok to accept lies as the "truth".

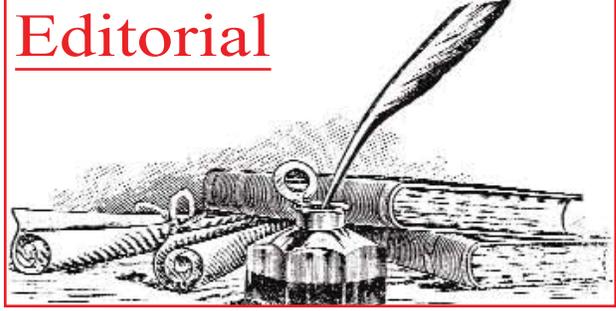
The Western Dictionary Defines truth as: "that which is true, or in accordance with fact or reality." Addressing the truth is by no means an unfamiliar topic, and the word truth, is probably one of the most frequently used, on a daily basis. I begin with the following quote from the great Mahatma Gandhiji: "Hinduism is a relentless pursuit of Truth. Truth is God, and if today it has become moribund, inactive, or, irresponsive to growth, it is because we are fatigued; and as soon as the fatigue is over, Hinduism will burst upon the world with a brilliance perhaps unknown before".

I choose to reiterate the importance of Truth, because in this materialistic, competitive, and "power grabbing" world in which we live, we often hear less of the truth (that which can be proven), and more of "made-up stories"/lies, as our fellow humans strive to impress, gain wealth, and be empowered, for the sake of personal gains. With so many proven lies being told, trust becomes thwarted, and faith depleted. There are some who begin to believe these lies, to be true, and, often find themselves totally entrapped, only to be saddened, and depressed, once the 'real' truth emerges.

Along with truth, comes trust. "Truth" defines and defends spoken words, and "Trust" invokes faith which evolves, because of our belief and conviction. We often hear the terms, "Tell the truth"; "I am telling the truth"; "I swear, it's the truth"; and so on, as individuals strive to defend their utterances. When there are doubts, truth can sometimes be perceived as lies, causing trust to wane. Some might say that unless "it" can be proven, "it" is not the truth. But, it is not always possible to prove a truth or a lie. So, upon our own insistence to believe, we turn to faith and trust.

The following words resonate with me: "*Satyameva*

## Editorial



*Jayate*!" This is a mantra from the ancient Hindu scripture, Mundaka Upanishad. Following the independence of India, it was adopted as the national motto of India on the 26th of January 1950. *Satyameva Jayate* is an ancient Sanskrit saying that means "truth alone triumphs."

So, if we know that "truth alone triumphs", (synonymous with, "the truth will always be known"), then, why do we find so many still telling lies? And more important, why do we succumb to believing the lies to be true? Is it because unless we can prove that it is a lie, we must believe it to be the truth? Or, are we so ignorant and gullible, that we believe upon hearing; versus, not seeing, or without proof?

I must admit, that as a child, "telling the truth" was engrained in my brain. If we were caught telling lies, no matter how small, we were severely punished. Sometimes, even if we told the truth, we were still severely punished. So, to avoid such punishment, we told a version that we 'thought' our parents would believe, even if it meant lying; knowing fully well, that if they ever found out that we lied, our punishment would be more severe. After a couple of these episodes, we learnt not to lie, and to immediately tell the truth, even if we

knew that we would face unwanted consequences, which were less severe, because we told the 'truth'. In general, facts are so much easier to prove, than fiction. And, it was a lot easier to defend the truth, than to defend a lie. I have heard some say that to defend a lie requires a lie and over time, you build a huge problem for yourself. To be truthful provides for a more peaceful and less stressful life, and will make the world a much better and peaceful place for all!



सत्यमेव जयते



# The Core of Hindu Thought

## A Practitioner's View



There is ONLY God. From the smallest sub atomic particle to the infinite universe.

### **There is ONLY God**

A 14th century saint in India said, "Truth is that which is simple, that which is natural." For the Hindu sages the conception of "God" is indeed very simple. *Upanishads*, the ancient philosophical texts, state, "Isha-vasyam-idam sarvam," meaning there is ONLY God. From the smallest sub atomic particle to the infinite universe, it is all pervaded by God. All that is known and all that is unknown is God. Please note, that the Sages do not say there is ONE god. They say there is ONLY God. This subtle distinction is at the core of all Hindu thought. From this one axiomatic Truth, many corollaries follow, that have shaped the Hindu way of life, their world view and their practices.

### **Eternal Cycle of Creation, Preservation and Dissolution**

All is God, so there can be no beginning and no end in space or in time. Time is cyclical. There is order and rhythm in the universe. There are cycles in nature. There is constant transformation occurring around us and within us. This unending cycle of creation, preservation,

and dissolution is represented by three aspects of Reality: *Brahma* for creation, *Vishnu* for preservation, and *Shiva* for dissolution. Along with them are the three female aspects: *Saraswati* for learning, *Lakshmi* for prosperity and *Durga* for strength. Whereas the male form signifies the inert, potent matter, the female form represents the dynamic, kinetic energy. They are inseparable and totally complement each other.

### **Everything is Interconnected**

All is God, so it means everything is interconnected. God is both the material and the efficient cause of the universe. *Paramatma* in Sanskrit is the Supreme Consciousness and we as individual *Atmans* carry the same spark of divinity in us. You and I are an integral part, a piece, of the Totality. Therefore, "Aham Brahamasmi, I am God," and, "Tat Twam Asi, You are God." Each one of us is *Vishnu* entrusted with protection and sustenance of this planet. And each one of us is *Shiva* responsible for conserving, recycling and reusing the resources of this planet. It is an organic unity. That is what *Yoga* means, to integrate, to become aware of this



*Lord Shiva's Tandava is considered the source of the cosmic cycle of creation, preservation and dissolution.*

interdependence between everything in the universe, the oneness of it all.

### **All Names and Forms are valid**

Because all is God, all names and forms are valid manifestations of the Reality. The Vedas say, "*Ekam Sat Viprah Bahuda Vadanti.*" Meaning Truth is one, but the Sages call it by various names. No wonder the Hindus have thousands of colorful representations or symbols of the Divine form. In reality the Hindus reach out to the formless God behind these icons. Just as vapor, liquid water and solid ice are indeed the same substance in different states. So it is with God. Gold in any form is gold.

### **All Paths are valid though not the same**

This freedom of visualization and expression leads to another great Truth that all paths leading to God must be equally valid. They may not be the same but potentially lead to the same Truth. The Hindu acknowledges and respects all spiritual traditions of the world. History is evidence that while the Hindus have sheltered all who came to their land and shores: marauders and plunderers included, they never ventured beyond their borders with swords or guns to impose their will on others. The Hindus do not convert and do not like to be converted. Conversion by any means is violence.

### **Everything is Essential and Sacred**

For the Hindu everything is sacred and essential: the rivers, mountain, stone, plant, tree, snake and another

human being; hence the tradition of acceptance, harmony, peace and compassion. There is no sin and there is no evil. The Hindu respects all and is forever bound in gratitude. The child, when she wakes up in the morning prays to mother earth and asks for forgiveness before stepping on the ground from her bed. The farmer prays in gratitude to the earth, before inserting the plough in the soil.

### **We are all related**

Being part of the same Reality, we are all related. The ancient Hindu Sages in their all inclusive and bold vision proclaimed: "*Vasudhaiv kutumbhakam,*" the whole world is a family. In Atharva Veda, the planet earth is described as a nest that we all live in. Thus, how can we hurt any creature, animal or human? This is the basis of

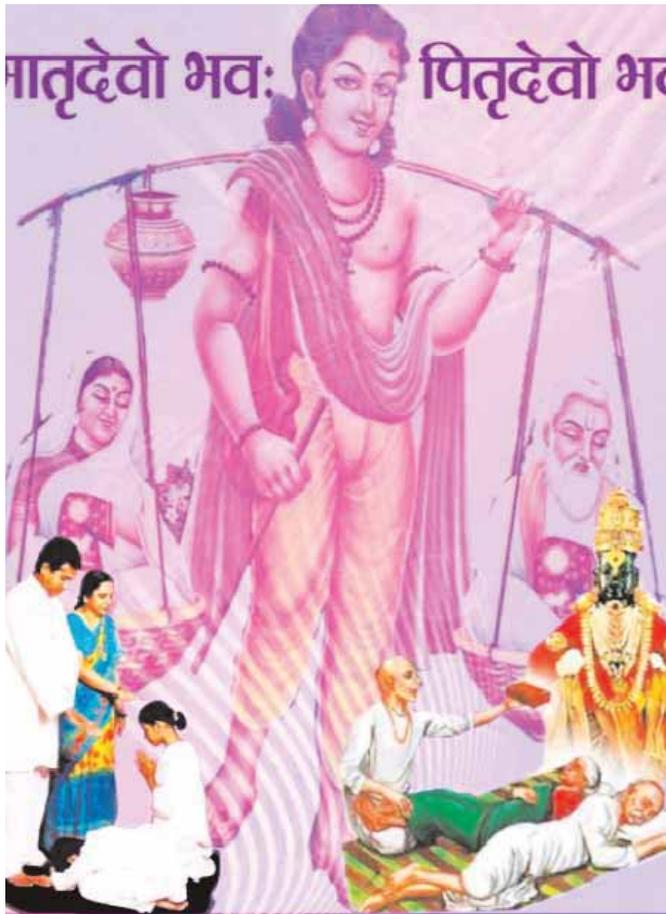


the principle of non-injury, non-violence. The glory of life is in compassion and serving others.

### **Mother, Father, Teacher and Guest are Gods**

Because all is God, the mother, the father and the teacher are Gods. The Vedas in the valedictory address to graduating students state: "*Matru devo bhav.*" Regard your Mother as God. "*Pitru Devo Bhav.*" Regard your father as God. "*Acharya Devo Bhava.*" Regard your teacher as God. All this is understandable. But then they add a final instruction. "*Athithi Devo Bhava.*" Regard your guest as God. The one who comes to your house uninvited is God. It is this acceptance of even a stranger as God that is remarkably unique about the Hindu tradition.

Let me share a real story. We were visiting a remote forest village in India where a single teacher school that we support is being run. After the program, the head of the village invited us to his home. He insisted that we were his guests and could not leave without eating. His wife served us food and then went inside. We started eating while he sat and shared more stories with us. Their two children stood in a corner. When he noticed that, he asked them to go inside and eat. They did but came back shortly. When asked again, the older one came forward and whispered, "There is no more food. This was all we



had." My wife and I looked at each other and our eyes welled up with tears. That is when we realized what the statement, "regard your guest as God" truly meant.

### God is Universe

In conclusion, it is not God's Universe. For the Hindu, God is Universe. Truly understanding this statement and then living in a way that is consistent with this Truth is



the purpose of our lives. Hindu tradition is not a rigid belief system. It is based on knowing, self experimentation, realization and practice, day in day out.

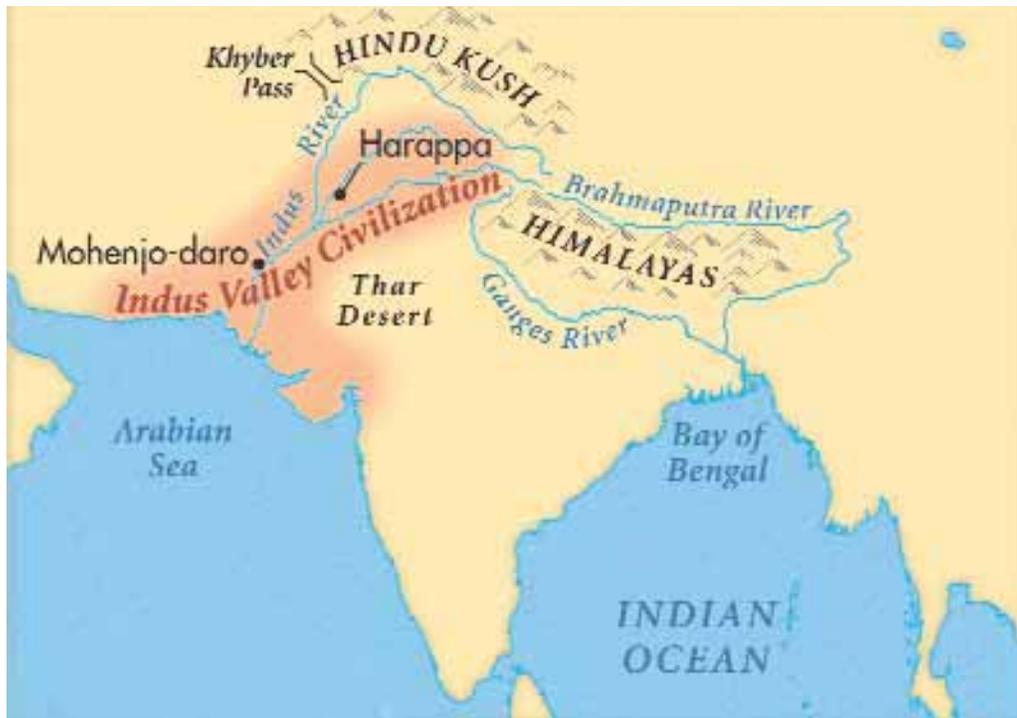
And that in a nutshell is the Spirit and the Spirituality of the Hindus.



### SIA's Seva work

*As part of Seva In America (SIA), VHPA did Seva work at Loomis, CA on December 23rd, 2018 and distributed \$25 gift cards to evacuees of CA camp fire.*





# Contours of Indic Civilization III

**By Dhiru Shah**

*Director/Treasurer, WAVES*

*Editor's Note: Below is the concluding part of the three part paper.*

## **The British Empire:**

Though India was still recovering from one thousand years of Islamic plunder, loot, genocide and destruction of Hindu temples and monuments, it still had a much greater industrial, manufacturing and engineering base than Europe when the British came. As per Angus Maddison, India's GDP was 24% of the world GDP.

The British racist imperial rule of India during the rule of East India Company and subsequently by the British government in England from 1857 was marked by the total destruction of the Indian economy, agriculture, and social institutions including education, ruthless suppression of social and political rights, subversion of the social and religious order, massacres of innocent people and loot and transfer of huge Indian wealth to England.

When the British left India in 1947, its GDP share

had fallen to a whopping 4% as shown by Angus Maddison above, thereby turning India into one of the poorest third world countries with nearly 90% living below the poverty line.

The Marquess of Salisbury, as Secretary of State of India in the 1860s & 1870s said: "*As India is to be bled, the lancet should be directed to those parts where the blood is congested... (rather than) to those which are already feeble for want of it*".<sup>[1]</sup>

The following analysis in brief examines how the British destroyed systematically the very soul of India during their rule of 200 years.

**1. Textile Industry:** India used to export its textiles to China, Japan, Europe including England and the Middle east. The British destroyed India's textile manufacturing first by smashing Indian weavers' looms and breaking their thumbs and then imposing 70-80% tariffs on export and simultaneously, flooding the Indian market by cheap British textiles. The ruin of the textile industry made weavers beggars and many drifted to agriculture.

**2. Steel Industry:** India was a great manufacturer and exporter of the finest quality steel, known as 'Wootz'



The British conquest of India was the invasion and destruction of a high civilization by a trading company (the British East India company) utterly without scruple or principle, careless of art and greedy of gain, over-running with fire and sword a country temporarily disordered and helpless, bribing and murdering, annexing and stealing, and beginning that career of illegal and 'legal' plunder which has now (1930) gone on ruthlessly for one hundred and seventy years.

- Wil I Durant

American writer, historian (1885- 981)

steel as mentioned earlier. Stealing the Indian steel manufacturing technology, Britain set up the steel industry in Sheffield and closed the Indian steel furnaces and destroyed the Indian metallurgical industries by the end of the 18th century.

**3. Shipping and Shipbuilding Industry:** The British ship builders could not compete with the Indian counterpart both in terms of quality and price and therefore a law banning Indian shipbuilding was passed by the Parliament. Further, Indian ships were denied the privilege of being treated as 'British Registered' by 1841 law, resulting in the total destruction of this thriving industry.

**4. Currency Manipulation:** The British manipulated the currency by depreciating the Rupee to accommodate the British account deficits. The Indian Rupee was the strongest currency in the world until the 17th century but with the British manipulation its value was reduced to a fraction by the end of the 19th century.

**5. Source of Revenue:** India was the biggest source of Britain's revenue by the end of the 19th century. India became the biggest purchaser of British products and the source of highly paid British civil

servants and Indian army soldiers. India also paid for fighting wars from Burma to Mesopotamia. Dadabhai Naoroji argued that from 1835 to 1872 India imported goods worth only about 943,000,000 Sterling Pounds against exports valued at \$1,430,000,000 Pounds Sterling, leaving a balance of about 500,000,000 St. Pounds, as a total tribute India paid to England. [2] William Digby based on the official data stated that the drain of capital from India during the nineteenth century amounted to 6,080,172,021 Pounds Sterling. According to him that the non-official estimated average national income of an Indian was 2d. per head per day in 1850. [34]

**6. Revenue Collection on Agriculture:** British Administrator in Bengal, F. J. Shore testified before the House of Commons in 1857: *The fundamental principle of the English has been to make the whole Indian nation subservient, in every possible way, to the interests and benefits of themselves. They have been taxed to the utmost limit; every successive province, as it has fallen into our possession, has been made a field for higher taxation...* [33]

The British revenue collectors strictly following the rules insisted that landholders pay a fixed amount of money each month with rigorous punctuality and if the farmer's crop failed, he would still not be exempt from paying taxes. The land tax imposed averaged 80-90 per cent of the rental. These measures made farmers from landowners to landless laborers, resulting in dispossession and collapse of once-rich country's wealth and destruction of the Indian agriculture. [33]

**7. Destruction of Indian Traditional Education:** Dharampal, a Gandhian social worker carried out a



*India used to export its textiles to China, Japan, Europe including England and the Middle east.*



detailed study on the impact of the British imperial rule in India (Beautiful Tree <sup>[31]</sup>) on Indian education. As per his study of the early 19th century the British Parliamentary records: (a) The Indian education was carried out through Pathshalas and Gurukuls which were supported by revenue contributed by the entire community. As per the British government surveys on state of education in Bengal 1835-38, there existed about 100,000 village schools in Bengal and Bihar around 1830s. Max Mueller asserted, on the strength of official documents and missionary reports, that there were 80,000 schools in Bengal or one for every 400 of the population. (b) The content of studies was better than what was studied in England; the method of school teaching was superior, and it is this very method which is said to have helped introduction of popular education in England; (c) the average percentage of Brahmins, Kshatriyas and Vaishya students was no higher than 40% and the rest of 60% of students were from Shudras and lower castes. In several cases, Shudras formed 70% of students in some districts; (d) As compared to India, British education till 1800 was very inferior on all accounts. The number attending schools was around 40,000 in 1792. Higher education was available to only the upper-class aristocracy; (e) There were many institutions of higher learning including universities throughout India, (f) It clearly establishes that the literacy rate in India before the arrival of the British was probably very high, in the region of 70-80 percent. The British left India with 16% literacy. The deliberate and ruthless economic exploitation of India by the British led to the decimation of Indian agriculture and industry which in turn uprooted and destroyed the sophisticated village economy on which the successful education

system depended and flourished.

**8. Famines:** Due to economic policies ruthlessly enforced by Britain, between 30 to 35 million Indians needlessly died of starvation during the Raj. Millions of tons of wheat were exported from India to Britain even as famine raged. Will Durant: "*Behind all these as the fundamental source of the terrible famines in India, lies such merciless exploitation...*" <sup>[4]</sup> Viceroy Lord Lytton notoriously issued order prohibiting any reduction in the price of food during a famine. He instructed district officers to 'discourage relief works in every possible way... mere distress is not a sufficient reason for opening relief work.' <sup>[30]</sup> Winston Churchill in 1943

I know it is said in missionary meetings that we conquered India to raise the level of the Indians. That is cant. We conquered India as an outlet for the goods of Britain. We conquered India by the sword, and by the sword we shall hold it. I am not such a hypocrite as to say we hold India for the Indians. We went with a yardstick in one hand and a sword in the other, with the latter we continue to hold them helpless while we force the former down their throats.



- Sir William Hicks,  
British Home Minister - 1928



famine deliberately ordered the diversion of food from starving Indian civilians to well-supplied British soldiers and even to top up European stockpiles in Greece and elsewhere. He said: 'The famine was their own fault for breeding like rabbits.'. He also asked: 'Why hasn't Gandhi died yet?' [33]

**9. Massacres and Cruelties of British:** During the revolt of 1857, thousands of mutineers were killed by mouths of cannons. Mass hanging were the norm. Gang rape by the police was not uncommon. The brutal massacres of about 1500 peaceful people in Jallianwala Bagh in 1919 by the order of Brigadier General Reginald Dyer is well-known.

**10. Forced Migration:** Transportation and Indentured Labor: [33] Between 1825-1872, Indian convicts (for theft to indebtedness) made up the bulk of the labour force for all public works in Singapore. The plantation economy of Mauritius largely ran on slavery. Thousands of Indian farmers were driven off their land and forced into migration by taking over their fertile lands for opium cultivation.

**11. Partition of India:** The final parting kick of the British at the rime of leaving India was to divide the mother country into two halves (Indian and Pakistan) as a part of their 'divide and rule' policy.

**12.** Sir William Hicks, Home Minister stated bluntly in 1928: "I know it is said in missionary meetings that we conquered India to raise the level of the Indians. That is cant. We conquered India as an outlet for the goods of Britain. We conquered India by the sword, and by the sword we shall hold it. I am not such a hypocrite as to say we hold India for the Indians. We went with a yardstick in one hand and a sword in the other, with the

latter we continue to hold them helpless while we force the former down their throats." [33]

Will Durant: 'The Story of Civilization' went to India in 1930. His short book 'The case for India' a classic. He wrote: "*The British conquest of India was the invasion and destruction of a high civilization by a trading company (the British East India company) utterly without scruple or principle, careless of art and greedy of gain, over-running with fire and sword a country temporarily disordered and helpless, bribing and murdering, annexing and stealing, and beginning that career of illegal and 'legal' plunder which has now (1930) gone on ruthlessly for one hundred and seventy years.*" (P.2) [4]

### Conclusions

1. India paid the heavy price of subjugation, genocide and slavery of more than 1200 years because of the disunity amongst the ruling kings and people in general. Looking at the current scenario in India today, Indians have still learnt nothing or unlearnt anything from their dreadful history. As the old saying goes, those who do not learn from their past are condemned to repeat it.

2. Distortion of the Indian history by the Marxist historians and Bollywood has played havoc on the current young Indian generation which has made them alien from their own ancient culture and traditions.

3. Pseudo-secularism propagated by the Indian politicians and liberal/leftist media has left the majority community vulnerable from the destabilizing forces from within and foreign enemies.

4. Finally, let us learn from Sun Tzu: "Knowing the other and knowing oneself, in one hundred battles no danger. Not knowing the other and knowing oneself, one victory for one loss. Not knowing the other and not knowing oneself, in every battle certain defeat." [4]



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# Gita Press - World's Largest Publisher of Books

**By Renu Gupta**

**O**ver two decades ago, my mentor, the legendary Hindi writer Shri Chandra Prakash Singh told me there were three great saints who saved Hindu Dharma in the 20th century:

1. Shri Prabhupadji who propagated Krishna Bhakti through ISKCON in the west
2. Shri Jaydayal Goenkaji, affectionately known as Shri Seth ji
3. Shri Hanuman Prasad Poddarji, affectionately known as Shri Bhaiji, who through the establishment of the institution of "Gita Press" and "Kalyan" magazine in Bharat itself.

Recently I came across a book by Akshaya Mukul which portrayed the Gita Press in a very negative light. He wrote. "Two Marwaris saved Hindu Dharma." This statement forced me to study further about Gita Press.

The Gita Press was established on April 29, 1923 in the city of Calcutta (now Kolkata). It later shifted its base to Gorakhpur, in Uttar Pradesh. This shift took

place as Shri Ghanshyam Das Jalan, one of the earlier proponents of the Gita Press, had business interests in Gorakhpur. Shri Seth ji, a proponent of the study of Bhagwat Gita, wanted a compact, and edited copy of the Shrimad Bhagwad Gita, with commentary in simple Hindi. Shri Seth ji believed that the Shrimad Bhagwad Geeta should be available to all men and women, and with explanations that could be understood. After having multiple printings of various editions of the Bhagwat Gita, (with all of them having several shortcomings), Shri Seth ji came to believe that it was necessary to form his own publishing press, for the Bhagwat Gita and thus the term "Gita Press" came in existence.

### Why is "Gita Press" unique?

Two Marwari businessmen, and great spiritualists came together and put forward a unique and sustainable business model for the Gita Press. When Shri Bhaiji with Shri Jamanalal Bajaj presented the first issue of



Kalyan to Mahatma Gandhi in Sabarmati Ashram, Gandhi gave three very valuable suggestions for Kalyan and Gita Press:

- 1) Do not take any donations, financial help or advertisement.
- 2) Do not print biography of living person.
- 3) Do not print book reviews.

The Gita Press has been faithful in following these principles. In my own personal experience, when there was a temporary shutdown of the Gita press, the management of the Gita Press refused to consider my personal offer of financial assistance.

**Financial Foundation of the Gita Press:**

Shri Sethji very skillfully crafted the financial plan and long term financial security of the Gita Press. The primary goal of the Gita Press was to

provide Hindu scriptures at an extremely affordable cost, so that anyone could afford them. The purpose of the Gita Press was not to make a profit, but to provide every home a copy of the Ramayana and Bhagwad Gita.

To reduce the cost of printing, Shri Sethji acquired a life-long contract to get supplies of good quality paper, at a very reasonable price. Earlier Titagargh Paper was used to supply paper. If one notices, the paper used by Gita Press is a bright white paper, but at the same time is very light weighted.

Presently, there are approximately 450+ employees, including 200 permanent staffers. In recent years, there has been news of a strike or temporary shutdown of the Gita Press. The Gita Press pays all of its employees, according to the labor law. Gita Press has a very clear policy to employ people with dedication, devotion, and



a sense of community service.

An overwhelming majority of the staff at the Gita Press works with this spirit.

People who work at Gita Press are very courteous and simple, and dedicated to the mission of Gita Press. Gita Press does its printing in Gorakhpur, but the editorial team of

over fifteen to twenty people, is based in Varanasi. It is a unit of Gobind Bhawan Karyalaya, registered under the Societies Registration Act, 1860 (governed by the West Bengal Societies Act, 1960). The entity started with

publications in Hindi and Sanskrit, and now publishes books in English, Urdu, Telugu, Odia, Bangla, Tamil, Marathi, and Punjabi etc.

Shri Sethji established four big showrooms in Kolkata, Rishikesh, Kanpur, and Gorakhpur. All the revenue collected from the sale of these showrooms goes towards the expenses of the Gita Press. The same

arrangement is utilized till this day.

### Visiting Gita Press was a divine experience

My visit to the Gita Press was a divine experience. Personally, it felt more like a visit to an ashram, rather than visiting the standard bookstore. When one enters the Gita Press, the large gate that greets all visitors was designed by Bhai ji, carrying all of the various symbols of Hindu Dharma, and depicting a complete picture of the glorious heritage of Hindu Dharma. It felt like entering a Hindu temple.

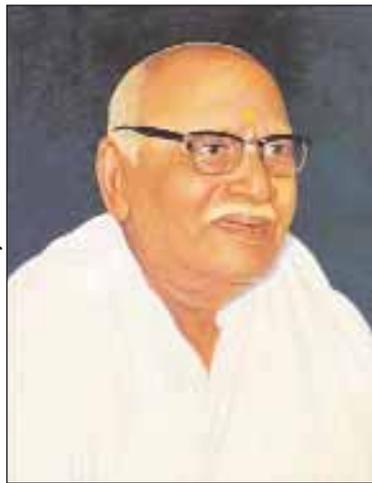
First, we went to the picture gallery, where all of the painted portraits printed by Gita Press are on display. It was a memorable experience, to see all of the 15 different portraits of Maa Durga. Gita Press has a special press dedicated for printing of the Ram Charit Manas, in all different sizes and layouts, since over 40% of total sales is that of the Ramcharit Manas. There is also one press dedicated exclusively for the printing of different editions of Shrimad Bhagwad Geeta, which is second highest selling publication. The Gita Press also has a separate section for printing color portraits.

### How books are distributed?

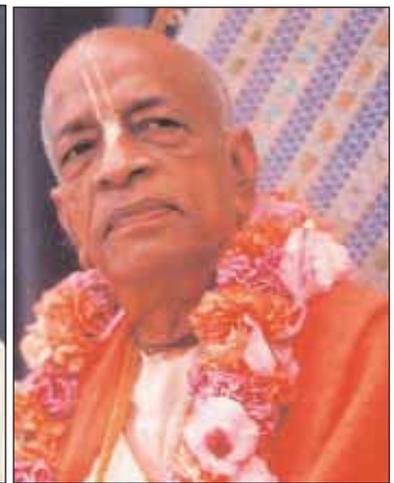
There are countless Gita Press stalls at railways stations, public festivals and events, etc. It has become very easy for anyone to buy the Ram Charitmanas, Hanuman Chalisa etc. and other books for everyday use. Besides online orders, books are distributed through Gita Press stores, mobile vans, and public outlets. Amazon will also start selling books of Gita Press in the near future.

### World's largest publisher

By the end of the 20th century, the Gita Press had sold close to 72 million copies of the Bhagwad Gita, approximately 70 million copies of Tulsidas



*Shri Hanuman Prasad Poddarji*



*Shri Prabhupadji*

Ramacharitmanas, and 19 million copies of scriptures like the Puranas and Upanishads. While most other journals of the period, whether religious, literary or political, survive only in press archives or libraries, Kalyan and its English counterpart, Kalyana-Kalpataru, both have circulation running into the several hundreds of thousands of devoted subscribers. Gita Press is the pride of all Hindus from all over the world. The Gita Press has completed almost 100 years in existence, and we all pray that this magnificent Hindu institution will continue its divine work well into the next century.



### About the Author



Submitted by  
**Renu Gupta**

West Chester, OH 45069

renurajvanshigupta@gmail.com

VHPA volunteer and Hindi Lekhak

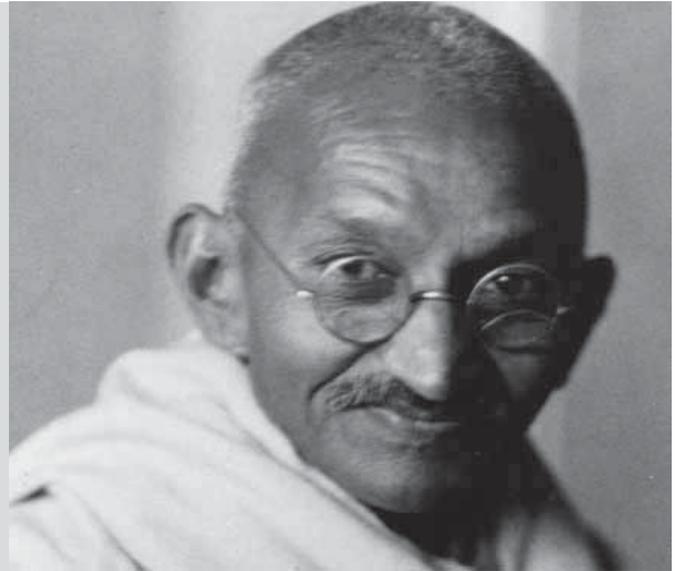


**SIA's Seva work**

**By Prof. Prabhakar G. Joshi**

**J**anuary is the month we remember a Nobel Prize winner, Dr. Martin Luther King. This writing proposes to compare Gandhi with King.

Gandhi had secured a license to practice law. However, Gandhi was not much interested in earning money by practicing law under the foreign rule in India. The government of India, which was unfortunately controlled by the British, was fully working for the benefit of the despotic British people rather than for the benefit of the people of India. Discrimination in favor of the British was rife. Gandhi could not stand the insults to basic human rights. The best medium of the freedom struggle that he introduced was 'non-violence' coupled with 'non-cooperation.' Gandhi knew that if weapons were used, the British would retaliate and nothing would be achieved except massacres. He founded his movement on humanity's capacity for suffering.



& armed British troops. Churchill wanted to crush Gandhism. But the British swords were broken and guns were silenced by Gandhi's non-violence. Non-

# King and Gandhi

Churchill, the then leader of the Conservatives in the British Parliament, showed the greatest failure of his life, when he said he never understood the power of non-violence of Mahatma Gandhi. The whole western mind was baffled by the sight of non-violent people advancing coldly in India, in the face of the hard-headed



violence changes the heart of an opponent for good, whereas violence breaks it permanently.

While Gandhi was winning, there was a rising of a social, and political leader in America -- Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. As a warrior understands a warrior, the social leader, King, understood Gandhi, much better than the British. Dr. King even went on a pilgrimage to India in 1959 to better understand Gandhi's 'non-violence' philosophy.

Gandhi's road to resistance through non-violence was somewhat easier than Dr. King's. Gandhi could muster support from the millions of non-British, and the British were about seven percent in India, whereas King's road was much muddier. King had to fight against his own countrymen. No group was actually alien like the British were in India. There were only about ten percent blacks against a majority of ninety percent non-Blacks.

Gandhi's goal was single and crystal clear - drive the British out of India. King had to change the minds of the powerful, and he had to moderate and organize his own people. Gandhi's millions of followers were far more in number (about 300 million) than Dr. King's (about 20 million). Most of the followers of Gandhi had stayed in India for generations. King's Black followers were originally imported from Africa, and did not have roots of generations, like Gandhi's followers had. Although

many Indians were poor, many of Gandhi's followers were highly educated and very rich. Nehru was born with a silver spoon in his mouth, and was a leading attorney. Examples of many other wealthy and powerful Indians are evident, whereas Dr. King's followers, were utterly poor.

At the same time, both Gandhi and King had similarities. Gandhi's march was to the sea to make the alien British allow free use of salt; and King's march was to Montgomery to win civil rights for Blacks, something that, like salt, should be free to all. Both, salt and civil rights, are nature's gifts. Gandhi would not give up his seat in a train in Africa (1893), and Rosa Park would not give up her seat in a bus in America (1955). Gandhi continued Lokmanya Tilak's slogan that "Independence is our birthright", and King pointed out that Civil Rights is everyone's birthright.

Gandhi had to fight against the dictatorship of the aliens, whereas Dr. King's road was somewhat easier, in that, he had to fight with the best democracy in the world. Gandhi's efforts to establish a unified battle faced monumental hurdles because of the many languages, and provincialism in India, whereas, such opposite forces were absent for Dr. King.



**Winston Churchill**  
*I never understood the  
power of non-violence of  
Mahatma Gandhi*

In India, the British could not put all the 400 million Indians in jail. At the same time due to the non-cooperation movement, the nation could not function if the Indians were not jailed. Thus the British had to come to terms.

Likewise here in America, the racists learned that if they did not yield to Dr. King, he would shake the whole economy, and the entire society. If the non-violent movement of Gandhi rocked the well-armed British Empire, why would it not change the racists' mind in the much more civilized America? The movement created a record of substantial achievements.

The unique medium of non-violence of Gandhi, and again vastly used by King was very successful against the atrocious British in India, and the then racists' regime in America. A revolution of values came through non-violence. And that revolution created a positive effect in other parts of the world.



*Author may be contacted via email  
joshipps@hotmail.com*

## Open more Hindu shrines in Pakistan, demands Hindu Jatha

**Yudhvir Rana, Amritsar:** Indian Hindu pilgrims have urged the Pakistan government to open more Hindu shrines and issue liberal visas to pilgrims from India so they could travel in large number to pay obeisance at historical temples. Talking to TOI after his return from Pakistan, president of Kendriya Sanatan Dharam Sabha, Shiv Partap Bajaj, said, "We had detailed discussions about opening of more Hindu shrines in and outside Paksitan's Punjab and issuance of liberal visas besides increasing the number of Hindu jathas' visit with the officials of Evacuee Trust Property Board (ETPB)."



Bajaj had led a Hindu jatha to Pakistan to pay obeisance at Kataraj cluster of temples in Chakwal district of Pakistan's Punjab. While expressing concern over unfulfilled aspirations of Hindus to visit their shrines in Pakistan due to visa constraints, he said, "When we talked to ETPB officials about our concerns, they sounded very positive and assured that they would recommended liberal visas for Hindu pilgrims, besides increasing the number of visits of our jathas." He said they had also asked the Pakistan government to restore the 'Aggarwal Dharamshala' in Lahore, which was converted into a commercial complex after the Partition. "Hindu jatha stays at Gurdwara Dera Sahib and many Hindu male devotees face problems like shaving. So, there is a need of separate accommodation for Hindu jatha in Lahore," he said.

ETPB deputy secretary for Hindu affairs Faraz Abbas told TOI over phone from Lahore that they were coming up with several development projects at Kataraj. "We have restored Sri Amar Kund and have taken strict action against nearby cement factories who were responsible for drying of the pond," he said. When asked about opening of more historical Hindu shrines, he said the issue would be discussed in the ETPB meeting.



# Hindu American Foundation Announces Launch of "I Am Hindu American" Campaign



New York, NY (December 4, 2018) -

Today the Hindu American Foundation launched a new campaign - I Am Hindu American - to improve awareness of the Hindu religion and Hindu Americans. The multi-platform initiative includes a social-media campaign, a 30-second PSA (access through link below), and a companion website to provide valuable resources about Hinduism and Hindu Americans: [www.IAmHinduAmerican.org](http://www.IAmHinduAmerican.org).

In collaboration with more than 300 community partners around the country, the PSA is being distributed through social media networks nationwide to boost awareness and clarify common stereotypes and misunderstandings about Hinduism. The platform will be interactive, encouraging Hindu Americans to upload a photo of themselves and share how Hinduism inspires them in their everyday lives. There are many Hindu contributions to our daily lives: from yoga and meditation to the decimal system as well as an understanding of the law of cause and effect known as karma.

"The goal of the 'I Am Hindu American' campaign is to drive online conversation by putting a face on the Hindu American community. Despite the fact that Hindus are one of the most successful minority communities, knowledge about Hindus and Hinduism is very low among the US general public," says Suhag Shukla, executive director and co-founder of the Hindu American Foundation. "Our own data shows that one in three Hindu-American students report being bullied for their religious beliefs. Most of this is based on misperceptions about Hindus and we want to change that narrative."

Another goal of the "I Am Hindu American" campaign is to educate about Hinduism during a period where the country has seen a rise in religious intolerance. Hate crime incidents reported to the FBI increased by about 17% last year compared to 2016 according to statistics released earlier this month by the FBI.

It is also an important time for Hindus in America as speculation grows that Congresswoman Tulsi Gabbard (D-Hawaii) will declare her presidential bid for 2020. Gabbard would be the first Hindu candidate ever from a major political party to enter the race for the White House.

For the first time in history, Congress currently has four Hindu members: Gabbard (she was the first Hindu elected to Congress), Raja Krishnamoorthi (D-Illinois), Pramila Jayapal (D-Washington), and Ro Khanna (D-California). With the swearing in of Gabbard, Krishnamoorthi, Jayapal and Khanna, Hinduism is the third largest faith group represented in Congress.

Additionally, according to ABC News, over 100 Hindus ran for office in the 2018 midterms, over twice the number who ran in 2017.

"I am grateful to be a part of this initiative featuring the stories of Americans across the country who are sharing how their Hindu faith inspires them in their everyday lives," says Congresswoman Tulsi Gabbard (D-Hawaii).

There has been an increase in the number of Hindus of non-Indian origin, people of European, Hispanic, and African descent who have been drawn to the spiritual teachings and traditions of Hinduism. Hindus are making contributions in every corner of the country including business, healthcare, law, education, agriculture, and entertainment. Hindus are community oriented and adhere to values such as tolerance, non-violence, freedom of religion and other issues consistent with American values.

"Hinduism is the world's oldest living religion, a global and universal religion with adherents living on every continent and are a part of the American fabric. Hinduism is no longer confined to Indians, and like Buddhism has been embraced by people from many cultures," says Dena Merriam, Hindu American and leader in interfaith movement.



# Can One Have Faith in the Almighty and yet be Scientific Minded?

*By Maria Wirth*

**Y**es, and it is even natural. One only needs to deeply reflect on what is meant by the Almighty.

If somebody grew up as a Christian or Muslim, he needs, however, to get rid of some notions about the Almighty which can never be proven and are in all likelihood not true - for example that He favors those who believe in a specific book (Bible, Quran) and sends

separate from the ocean as they have a distinct form and name. But ultimately all waves are nothing but the one great ocean and nothing is lost when their form is lost. Similarly, though we may consider our person as separate from others, in truth we are the one consciousness and nothing of substance is lost when form and name are lost.

Further, Indian Rishis claim that the apparent reality is not really real. It is a sense deception (maya), in a similar way, as at dusk a rope is mistaken to be a snake,

even though in reality there is only a rope. Truly true is our inner being (Atman) that permeates everything. It means that in our essence, we are infinite, spread out all over as it were, eternal.

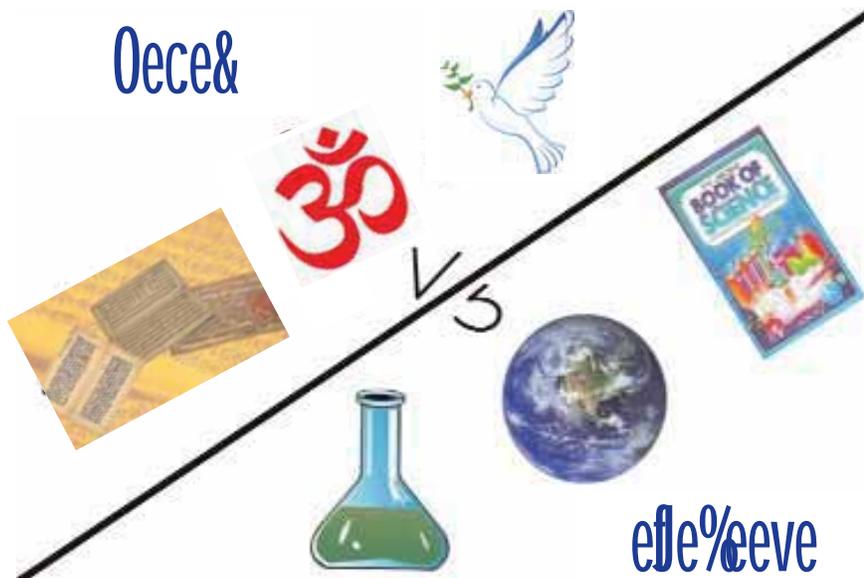
Now this ocean analogy sounds almost like modern physics. How come? Did the scientists discover that all is one energy independently or were their theories inspired by the Vedas? Had the scientists reflected on the profound insights of the Indian rishis?

Indeed this had been the case. The scientists who were responsible for replacing Newton's paradigm of a universe full of separate things with an

interconnected, homogeneous Whole were inspired by Vedanta: Heisenberg, Schroedinger, Pauli, Einstein, Oppenheimer, Tesla and others, all knew about and reflected on India's ancient wisdom.

In contrast, dogmatic religions never fostered science. What sadder example can there be than the burning of the great Nalanda University library in present day Bihar by Islamic invaders in 1193 AD. The collected treasure of the best minds was turned into ash and thousands of students were brutally killed. Voltaire rightly said, "Those who can make you believe in absurdities can make you commit atrocities."

Yet times are changing. The awareness that we would be better off without blind belief in irrational dogmas is



all others to eternal hell and that he is a superhuman (male) creator, separate from humans, and that he made his will known only recently, not even 2000 years ago, and that the jury is still out (because two religions stake claim to it), to whom he has spoken the last word of the 'only truth'...

But Vedic wisdom can help to correct one's view, as it had already long before Christianity and Islam appeared, a highly mature understanding of the 'Almighty':

The Rishis claim that everything in this creation including ourselves is permeated by the same great intelligence, like waves are permeated by the same ocean. The waves may be convinced that they are

growing. Christianity is losing its hold over its followers in the west. I just read that in Berlin, the capital of Germany, only 25 per cent of the inhabitants are still Christians. And Islam, though seemingly still on an upswing, is being scrutinized, too. The recent widespread protests in Iran point to the fact that not all believe what they are told to believe and even risk their lives for freedom.

So to come back to the question: belief in an Almighty Presence is not an obstacle to being a scientific minded person, but rather a help. It can help to even expand science. Here is why:

Science is defined as knowledge gained from observation and experimentation. The Rishis, however, added one more method - knowledge gained from inner exploration. This inner exploration or meditation lifts Vedic wisdom above science and inspires it.

Scientists have discovered the oneness of all, but for them the oneness is dead, without life. The Rishis have discovered the oneness of all many thousand years earlier, and they 'saw' or realized that this oneness is alive and knows itself.

The truth is not something abstract, cold, and theoretical. It is the conscious, loving, intelligent essence in all from where thoughts emerge. True inspiration and intuition come from this level. Srinivasan Ramanujan, the great mathematician, would have touched this level from where he received amazing mathematical insights. He related to it as Devi Namagiri.

Many great scientists acknowledge an almighty intelligence as the cause for (or essence of) this universe. Einstein, too, acknowledged it. In a letter to a school girl, who asked him if scientists pray, he wrote: "Everyone

who is seriously involved in the pursuit of science becomes convinced that some spirit is manifest in the laws of the universe, one that is vastly superior to that of man."

This spirit level (Indians called it Atman) is within all of us. It is the Almighty and we are definitely better off if we acknowledge its presence and trust it. The Rishis advocate complete trust - after all, it is Almighty...

PS: a similar question - "How can I hold my faith in Almighty as well as being a scientific minded person?" was asked on Quora to which I replied. The above article is based on my reply.



**Maria Wirth**

*is a German and came to India for a holiday after finishing her psychology studies at Hamburg University. She visited the Ardhha Kumbha Mela in Haridwar in April 1980 where she met Sri*

*Anandamayi Ma and Devaraha Baba, two renowned saints. With their blessing she continued to live in India and dived into India's spiritual tradition, sharing her insights with German readers through articles and books. For long, she was convinced that every Indian knows and treasures his great heritage. However, when in recent years, she noticed that there seemed to be a concerted effort to prevent Indians (and the world) from knowing how valuable this ancient Indian heritage is, she started to point out the unique value of Indian tradition.*

***She may be contacted via email [mariawirth12@gmail.com](mailto:mariawirth12@gmail.com)***



**SIA's Seva work**

## EKAL VIDYALAYA FOUNDATION OF USA OCTOBER 13, 2018



*L-R - Chirag Patel, Mohan Wanchoo, Suresh Iyer, Ramesh Shah,  
Bajarang Bagra, Naresh Jain, Prakash Waghmare*

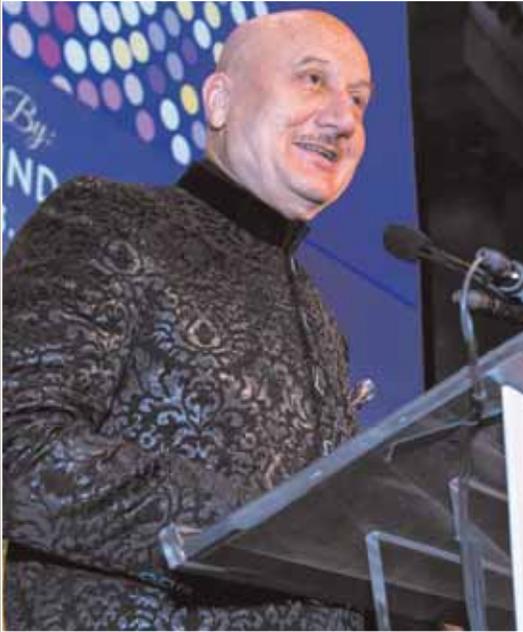
# Phenomenal Success of "Ekal Vidyalaya" Galas

**T**he week of October 6-13, 2018, has a special significance in the 30-year history of Ekal Vidyalaya Foundation (EVF). In this week, Ekal (as it is popularly known), hosted three glittering fund-raising Galas at three strategic places in the USA and raised a record \$5.5 Million in pledges. This was in addition to \$7.5 Million it had already realized through its annual 50+ fund-raising concerts across the USA.

On Oct. 6 Ekal-Houston, TX hosted a Gala where generous donors collectively gave \$1.5 Million. In similar fashion, on Oct.12, Ekal-Washington hosted a Gala in Bethesda, MD and raised \$1.1 Million. A year earlier (2017) the New York (NY) region successfully initiated a Gala for high net-worth philanthropic donors, and so all eyes were on the magnificent 'Cipriani-Wall Street' banquet Hall in NY as the grand finale of this gala-phase and NY did not disappoint. It raised \$3 Million. This crowning achievement pushed Ekal's donation totals for Year 2018, way beyond \$10 Million it had initially hoped to raise. In addition, what was remarkable was that all three Galas were completely sold-out affairs.

*By Prakash Waghmare*

At the NYC Ekal-GALA, the presence of John Sculley, former CEO of 'Apple & Pepsi', and veteran film actor Anupam Kher, as two keynote speakers was the highlight of the evening. These two Iconic personalities, not only freely mingled with the crowd during the initial social hour but also patiently took time to interact with their fans. Sandeep Chakravorty, Consul General of India was the Chief Guest of this event. Mohan Wanchoo's opening remarks, after national anthems of USA & India, set the tone for the evening. As the Chairman of the GALA, he touched on aspirations of village folks and what could be done to bring them into the mainstream. Chirag Patel, as the co-chair of the event, emphasized urgency to transform villages so that India could tackle challenges of the future. Ranjani Saigal's presentation of Ekal (with a montage of slides and pictures in the background) was a defining moment. In 10-12 minutes she spoke about several real-life examples of the ecliptic rise of some of the Ekal alumnus. This made the first-timers to Ekal, including 'Keynote



*Veteran Actor - Anupam Kher  
- Keynote Speaker*



*Former CEO of Apple & Pepsi -  
John Sculley - Keynote Speaker*



*Mohan Wanchoo - Gala Chairman*

speakers', fairly knowledgeable about crucial aspects of the Ekal movement. John Sculley and Anupam Kher were simply amazing as keynote speakers. John Sculley commended the innovativeness of Indians and lauded Ekal's dedication to bring changes in rural life by empowering women and boasting self-esteem of rural folks, in general. Anupam Kher drew parallels between his life and the life of poor village-folks and elaborated on how he overcame obstacles in his own life by believing in himself. The placement of laminated letters of Ekal-school children at every guest table were quite soul-touching. This immediately connected the attendees with the village-based children in India. On this occasion, Ekal India Team (Bajrang Bagra and Naresh Jain) was also felicitated. Honoring them, Mohan Wanchoo said, "we in the USA only raise funds for rural folks but the real hard work is done by 'Ekal-India'".

The pledging process was focused on supporting a variety of projects in the field of education, health and skill development. Inspired by a matching donation from 'Sarva Mangal Family Trust' to bring 'tablets' to Ekal schools, \$150,000 was raised, instantaneously so that it could turn into \$300,000 and equip 600 schools for hand-held 'Tablets'. Chintu Patel, Co-Founder and CEO of Amneal Pharmaceuticals gave a passionate speech on the importance of supporting the eye initiative of Ekal which he personally promised to support in partnership with 'Irada', a foundation started by his family. As of this moment Ekal has 77,000 Ekal-schools across India grooming 2 Million Children - more than half of them girls. PM Modi has given Ekal a goal to establish 100,000 schools by YR 2022 (75th Anniversary of India's

Independence). The highest bid - \$500,000 - came from an anonymous donor who wanted to support the expansion of the schools specifically to reach this target. With the overwhelming support that Ekal witnessed in 'Galas', it is very likely that Ekal will reach PM Modi's target 100,000 schools by Yr. 2022 (way ahead of time).

This unprecedented support from patrons has also given confidence to Ekal to revise and aggressively pursue its developmental agenda. Yr 2018 saw the highest ever growth in Ekal's 30-year history. New schools were opened in 18,000 villages. E-Shiksha - tutoring by 'Tablets' - was initiated in 180 schools, as a pilot project. For digital literacy, 10 'Ekal-on-wheels' mobile digital labs were added. Each van can educate 5,000 youths, each year, in basic computer skills. Four 'Gramothan Centers' that directly benefit 400,000 farmers (indirectly up to 4 Million) have been planned along with 'Satellite Skill Centers'. The first 'Tele-Medicine' project, with support from 'John Hopkins University', was undertaken in Odisha to bring expert Medical advice to the doorsteps of remote Villagers. As Bajrang Bagra, CEO of Ekal-India said, "the primary objective of this all-round integrated development is to give dignity and self-esteem to rural-tribal folks of India". For the first time, Ekal went 'live' on Facebook and Twitter for this event. This memorable evening concluded with a concert by the singing superstar contestants Bishakh Jyoti and Suchetana Sinha of 'Sa Re Ga Ma Pa'. Three TV Channels, namely ZEE TV, TV ASIA & ITV-GOLD covered the entire event, start to finish, with their 'owners & Chiefs' in attendance as a way of support to this divine cause.





# Women's Empowerment and What It Means to Me

**I**n the modern world, where social media, round the clock news, and instant gratification prevails, there is a certain buzz word being used by women all over the world: Empowerment. My first thought is that women and men are born with equal rights. A baby boy is just as dependent on the adults in his life for his wellbeing, as a baby girl. As adults, do women lose the equal status due to differences in physical strength? Or is it due to societal perceptions which shape the minds to perceive women as the weaker sex? If this were not the case and society perceives all human beings as equals, there would be no need for one gender to be empowered and not the other.

I have heard that Hindu women have always enjoyed the same rights as Hindu men during the Vedic times and that various invasions and colonization have abrogated the rights of women, in the name of protection. While this is the historical narrative, I want to focus on how Hindu women perceive themselves today and what we can do to improve the situation. The definition of empowerment according to the Merriam Webster dictionary is *'the act or action of empowering someone or something: the granting of the power, right, or authority, to perform various acts or duties'*. This implies that for women to feel empowered, someone has to grant them this right. Do women then need to look at some external source to understand if we are equal and empowered? As a woman, I feel that by letting someone else define me and my rights as a woman, I am losing myself. My perception will be skewed by those of others

**By Sabitha Venugopal**

who may or may not know the reality of my circumstances. So let us instead talk about how women can find fulfillment and contentment within ourselves and not wait for empowerment to be bestowed on us.

Empowerment might be a concept introduced by the West, as women in the developed countries are now fighting issues like gender discrimination in the work place, unequal pay, sexual harassment and demeaning stereotypes. These problems are not isolated to the Western world, and in my opinion, it impacts the women in poorer nations even more. These issues get overlooked in poorer countries as women there are still fighting for basic necessities like unadulterated food, clean water, and safe shelters. In fact, women in poorer countries are at a greater disadvantage as the allocation of scarce resources is skewed against due to lack of representation at the highest levels of decision making.

The feeling of empowerment is personal for each woman. There is no common yardstick that will apply universally, as we are all unique individuals. If a woman enjoys equal status under the law, is able to choose her own lifestyle, has the freedom to voice her own opinions, and is responsible for her own actions I would consider this woman as powerful in her own right. A woman who feels that she is in control of her own destiny will not be easily influenced by societal definitions, and will not look outside for validation. As women, we owe it to ourselves and future generations, to explore what we can

do within our sphere of influence, to change the life of women for the better.

It is often said that women are the worst critics of other women. So a good first step is that we stop judging each other harshly. Our definition of success should change to be more inclusive of women from all walks of life. Very often, this definition is restricted to material wealth, societal status and achievement of family members, rather than basing it on character, faith and ability to overcome adversities. We should value the contribution of each woman equally irrespective of monetary compensation. After all society will only improve if women fully participate at all levels whether it is working as law makers, doctors, teachers, factory workers, entrepreneurs or homemakers.

We must learn to respect the right of each woman to make her own choices, and agree to disagree, when needed. How we dress, what we eat or drink, whether we go clubbing or dance at weddings, should not define how we treat each other. We should not let our personal preferences get in the way of appreciating other women, who might choose to express themselves differently. Denigrating someone based on an arbitrary set of criteria is counterproductive to progress and stands in the way of uniting women across the globe. As women, we should vociferously defend our individual rights to be whoever we choose to be.

We should speak up against how women are portrayed, whether it is in the media, objectified on bill boards or in literature. With the advent of social media where something that is posted becomes viral, it has become very crucial for all of us to do our part. How often do we see some jokes stereotyping women, being

circulated through various chat groups and media posts? Then how often do women share these same jokes? Innocuous on the face of it for sure, but they can be very insidious. Over time and with repetition, they become set in the collective psyche of society. In reality, all human beings are a mixture of good and bad traits, and good people work hard everyday to better themselves. This of course does not make an entertaining story. The movies and television shows have played up stereotypes about women consistently over the years that it has become ingrained in society that women are physically and mentally frail, and cannot exist without support. While we enjoy a good movie or a novel, we must remain aware that fiction is not reality, and strive to clearly communicate this fact at every opportunity. We must try to break down the barriers holding us back from achieving our true potential and serve as an example for all those around us.

We wear different hats in our day to day life, and multi-tasking and stress have become an accepted part of our routine. We need to take steps to consciously break out of our routine, and look at the world around us to broaden our horizons. We must learn to work with technology to facilitate exchanging ideas and sharing collective wisdom, so that we may learn from each other. Travel has also become affordable, and taking trips to new places is exciting and provides us a window into new and different lifestyles. As we explore history, eat new foods, listen to a different language and meet people, we constantly observe and learn. Investing in opportunities that let us experience the wonders of this world are invaluable, and as women, we should take the lead in making this a reality for *Continued on page 38*



# Yoga and Ayurveda's View of Depression and How to Overcome It

While treating depression, we should not target depression as the enemy, something coming from the outside. We must try to understand its cause within us, and what its message is about how we live and think.

*By Dr. David Frawley  
(Pandit Vamadeva Shastri)*

Depression is becoming epidemic, particularly in the affluent Western world. It is afflicting young and old, rich and poor, educated and uneducated alike. To counter it special anti-depressant drugs are being prescribed in ever increasing record amounts, with new varieties regularly introduced into the market. Yet the problem continues to increase and these new drugs have many side effects.

This problem naturally leads us to the fundamental question: What is the cause of depression and how can we effectively treat it? There are many explanations, some very informative or insightful. However, I would like to look beyond any complicated theories or chemical analysis. To put it very simply, the cause of depression is stimulation. The more we depend upon external stimulation, the more depressed we will likely become over time. There are several reasons for this.

First, whenever any stimulation we become used to is ever reduced or withdrawn we are likely to become

**to move out of depression we need to affirm our own higher Self and not make too much of the world that is but an appearance of the senses. It should be beneath your dignity as a Divine soul and immortal consciousness to wallow in depression. Your true nature is Being-Consciousness- Bliss absolute beyond the body and mind, Satchidananda.**

depressed, or feel some sort of withdrawal syndrome, as we become dependent on the stimulation to energize our nervous system. In other words stimulation always causes some degree of addiction.

Second, over time we are likely to become bored or depressed with any type of stimulation as repetition causes it to lose its novelty. The threshold for any stimulation to affect us goes higher as we regularly experience it. That is why we need ever new forms of stimulation.

The fact is that reliance on external factors to entertain, engage

or motivate us causes us to lose our own power of creativity and motivation resulting in eventual depression.

## **The Modern Era of Media Stimulation and Drug-based Medicine**

In the modern high tech world we are subject to much more stimulation and entertainment than in any previous era. Many people are wired up the entire day with music, videos, social media, or the Internet - almost shutting

themselves off from the rest of life or even from other people. It seems that we don't know how to be alone, be silent, be in nature, or even have a direct relationship with anyone.

On top of our extensive sensory stimulations many of us are taking recreational or medicinal drugs that have addictive and depleting side effects. There are epidemics in the amount of opiates that people in America today are taking for pain relief, or simply opiate drug addictions, for which there are several powerful new artificial forms that are even more addictive.

Depression can be connected to addictions of various types, from sensory addictions to every sort of substance addictions. Yet depression can also generally relate to our lives type of looking outwardly, even if we have specific addictions to go with it. Some of us may feel depressed at the unhappy state of the world today. That is another complication of too much attention to the external world covering over our internal spiritual practice.

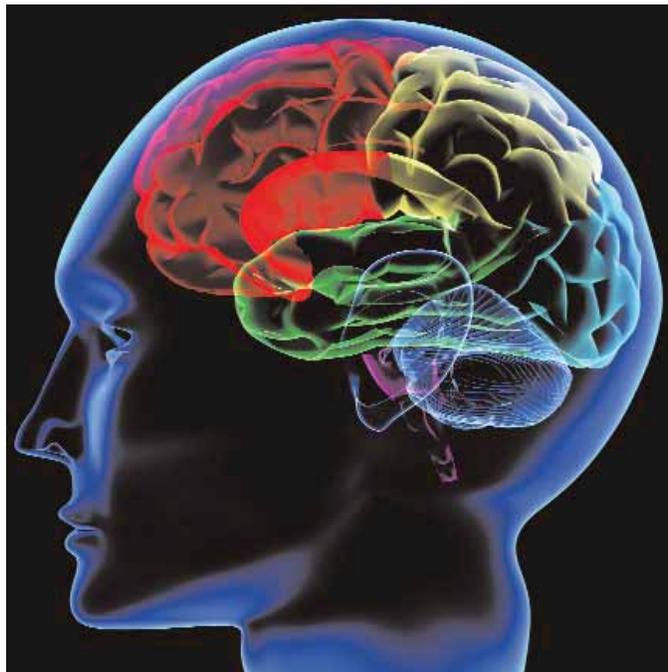
### **The Myth of Depression as merely a Problem in Brain Chemistry**

The most recent medical science tells us that depression is a product of wrong chemistry in our brains, and such faulty brain chemistry can be best treated with drugs as it as a chemical problem. The result is that, instead of looking to our behavior or life-circumstances to address depression, we have a massive new array of anti-depression medications that did not exist even a few decades ago. Yet with all the anti-depressive drugs we are taking, we seem to be getting more depressed. Some anti-depression drugs have as side effects making us more depressed. This is to be expected. As depression results from dependence upon external stimulation, a category into which anti-depression drugs also fit, they are likely to create more depression in the long run, or at least reduce our level of creativity, contentment and motivation.

Drug-based medicine tells us that we are not



responsible for such brain chemistry imbalances. We are victims of our brain chemistry that depends upon various factors beyond our control, starting with genetics. Believing this assumption to be true might make us feel personally relieved of blame, but in absolving us of all responsibility for our condition, it takes away our ability to control or improve our own health and well-being. If we are the victims of brain chemistry, what is a human being or a human soul and what responsibility in life do we really have?



### **Depression and Behavioral Issues**

The fact is that most depression is behavioral based. Our wrong lifestyles of excessive activity, over stimulation and disruption from the world of nature eventually leave us depleted and depressed, particularly at a psychological and emotional level. Yoga teaches us that the quality of

rajas or excessive aggression and stimulation leads to the quality of tamas or dullness, inertia and depression as we wear ourselves out, burn ourselves up, or just become overly hyper, sensitive, restless and stressed.

In our individualistic oriented society we often end up alone, as family and community are subordinated to individual achievements. This makes us more dependent upon media stimulation to fill the emptiness of our lives. Loneliness and depression often go together.

To look at it from another angle, depression is nothing but low energy in the mind or at a psychological level. To some extent just as we all have periods of low physical energy, particularly as a consequence of excessive activity, we also have periods of low mental

In terms of Vedic Astrology, depression is more common when Saturn aspects the Moon in the chart, during Saturn to Moon transits (*sade sathi*), when Saturn is transiting the eighth house from the Moon, or during Moon-Saturn or Saturn-Moon periods in the individual birth chart.



energy as a consequences of too much mental or emotional work or stimulation. Just as physical low energy rests upon lack of exercise and poor nutrition, so psychological low energy rests upon lack of mental exercise and poor nutrition for the mind.

How many of us exercise our minds in creative and intelligent ways, rather than just follow mindless mass entertainments? Have you examined your mental nutrition that you take in through your senses? We will let people into our own minds through the media that we would never let into our homes. We watch programs full of violence, destruction and negative emotions as entertaining.

Depression indicates weak psychological and physical immunity. Many who claim to be suffering from depression have actually not suffered much outwardly in life in terms of disease or deprivation, but are reacting to emotional issues, often rooted in childhood. Depression involves too much fixation on our personal self and ego, a kind of inverted narcissism as it were. The more we think about our depression, which is to give it more attention, the worse it gets.

#### **What Depression Can Teach Us**

First in treating depression, we should not target depression as the enemy, like a pathogen to be destroyed, something coming from the outside. We must try to understand its cause within us, and what its message is about how we live and think. We should try to understand what our depression is telling us and what it might be teaching us about our situation in life.

Depression like pain may be the symptom of a deeper problem. Depression may be telling us that there is something unfulfilling or even wrong about our lives - that we may need to fundamentally change who we are or how we function in the world. It may be telling us that we are not using our time wisely and need to change our

daily routine. Depression may be spiritually based as without any meditation practice or deeper values, the externally world will eventually leave us feeling empty, depleted and without any value of our own.

#### **Treatment For Depression**

What is the treatment for depression? First it should be mainly behavioral, though many other factors can help. It should be based upon natural healing, not artificial substances. Anything lacking in prana or the life force cannot in the long run truly raise our spirits that reflect our prana. We must learn to withdraw from external stimulation and develop our own internal creativity, motivation and discipline to overcome depression. Depression may be a sign that you need to detach and move on in your life to a new level of awareness. Depression may also hide deeper fears. Without challenging our fears, depression may shadow us along with them.

To get beyond depression we must cease to play the role of victims in life and take karmic responsibility for who we are. We must begin to pursue a life of higher awareness rather than mere personal enjoyment and outer success. We must give up the chemical model of behavior and accept that our state of mind is our rooted in our own values, actions and motivations - in our lifestyle itself. We must stop blaming our bodies, our parents or even our society for who we are. We must empower our inner being and this can only be done by developing will power. Naturally such personality and behavioral changes cannot happen overnight but we can introduce them gradually every day.

#### **There are simple things we can do for depression in Yoga and Ayurveda.**

We can use stimulating aromas or incense like champak, frangipani, camphor, eucalyptus, mint, sage or tulsi, or take herbs like tulsi, brahmi or calamust to clear

the mind. We can use nasya oils to clear our sinuses or a neti pot to cleanse them in order to bring more prana into the head. We can practice pranayama to bring deeper energy to the brain. As long as our sinuses and lungs are open and our breath is deep and full it is hard to fall into depression or stay in it.

We can chant mantras like Hreem or Om Namah Shivaya, or whatever mantras we best relate to, or repeat them silently to get our energy moving. We can use Ayurvedic herbal teas like tulsi, calamus or brahmi to improve circulation to the brain, or natural calmativ herbs like sandalwood oil to the head.

We can go outdoors into nature, take a hike in the hills, go swimming, take a yoga asana class. We must move our bodies. We can do inverted poses to draw the energy into the brain.

We should learn to relate to life and the universe through the sky, the waters, the Earth and mountains, trees, flowers and herbs, and all creatures great and small. We must open up our mental horizons to the boundless space of consciousness. Only if we give the mind space within itself can it heal itself. For this we must be willing to experience the emptiness within, which will eventually fill itself with awareness if we are receptive to it.

We must take responsibility for our own depression and not just look for some quick outer fix to make it go away for a while. Depression is often a self-indulgent emotion arising from worry about ourselves and over fixation on our personal happiness. A good cure for depression is to perform service work for others in more difficult life situations than yourself. Try also removing the clutter from your room or your house to help remove the clutter from your mind that depression often involves.

★ In more specific Ayurvedic terms, airy *Vata dosha* types often end up in a deep depression born of debility and nervous exhaustion, though they may also be manic-depressives with many ups and downs over time. They need good nutrition, relaxation, oil massage, tonic herbs like ashwagandha, and human company.

★ Watery *Kapha dosha* types can have chronic heavy depression born of lack of movement, lethargy and overweight. They need to be prodded and motivated, made to move and act both physically and mentally. They need stronger exercise, pranayama and svedana or steam therapies.

★ Fiery *Pitta dosha* types usually get depressed when they fail to achieve their personal goals or when their efforts are blocked. Depression often goes along with anger. They can be bipolar and strike against others.

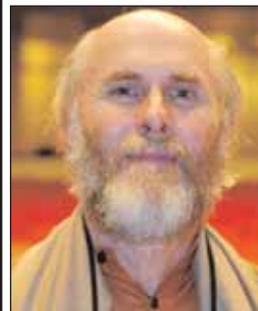
They need to cool off and calm down, cultivating forgiveness and compassion, with cooling herb like brahmi or manduka parni.

In terms of Vedic Astrology, depression is more common when Saturn aspects the Moon in the chart, during Saturn to Moon transits (*sade sathi*), when Saturn is transiting the eighth house from the Moon, or during Moon-Saturn or Saturn-Moon periods in the individual birth chart. Additional Mars aspects to the Moon can worsen the situation, or Rahu influence on the Moon. Certain sensitive Ascendants like Gemini, Virgo or Pisces are more prone to depression by nature. This is also true of charts with a Scorpio Moon or debilitated Saturn. Such astrological influences require that we manage our karmas in life properly and develop detachment. Mantras and gems for the planets can help, like pearl for the moon, or chants to Saturn (Shani Dev).

Good Ayurveda or Vedic astrology practitioners or Vedic counselors will have many insights about how to deal with depression without resorting to drugs of any type.

In conclusion, to move out of depression we need to affirm our own higher Self and not make too much of the world that is but an appearance of the senses.

It should be beneath your dignity as a Divine soul and immortal consciousness to wallow in depression. Your true nature is Being-Consciousness-Bliss absolute beyond the body and mind, Satchidananda.



**Dr. David Frawley**  
(Pandit Vamadeva Shastri)

*D. Litt., author of several books, is a western born teacher or guru in the Vedic tradition. In India, Vamadeva is recognized as a Vedacharya (Vedic teacher), and includes in his scope of studies Ayurveda, Yoga, Vedanta and Vedic astrology, as well as the ancient*

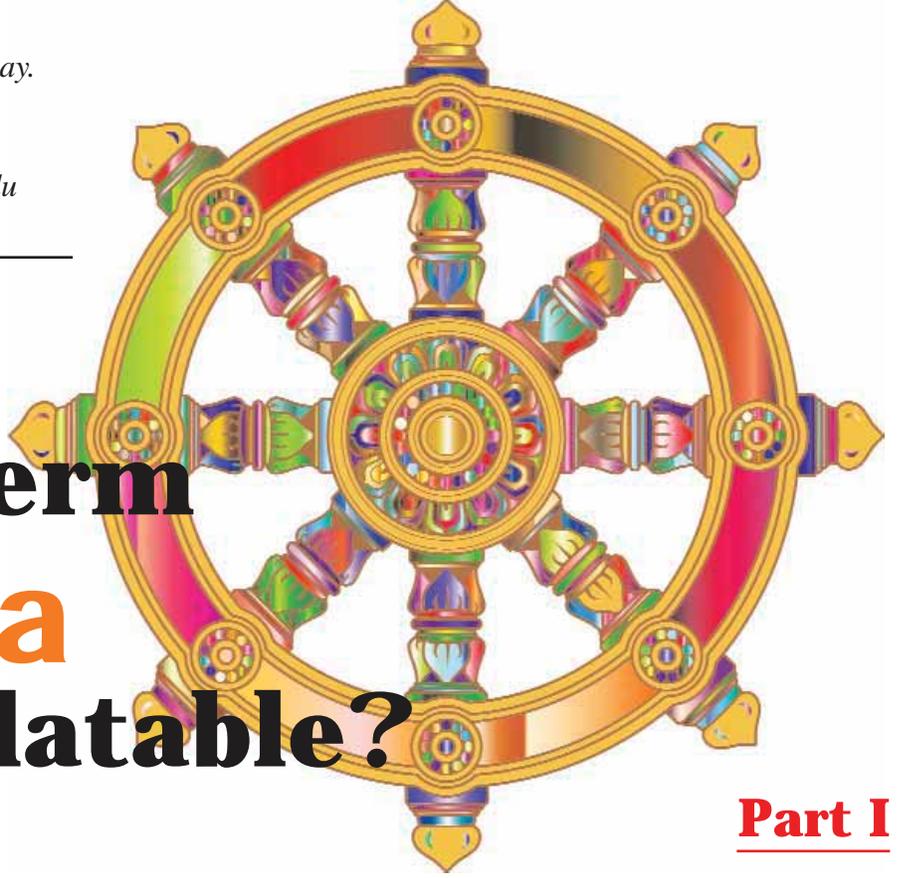
*Vedic teachings going back to the oldest Rigveda.*

*Vamadeva is a recipient of the prestigious Padma Bhushan award, one of the highest civilian awards by the government of India, "for distinguished service of a higher order to the nation," honoring his work and writings as a Vedic teacher, which he received in March 2015.*

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# Is the Term Dharma Untranslatable?

**Part I**

**By Koenraad Elst**

**Introduction**

Does the central Sanskrit term *dharma* have an exact equivalent in English or other languages? Rajiv Malhotra recommends to use the word *dharma* in English untranslated. At first sight, we must admit that no English word does justice to the range of meanings of *dharma*. But the *dharma* translators should not go down without a fight: we are at least going to give it a try.

The question presupposes another one: what does *dharma* mean? Once we agree on an answer, we are free to spot equivalents in other languages, if we can find them. Whether we will be able to do so, we can only say at the end.

**The Vedic concept *rta***

Before focusing on the Hindu concept of *dharma*, it is common to study the *Rg-Vedic* concept of *rta*, "the going", "pattern of motion", "sequence", "cosmic order", "natural law". It is represented by the night sky and thus the sequence and orderly motion of the stars; as well as by the orderly sequence of the seasons (*rtu*). Its natural visual glyph is the *svastika*, embodiment of the archetypal cycle with distinct phases. Its antonym is *anrta*, "disorder".

The parts together form a whole, the seasons form the year or the "seasons' cycle" (*rtucakra*); but each of them is different. A cycle of different phases connected with the seasonal cycle and the nightly cycles, that is what we

know as a zodiac. We are not specifying here which division our zodiac uses, into how many phases per revolution: 2 (northern & southern half, dark & light, elsewhere yin & yang), 4, 6, 12 (later called *rasicakra*), 24, 27 or 28 (*Vedic nakshatracakra*), 360. Nor by which name or symbol, if any, these parts of the whole are characterized; we merely mean any cycle within which distinct phases are discernible.

In some contexts, *rta* is treated as more or less synonymous with *satya*, with both translated as "truth". Its antonym *anrta* is therefore also translated as "untruth". Classic example is the maxim from the Mundaka Upanisad, now India's national motto: *Satyam eva jayate na anrta*, "Truth truly prevails, not untruth." While "order" and "truth" may be related concepts, they are nonetheless distinct. In what context are they brought so closely together that they can be summed up in a single word, *rta*?

Imagine that an adolescent son is announcing to his father that he plans to do one of the foolish things that young lads happen to do. His father warns him that this will lead to sorry consequences. The son, headstrong, proceeds anyway, and feels very brave and independent. But all too soon, unfortunate things happen as a consequence, and he comes to regret his initiative. He returns home to his father, who (perhaps, like in the Gospel, forgives the Prodigal Son, but nonetheless first)

says: "I told you so!" Being a father myself, and having been a headstrong son myself, I know from experience that fathers do say this. This does not come from some shady oracular knowledge of the future but from life experience, i.e. from having lived through (or having seen) sequences of events in reality where one type of action typically leads to a corresponding type of reaction.

Some actions invariably lead to the same consequences. When you see clouds gathering, you can predict that it is going to rain. Then, once it does start raining, you can say: "I told you so." Prediction is based on the knowledge of sequences, at some point further explained as "cause and effect", which later becomes a central theme in Indian philosophy. "Orderly sequence", "sequence following an established law", is thus intimately connected with "true prediction", and hence with "speaking truth".

There is also a more direct link between "cosmic cycle" or "cosmos", and "truth". Anyone with a bit of experience of reality knows that certain statements which cannot be shown to be mistaken, nevertheless make no sense when put in context; or that a conduct that is defensible in itself, becomes less advisable when seen against the background of the whole. One has to consider the further ramifications before taking a decision on a course of action, or to check with the larger framework before making a truth claim. As GWF Hegel, the German philosopher best known in India for his hostile commentary on the Bhagavad Gita, said: *Das Wahre ist das Ganze*, "the true is the whole".

#### A similar Chinese concept

Among the Chinese, a narrowly corresponding term for *rta* is *dao*, "path", "way", and more precisely *tiandao*, "way of heaven". Its visible embodiment was the daily (seeming) course of the stars around the earth, the orderly movement of constellations, the day cycle and year cycle.

This character does not, however, have the meaning "truth". No translatable of *rta* there. For this second meaning, we need a different character: *zhen*, "true". Well, at least, that is its modern meaning. But the word has a history that illustrates well how "sequence" may have shaded over into "truth".

The character is used in the oracular Book of Changes (Yijing, -11th century), especially in the frequent expression *li zhen*. *li* means "auspicious", and the expression is often translated as "fixity/constancy is auspicious". But that is the modern meaning, "modern" here meaning younger than Confucius, who lived around -500. From then on, the old text is given moralistic meanings, but the ancient meaning was another one,



yin & yang

purely divinatory: "auspicious oracle". Indeed, nowadays means "true", and has also carried extended meanings like "reliable", "constant", but few modern people would think of the meaning "prediction, oracle". Yet, that was the meaning in the Book of Changes, the most influential text in Chinese civilization.

The semantic span from "prediction" to "truth" in the Chinese word *zhen* echoes the span from "heavenly cycle" to "truth" in the Sanskrit word *rta*. The basis of prediction is in either case the knowledge of patterns and sequences.

#### Varuna

The personification of *rta* among the Vedic gods is Varuna, lord (Asura) of heavenly hosts, the star-studded night sky, the oceanic expanse above us. His counterpart *Mitra* represents the day sky, monopolized by the sun. In the Iranian tradition and its derived *Mithraic* cult among the Romans, *Mithra* c.q. Mithras is simply the sun.

In another dimension, his counterpart is Indra. Foremost among the Gods are Indra and Varuna: "One kills *Vrtra* etc. in battle, the other protects religious observances." (RV 7:83:9) Whereas Indra is the God of strong vs. weak, of vigour and power, Varuna is the God of good vs. evil, of law-compliant vs. law-defiant, of norms and morality. In the war between Iranians and Vedic Indians, the former will veer towards Varuna, the latter towards Indra, but originally both gods were worshipped by both peoples.

Varuna is the first one of the twelve Adityas, "suns", also named the "charioteers of *rta*". He is iconographically depicted as sitting on a *makara*, a sea monster that in different contexts may be a dolphin or a

crocodile. *Makara* happens to signify Capricorn in the Hellenistic zodiac (rasicakra), meaning the Winter Solstice, the shortest day of the year, when the sun's northward course (*uttarayana*) sets in, the Hindu equivalent of the Yuletide. Prehistorical woodhenges and stone circles with astronomical alignments teach us that it was the principal feast of the year worldwide.

He disciplines sinners, but also confers mercy: "Have mercy, spare me, Varuna." (RV 7:89:1) Or: "Free us from sins committed by our fathers... Not our own will betrayed us, but seduction, thoughtlessness, oh Varuna, wine, dice, or anger." (7:86:5-6) He makes his devotee

exaggerated sense of good and evil, which is why his book on his vision of a post-moralistic world order (in which the prophet is cured from his moralistic "folly"), was called *Also sprach Zarathustra*, "thus spake Zarathustra".

It is possible, though not obvious from the Vedic text, that Varuna's identity with the Iranian enemies' god *Ahura Mazda* had something to do with his decline and gradual disappearance from the later Rg-Vedic horizon. Book X has no hymn for him anymore, and later Hinduism forgot him. He declines both in power and in moral stature, so that the Yajur-Veda treats him with

From the actual usage of the word by Hindus, we gather that there are two dimensions to *dharma*. One is vertical and concerns the relation with the divine, including the required rites, observances, pilgrimages and celebrations (yes, it can be a duty to celebrate). Here it approaches the English word religion in meaning. The Constitutional term secularism, in the sense of "religious neutrality", is therefore often translated in Sanskritized Hindi as *dharma-nirpeksata*. However, serious Hindus reject this choice of translation because to their minds, *dharma* is an entirely positive concept. So you don't need to keep it at arms' length the way Western secularism was meant to keep the Churches away from state power. For them, Nehruvian secularists only express their ignorance by treating *dharma* as a synonym for "religious denomination". Rather, it approaches "religiosity", not the series of denominations such as Shiism, Sunnism or the Christian Churches. They prefer *pantha-nirpeksata*, "sect neutrality", in the more precise sense of impartiality vis-à-vis all religious denominations.

medhira, "wise" (RV 7:87:4), meaning that he has and confers *medha*, "wisdom", the Sanskrit equivalent of Iranian *mazda*.

#### **rtā international**

Varuna is even more present in the Iranian tradition, though known by his form of address *Ahura Mazda* (corresponding to Sanskrit *Asura Medha*), "Lord Wisdom". There too, he is the personification of cosmic order and truth, *aṣa* or *arta*, best known as a prefix in proper names, such as of the several Achaemenid emperors called Artaxerxes.

(It is even thought that British king Arthur, folk-etymologically derived from Welsh *artus*, "bear", actually refers to a Roman officer of Iranian provenance, because after the withdrawal of the Roman army in the 5th century, the Roman veterans settled in Britain were the only ones capable of organizing a defense against the Saxon invaders; namely to one Artorius, who had been recruited at the empire's Hungarian border, where Iranian Sarmatians had settled.)

That *Ahura Mazda* is the equivalent of *Varuna* helps explain why the polarity good/evil becomes so central in Mazdeism. Friedrich Nietzsche considered this god's prophet Zarathustra as the pioneer of moralism, of an

wariness. Likewise, the Varuna-related concept of *rtā*, "righteousness", "world order", "normative succession of phases in a cycle", "truth", dwindles and vanishes. It is more or less replaced by *Dharma*.

#### **Dharma**

The term *dharma*, which for now we will leave untranslated, comes from the root *\*dh*, "bear, support, sustain, keep". It is related to Latin *firmus*, "firm, closely-knit", and Old English *darian*, "lie motionless, lurk"; its reconstructed Indo-European root connotes fixity, keeping motionless. Within Sanskrit, it is distantly related to *dhruva*, "pole star", "earth axis", and more closely to the suffix *-dhara/-dhara*, "carrying" (as in *vasun-dhara*, "goods-bearer, earth"); and *dhti*, "steadiness". In the body, it may be likened to the hard part, the skeleton with the backbone, which gives structure to the whole. *Dharma* is symbolized by a bull standing firm.

*Dharma* may imply firmness, but in Hindu belief it is not always evenly firm. In the Golden Age (*Kṛta Yuga*) the *dharma*-bull is standing on all fours, in the Silver Age (*Treta Yuga*) on three feet, in the Bronze Age (*Dvapara Yuga*) on two, and in the Iron Age (*Kali Yuga*) on just one foot. This differentiation in time is the basis of a division

between eternal *sanatana dharma*, which is always valid, and *yuga dharma*, the norms specific for a particular age. It is a typically *Vaisnava* belief that whenever *dharma* risks getting defeated, it is restored by divine intervention, especially by *Visnu's* incarnations such as *Rama* and *Krsna*. Though very widespread, however, such beliefs postdate the first use of the term *dharma* and are not part of its definition. So here we need not consider them further.

In the Rg-Veda, the term *dharma* already appears dozens of times, often connected with *rta*. It takes center-stage in the Mahabharata, a story illustrating the decline of *dharma* and the effort to uphold it through a *dharmayuddha* (usually translated as a "war of righteousness" or "just war"; definitely not "war of religion"), with the formal though bitter victory being scored by the *dharmaraja* or "king of righteousness", *Yudhistira*, whose biological father is called *Dharma*.

But it also continues the meaning "truth" from the older term *rta*. As the *Brhadarany Upanisad* (1:4:14) says: "Nothing is higher than *dharma*. Thenceforth even a weak man rules a stronger with the help of *dharma*, as with the help of a king. Truly that *dharma* is the truth (*satya*); therefore, when a man speaks the truth, they say, 'He speaks the *dharma*'; and if he speaks *dharma*, they say, 'He speaks the truth.' For both are the same."

The concrete details of the application of *Dharma* are elaborated in the *Dharmasastras*, usually rendered as "Law Codes". The most famous is the *Manavadharma sastra*, attributed to the patriarch *Manu*. Some forty times, the Rg-Veda mentions him: as an ancestor, as the Father of Mankind, and implicitly as a law-giver. The extant text of his *Manavadharma sastra* hardly predates the Christian age, but the idea of a normative system established anciently by *Manu*, though its details must have evolved, was already present in the Veda.

*Dharma* itself is the word used by Hindus for what we translate as "Hinduism". An expression attested only in the last centuries, and that modern Hindus will use when asked for the self-designation of Hinduism, is *Sanatana Dharma*, "eternal *dharma*". Though probably recent, this usage is based on the ancient assertion, both in the Mahabharata and by the Buddha, that "this *Dharma* is *Sanatana*", eternal. Normally the term *dharma* by itself is enough to designate Hinduism in the large sense, i.e. including Jainism, Buddhism, Veerashaivism, Sikhism, the Ramakrishna Mission and other sects whose belonging to the Hindu fold has been rendered controversial.

### Dimensions of *dharma*

From the actual usage of the word by Hindus, we

gather that there are two dimensions to *dharma*. One is vertical and concerns the relation with the divine, including the required rites, observances, pilgrimages and celebrations (yes, it can be a duty to celebrate). Here it approaches the English word religion in meaning. The Constitutional term secularism, in the sense of "religious neutrality", is therefore often translated in Sanskritized Hindi as *dharma-nirpeksata*.

However, serious Hindus reject this choice of translation because to their minds, *dharma* is an entirely positive concept. So you don't need to keep it at arms' length the way Western secularism was meant to keep the Churches away from state power. For them, Nehruvian secularists only express their ignorance by treating *dharma* as a synonym for "religious denomination". Rather, it approaches "religiosity", not the series of denominations such as Shiism, Sunnism or the Christian Churches. They prefer *pantha-nirpeksata*, "sect neutrality", in the more precise sense of impartiality vis-à-vis all religious denominations.

The second meaning is horizontal and concerns the relation with your fellow creatures, human and other. Here, it comes to mean "righteousness", "ethics", "deontology", "law", "justice", "responsibility", "rules of conduct: duties and prohibitions". As they say in Hindi: *Yeh mera dharm hai*, "this is my duty".

**To sum up:** *dharma* has two dimensions. One is the correct relation of the part to the whole, of the lower-order entity to the higher-order entity: religion. The other is the correct relation of the part to the other parts: ethics, duty.

This combination promises to militate heavily against the translatableness of the term *dharma*. It is not equal to "righteousness": at least its religious meanings fall outside of this domain. Conversely, *dharma* is not equal to "religion": the latter term would exclude the purely ethical dimension, even when "religion" has its most uncontroversial sense of "awe for the sacred". Moreover, there is also a specific contrast with the typically Christian overlay of the originally more general term "religion".



### About the Author



#### **Koenraad Elst,**

*a renowned Belgian Indologist, has written several books on Indian history and culture. He is best known for his writings on controversies in Indian history.*

# Hindu Sangam:

## Handling of Seafield Temple Relocation Good Model to Follow



*The Sri Maha Mariamman temple in Seafield, Subang Jaya, which is slated for relocation to a bigger plot of land some 3km away*

**Robin Augustin:** PETALING JAYA: The Malaysia Hindu Sangam has praised the way in which the Sri Maha Mariamman temple's relocation in Seafield, Subang Jaya was handled, saying it can serve as a template for future land disputes involving religious buildings.



**RS Mohan Shan.**

Speaking to FMT, Hindu Sangam president RS Mohan Shan said it had been involved in the dispute over the Sri Maha Mariamman temple for more than 20 years, engaging all parties involved in that period.

"Initially, we wanted the temple to remain where it was, but after the matter went to court and a consent judgment was reached, we agreed to the relocation. "This is because in the consent judgment, the developer, One City Development Sdn Bhd, would provide a proper place for the temple to be relocated to, and fair compensation. The new temple site would also be gazetted as a place of worship. We feel this is fair."

The relocation of the temple is part of a win-win 2014 court solution, involving One City, the Selangor state government and two claimants to the temple management, K Chellappa and M Nagaraju. Both Chellappa and Nagaraju, who were involved in a separate suit over the control of the temple management, agreed to hand back the land to One City after the company agreed to donate RM1.5 million to build a new temple on one of two plots of land given by One City. Chellappa has since been named as the rightful temple manager, but Nagaraju is refusing to abide by the consent judgment to relocate. After the temple gave up the rights to one of the two plots of land, One City also gave it another RM1 million in compensation.

Now, some NGOs and MIC want the government to intervene and stop the relocation. A protest outside Parliament is set to be held today, on the matter.

Mohan Shan said as far as Hindu Sangam was concerned, it did not care about personal agendas but supported the relocation because it believed it was the best thing to do.

He added that Hindu Sangam, which is a member of the Malaysian Consultative Council of Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Sikhism and Taoism, had also requested the developer to allow for the relocation of the temple to be done in accordance with Hindu rituals, to which it had agreed.

"In many cases of temple relocations, the developers or authorities would just smash the temples and simply discard the deities. "This is the correct way to handle a temple relocation. It's a good example as the relevant parties have settled the matter amicably." Mohan Shan added that only a "section" of devotees were against the relocation, but said it was their right to protest in front of Parliament.

"There is no harm in them protesting, but we believe it is better to resolve the matter peacefully. In this case, all efforts have been made to do that. As far as we are concerned, this is the way forward." ■ ■ ■

A debate has been raging between proponents of the view that the Aryans migrated into India, and those who hold the opposite view. In this blog, I do not attempt to resolve that debate; indeed, I make no claims about the historical reality of an ethnic group, whether called "Aryan," "Indian" or "Indo-German." Rather, I seek to bring historical perspective to this debate by illustrating the political and rhetorical uses to which the search for origins has been put, especially the origins of a semi-divine "culture people" (Kulturvolk) held to be responsible for bringing civilization and progress to the rest of humanity.

Aryan invasion / migration theory and German anti-Semitism are two sides of the same coin, linked not only in the sense that both ideas emerged concurrently in German Indology or that both ideas are referred to each other. Rather, the two ideas conjointly articulate a complex notion of theological favor, which is the real source of their dynamism and validity. History is being driven by the theological question of primacy and succession, or, stated otherwise, by a sibling rivalry between Christianity and Judaism.

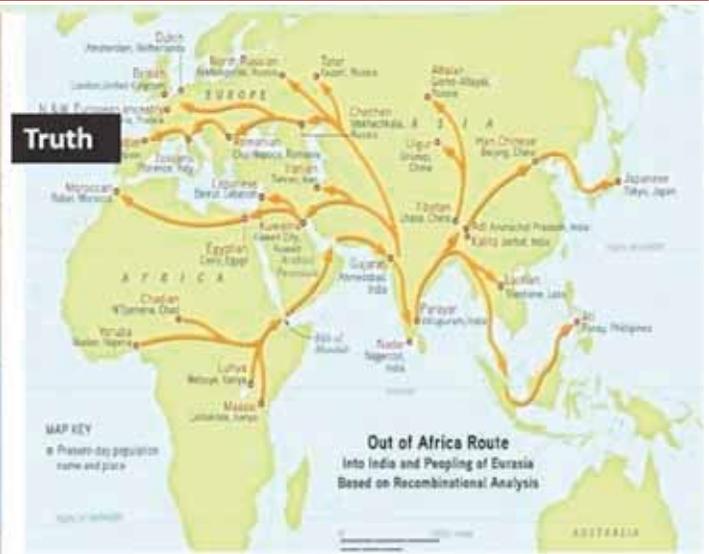
The theological debate about whether the Jews were the "chosen people" could not be settled in theological terms because the books of the Old Testament did not permit an unambiguous determination about the status of

**By Vishwa Alduri**

Jesus as the Messiah. As communities of the Hebrew Bible continued to exist alongside the Christians, this theological debate was ultimately transferred to history. The terms Aryan and Semitic are successor "historical" terms for the theological terms Christian and Jewish, representing the transposition into history of what was originally a theological debate. This transfer into history can be traced back to the very origins of the modern concept of History, which go back to the Reformer Martin Luther and his historicist-philologist successors such as Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel. The question of "Aryans" is thus indissolubly linked with the question of the "Semites," as will become evident toward the end of the nineteenth century. But even in its earliest use in Germany, "Aryan" is framed as the counter-concept to Jewish identity. Consider, for example, the work of Friedrich Wilhelm Schlegel (1772-1829) titled *Über die Sprache und Weisheit der Indier (1808)*, in which he first promulgated the idea of a semi-divine race of Sanskrit-speaking humans responsible for civilizing the rest of the world.

Friedrich W. Schlegel's use of the term [Aryan] suggests that the Christian narrative of expulsion from paradise was superimposed onto historical accounts of

# Aryan Invasion-Migration of India and German Anti-Semitism



the migration into Germanic Europe of an expansionist Aryan people from an idealized, primordial Asian homeland. In 1819, Friedrich W. Schlegel had introduced the word "Aryan" into the vocabulary of German philologists while trying to reconcile Old Testament notions of divine revelation with that secular history of human origins which J. G. Rhode had constructed from passages in the Zend-Avesta. Schlegel suggested that the word of God had been imparted in an "Aryan language" that was closely related to Avestan (Zend) and to Sanskrit; this "primordial, mother tongue" was "multi-syllabic and organic." The ancient people (Stammvolk) chosen to receive it were likewise called "Aryans," and they lived in the mountainous heights between Persia and India.

Schlegel believed the ancient Germanic tribes to be the direct descendants of these people. "Our German ancestors," Schlegel wrote, had been known by the "name of Aryans" while still in Asia and they had been a "warlike, heroic people." He interpreted the Sanskrit root "Ari" as meaning "splendid and excellent, famous" and related it to the German word for honor, "Ehre." The frequency with which it appeared in archaic German names for heroes pointed, in his mind, to the close historical ties between modern German-speakers and the chosen people of revelation.

(quoted from Benes, "From Indo-Germans to Aryans," 175-76)

August Wilhelm Schlegel's essay "De l'origine des Hindous" (1834) is the earliest source for the biracial theory of Indian history—that is, the view that the Indian population comprises two heterogeneous races: one advanced and civilizing, the other primitive and subjugated. In this essay, A. Schlegel (1767-1845) speculated on the location of the Aryan homeland:

And this central country, where are we to look for it, if not in the interior of the great continent, in the vicinity and to the east of the Caspian Sea? ... The most ancient testimonies indicate to us Bactriana as the seat of a high civilization. My hypothesis is that the ancestors of the Persians and of the Hindus have thus emigrated from there toward the south-west and the south-east; those of the European peoples toward the west and the north.

(A. W. Schlegel, "De l'origine des Hindous," 444-45).

Christian Lassen (1800-1876), a seminal figure in the Aryan debate, lent material reality to the concept of an Aryan race by claiming he had found evidence for the primordial conflict through which the Aryans had secured mastery over India. Born in Bergen, Norway in 1800, Lassen had moved to Germany with his mother after the death of his father in 1818. He remained there for the rest of his life. After studying with August W.

Schlegel in Bonn (1821-1824), he went to Paris and London for further studies, finally receiving his *venia legendi* from Bonn in 1827 for a dissertation on the geography and history of ancient Panjab reconstructed mainly based on travelers' tales and the Mahabharata. Lassen is most noted for his magnum opus, the four-volume *Indischer Alterthumskunde* published between 1847 and 1862, which was to have a defining influence on all future Indian historiography. In this work, Lassen forged an opposition between the Indogermanic and Semitic "races." Here is Lassen on the Semitic people.

History is evidence that the Semites lacked the harmonious balance of all psychic powers through which the Indo-Germans became preeminent. [...] The Semite cannot separate the relationship of the world to man in general from the relationship of the world to his own 'I.' He cannot represent ideas in the mind in pure objectivity. His way of looking at things is subjective and egotistical. His poetry is lyrical [and] hence subjective. His spirit expresses its joy and its pain, its love and its hatred, its admiration and its scorn. [...] Even if he expands his horizon it is only to represent his tribe as an individual over against other tribes. [...] He is unsuccessful at

[creating] epic because here the 'I' of the poet recedes before the object [and] even less at dramatic works, which demand that the poet shed his personality even more completely. [In contrast,] the Indo-Germans possess, alongside the lyrical, also the other genres of poetry. They alone produced a national



*Christian Lassen*

drama. They alone produced the great heroic poems [Heldengedichte] that reflect the great deeds of antiquity handed down in the legend in glorified form, that present the entire worldview of the spirit of a people [Volksgestes] to us and are present as the result of the poetic effort of an entire people. The Semite is lacking in the material of the epic, but not the saga, which he poetically ornaments and develops but does not combine into larger cycles and, instead, preserves in his memory as primordial history.

(Lassen, *Indische Alterthumskunde*, 1: 414-15)

As Benes notes, "In Lassen's analysis, it was impossible that India had been the original German homeland: an Aryan people would never have let itself be conquered by a tribe of darker skin color. Ancient Aryans, he wrote, always proved to be 'the dominant,

victorious race (Geschlecht), successfully driving away (verdrängen) the 'weaker, yielding' natives who lacked equivalent 'power.' According to Lassen, the original 'black natives' of India were 'defeated races' just like 'the Australian Negroes... and the red men of America.' The Aryans distinguished themselves as 'white people' and represented, to Lassen, 'the more perfectly organized, entrepreneurial and creative nation.' In India this unequal relationship had, he believed, been consolidated politically in the caste system. The Sanskrit word for caste, Lassen noted, originally meant 'color,' (referencing Varna) and while the three dominant Aryan castes, including the Brahmins, had 'the whitest color,' the indigenous underclass had 'the darkest.'" Lassen had a significant influence on historians of India. Basham, for instance, claimed, "The Indische Altertumskunde is a milestone in the progress of the science of Indology. In it Lassen distills the quintessence of all the contemporary knowledge of the subject, adding much of his own. No other single hand has since produced so monumental a survey of the history of early India." Regrettably, Lassen's approach led to the thoroughgoing racialization of Indian history, indeed, to the reformulation of the science of history as a racial anthropology or epidemiology. But back to the impact of Lassen's work on the Semitic people:

It was Christian Lassen, Schlegel's student and



*Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel*

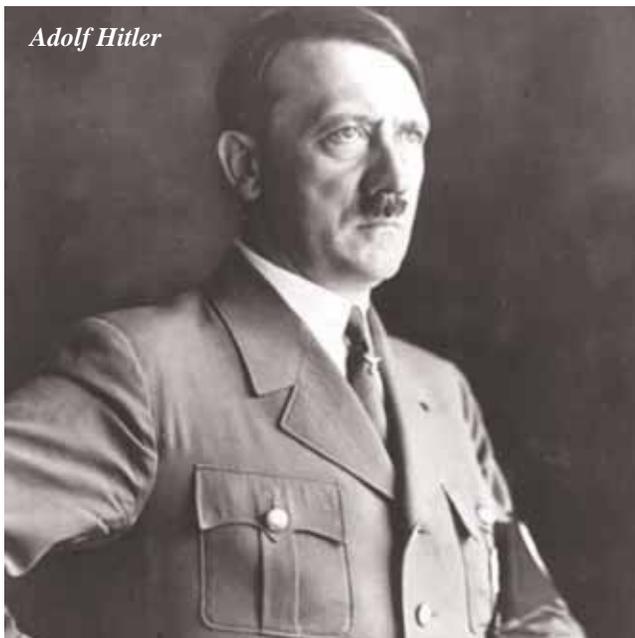
successor at the University of Bonn, who, like his more famous contemporary Ernst Renan in France, had in his massive study of language contrasted the superior Aryans to the inferior Semites. In contrast to the creative Aryans, imbued with a sense of balance and harmony and an appreciation of the beauty of the natural world, Lassen portrayed the Semites (including Arabs and Jews) as a people devoid of self-control and possessed by unbridled egoism. Lassen's writings drew considerable

attention in racist circles and heavily influenced a generation of German racist scholars, propagandists, and writers.

*(William I. Brustein, Roots of Hate, 130)*

Among the manifold outgrowths that Lassen's ideas were to have, it bears mentioning that in one way or another, all maps of Aryan migration or invasion such as German Scholar and Nazi Party member, Hans Friedrich Karl Günther's (1891-1968) map of "the conquest campaigns of Satem-Indo-Germanic-hood" (*Eroberungszüge des Satem-Indogermanentums*) in his 1934 publication *Die nordische Rasse bei den Indogermanen Asiens* are directly or indirectly indebted to Lassen's theory of a racial conflict in Indian prehistory. The subtitle of Günther's work-*Zugleich ein Beitrag zur Frage nach der Urheimat und Rassenherkunft der Indogermanen* (simultaneously a contribution to the question of the original homeland and racial origin of the Indo-Germans)-illustrates how the question of Aryan migration had now become inextricably linked with the establishment of German racial superiority. Adolf Hitler himself owned six books of Günther's in his private collection and was strongly influenced by his race research. The logic of othering that German scholars introduced had real consequences for vast tracts of humanity-the Holocaust being the most prominent example of the savage violence the specifically German conception of "history" unleashed.

Once the Aryan race theory was transposed into the Indian setting, it required one final element to become a permanent and real feature of Indian "history," namely, it had to be anchored in a "historical" source. Here is a quote from Lassen from his work on the *Mahabharata*: Since the Pañcala definitely belonged to the Aryan



*Adolf Hitler*



**Once the Aryan race theory was transposed into the Indian setting, it required one final element to become a permanent and real feature of Indian history, namely, it had to be anchored in a "historical" source, i.e. Mahabharata**

peoples, we may not interpret the relationship between them and the Pandavas in such a way that the former, through the black color ascribed to Krishna [i.e., Draupad?] should be understood as being described as belonging to the black natives of India, the latter as the white Aryans. Nonetheless, the distinction in terms of color must have a meaning, and this can only be that the Pañcala, as well as the Yadava who are represented by Krsnaa [Vasudeva], both belonged to the Aryan peoples who had immigrated [into India] earlier, [that they] had become darker through the influence of the climate than the more recent immigrants from the north and, in contrast to these, were called the black ones.

(Lassen, *Indische Alterthumskunde*, 1: 643)

Henceforth, all Hindu texts could be read as "evidence" of the slow darkening of the white races that came into India. German Indologists such as Garbe and Oldenberg explicitly undertook a reading of Indian culture in terms of race. Naturally, the positive elements (that is, those these scholars viewed positively) of Indian texts, religion, and society were attributed to hypothetical "Aryans," whereas elements these scholars disliked were considered "aboriginal," "Hindu," or "black" in origin.

There is no bridge from the radiant forms of the Veda to the forms of the modern gods [of Hinduism], whose monstrous representations with their tastelessly multiplied animal limbs and so on, should be familiar to all, at least as a type. In spite of their Aryan names, I consider the modern Hindu gods-Shiva, Vishnu, Durga, Hanuman, and whatever else they may be called-not for

Aryan conceptions, but for conceptions of the aborigines.

(Garbe, *Indische Reiseskizzen*, 85)

What has triumphed is the power we call "Hinduism." Its gods are the misshapen, wild, cruel, [and] lascivious Hindu gods, at their head Shiva and Vishnu. Its books are the gigantic epic, the Mahabharata, and an unsurveyable host of literature . . . A transformation that affects the innermost core of the people, of the soul of the people. Mixing with the dark-skinned aborigines transforms the invaders, causes the Aryan to turn into the Hindu.

(Oldenberg, *Indologie*, 640)

In the sultry, moist, tropical lands of the Ganges, highly endowed by nature with rich gifts, the people who were in the prime of youthful vigour when they penetrated hither from the north, soon ceased to be young and strong. Men and peoples come rapidly to maturity in that land, like the plants of the tropical world, only just as rapidly to fall asleep both bodily and spiritually. [. . .] The Indian has above all, at an early stage, turned aside from that which chiefly preserves a people young and healthy, from the battle and struggle for home, country, and law.

(Oldenberg, *Buddha: His Life, His Doctrine, His Order*, 11-12)

German Indologists' historical accounts about ancient India were neither objective nor secular. The Indologists lacked historical training. What they peddled as "history" was, in fact, racial prejudices disguised in teleological terms (for example, that it was natural for the "stronger" race to defeat the "weaker"). We must learn to recognize that the "history" we have been told is fundamentally a racial history. Even indigenous accounts of history (see, for example, the work of D. D. Kosambi) attest to this racial bias. In many ways, the "official" history of India has functioned as an apology for colonization and a legitimation for cultural and ethnic genocides.



### About the Author



#### Vishwa Alduri

Holds a PhD degrees in Philosophy (New School for Social Research) and in Indology (Philipps Universität Marburg) and teaches Religion and Philosophy at Hunter College, New York.



### Control Your Tongue

The pen is mightier than the sword, but even mightier than the pen is the tongue. The tongue has no bones but has the power to crush many. Words are extremely powerful and can do much damage. God has given us two ears and one mouth; His way of saying that we should listen twice as much as we should speak. Think before opening your mouth, "Am I going to say something useful, or should I just be quiet?" Speak only when it is essential to do so. Even then choose your words very carefully. You will be thankful you did.



There are times when you feel that you just cannot control your tongue, and at that point you know you are going to regret your words later. Remember at that crucial moment that a hundred regrets and a thousand apologies cannot mend the damage caused by one thoughtless or malicious word. You may be very kind and helpful, but if you speak angrily to someone, he will forget all the good you have done and remember only the words of anger that escaped from your mouth.

Wise ones speak to communicate some great thought, whereas the fool speaks for the sake of saying something. We have been gifted with the power of speech. It becomes our responsibility to make sure that we speak sparingly. And when we do speak, we must make sure that our words are kind and benevolent, giving happiness to all who hear them.

And finally, "It is better to keep quiet and have the world think you a fool than to open your mouth and remove all doubt."

### Seek Good Advisors

The most successful men and women in the world surround themselves with intelligent advisors. No one can be an expert in every single area, and for this reason,

experts from various fields are necessary to impart good advice and provide essential feedback.

In ancient times kings and emperors relied heavily on advisors. In the modern context, prime ministers and presidents of nations would not be able to guide their country effectively without seeking advice from knowledgeable people. There is not a single CEO of a company who does not rely on regular advice. Everyone needs counsel from time to time.

Advisors can be extremely helpful or harmful. Therefore, they need to be selected with extreme care. Beware the 'yes man.' He will say 'yes' to all that you say. You need advisors who are not afraid to say, "I don't agree with you on this; here is my suggestion." Make sure your advisor does not have a hidden agenda. He must have your welfare on his mind. This is why parents usually serve as the best advisors for a child.

Your advisors must stand on the same moral stance as you in order to serve your best interest. If truth is dear to you, do not seek counsel from an admitted liar. If you are a recovering alcoholic, you should not seek advice from someone who says, "Go ahead; one little drink won't kill you."

It is a wise individual who listens to intelligent advisors and seeks their counsel.

### Get Smart! Be Aware!

What are we really eating and drinking these days? Have you checked the ingredients? How much sugar went into the soft drink that your child just gulped down?

What is corn syrup? What are those ingredients whose names you cannot pronounce? How much salt is there in your favorite brand of potato chips? What goes into the making of sports drinks? Is it really fruit juice



you are offering your child, or is it a fruit drink with only 10% real juice?

You do not need to give me the answers to these questions. You must give them to yourself. Be fully aware of what you are putting into your mouth. How many chemicals are you ingesting every day? Is the fake butter really as good as the real thing? And just why is it better than the real thing?

Have you ever wondered why fast food is so cheap? When did they prepare that food? Who prepared it? What nutritional value does it have? What is the reason behind so many diseases we are suffering from? Why do so many children have a peanut allergy? Why are we eating food that is genetically modified? Do we really believe that our food choices have nothing to do with our physical health?

Should we not find out what is in the products we are using? Can we substitute the harmful chemical laden cleaning products with natural things such as baking soda and vinegar? Have we become advanced or just plain stupid? Why are we not paying more attention to what we are eating, drinking and using?

Read the labels. If the package has a long list of unfamiliar ingredients, take the time to find out what they are. Look for healthy substitutes for the unhealthy snacks and foods. Use the various learning tools you have at your disposal to make more intelligent choices.

Get smart! Be aware!

### **Stress Management & Spirituality**

While explaining stress management to an audience, a lecturer raised a glass of water and asked, "How heavy

is this glass of water?" Answers ranged from 20g to 500g. The lecturer replied, "The absolute weight doesn't matter. It depends on how long you try to hold it. If I hold it for a minute, that's not a problem. If I hold it for an hour, I'll have an ache in my right arm. If I hold it for a day, you'll have to call an ambulance. In each case, it's the same weight, but the longer I hold it, the heavier it becomes." He continued, "And that's the way it is with life. If we carry our burdens all the time, sooner or later, the burden becomes increasingly heavy and we won't be able to carry on. As with the glass of water, you have to put it down for a while and rest before holding it again. When we're refreshed, we can carry on with the burden."

We all carry several burdens throughout life. These are related to matters such as work, family and health, and can leave us feeling 'heavy' after a while. If you let it go on for long, it will consume you and it can affect your physical, mental and emotional health. We see and experience this in our lives on a daily basis. Unfortunately, we either do not rest or refresh ourselves or we seek that refreshment in wrong places and things.

How can we best mitigate the stress of our lives? You can start by setting the glass down and handing it over to God. Your burden will start to lighten immediately. Slowly, you will learn to trust Him to hold the glass for a while. You slowly start to feel renewed and refreshed.



Visit [www.radhamadhavsociety.org](http://www.radhamadhavsociety.org)

Email: [s\\_didi@radhamadhavsociety.org](mailto:s_didi@radhamadhavsociety.org)

## **Women's Empowerment and What It Means to Me**

*Continued from page 23* our families. It is essential that we give back to society through various volunteer opportunities. Women especially as nurturers are invaluable volunteers in various settings. It will take planning and effort to set aside some time out of our lives to volunteer, but the rewards far outweigh what we put in. In the long run, not only will we respect ourselves, but we will also gain the respect of those around us.

For those of us who are mothers, the most important duty that we have as women is to raise confident daughters who have the strength and integrity to stay true to themselves. We must have the confidence to set our daughters free and defend their right to define their own destiny. If we have to fight society or even our immediate family to achieve this, we must have the courage of conviction to do so. The journey to find themselves will ultimately be the experience that transforms our daughters into powerful women in their own right.

We are very lucky to be Hindu women. As the world struggles to move forward in leveling the playing field for women, we don't have to look too far for inspiration. Our sages have already provided us with elevated thoughts and ideas regarding women through our scriptures. In Manusmriti it is said that 'yatra naryastu pujanya ramante tatra devatah' (ह्यत्र नर्यस्तु पुज्या रमन्ते तत्र देवताः) which loosely translated means that 'where women are respected, there the Gods reside'. This wonderful concept is my dream of Heaven on Earth. If each of us resolve to treat all the women in our lives with highest respect at all times, there is no reason to doubt that this dream will one day become a reality.



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VP, Interfaith, Community & Government Relations	Sant Gupta	santguptava@gmail.com
Director, Newsletter & Monographs	Dr. Surendra Pandey	pandeyasn@yahoo.com
Hindu Chaplaincy	Shama Mehta	shama.mehta7@gmail.com
Calendar & Government Relations	Sandip Shah	shahsanjay@hotmail.com

**Prachar - Awareness, Media, Public Relations**

VP, Awareness, Media, Public Relations	Dr. Ajay Shah	shahajay@gmail.com
Director, PR & Media	Utsav Chakrabarty	utsavc@gmail.com
Coordinator, PR & Media	Monik Mehra	monikmehra@aol.com
Coordinator, PR & Media	Nirav Patel	nirav440@yahoo.com
Director, American Hindus Against Defamation (AHAD)	Dr. Ajay Shah	shahajay@gmail.com

**Prachar - Publications**

VP, Publications	Shyam Tiwari	srtiwari@hotmail.com
------------------	--------------	----------------------

**Sampark - Network**

VP, Networking	Sanjay Kaul	sanjaykaul@hotmail.com
Director, Inter Organizations Communication	Dr. Umesh Shukla	umeshshukla123@gmail.com
Convener, Hindu Mandir Executives Conference (HMEC)	Dr. Vipul Patel	patelvipulk@gmail.com
Director, Hindu Mandir Priests' Conference (HMPC)	Sant Gupta (Acting)	santguptava@gmail.com
Director, Hindu American Vanaprasthi Network (HAVAN)	Vinod Gupta	vinodgupta2005@yahoo.com
Co-Director, Hindu American Vanaprasthi Network (HAVAN)	Kumar Dave	kdave@sbcglobal.net
Co-Director, Hindu American Vanaprasthi Network (HAVAN)	Dr. Chandra Reddy	gavvac@aol.com
Director, HWN (Hindu Women's Network)	Kusum Khurana	kusum30068@yahoo.com
Advisor, HAVAN	Arvind Patel	patelvipulk@gmail.com

**Seva - Service**

VP, Seva	Renu Gupta	renurajvanshigupta@gmail.com
Director, Support A Child (SAC)	Jayant Daftardar	daftardarj@yahoo.com
Director, Seva in America (SIA)	Mani Keeran	manikeeran@gmail.com
Director, Disaster Relief	TBD	
Advisor, Seva	Girish Gandhi	karnavati45@gmail.com

**Finance**

VP, Finance	Vimal Sodhani	vimalsodhani@yahoo.com
Treasurer (Advisor)	Jayesh Mehta	jayesh17@hotmail.com
Co-Treasurer	Anit Gupta	anitgupta@gmail.com
Co-Treasurer	Vasav Mehta	vasavmehta@gmail.com

**Infrastructure & Organizational Functions**

Coordinator, Training and Document Repository	Rakesh Kansara	rakeshkansara@yahoo.com
Co-Coordinator, Training and Document Repository	Toral Mehta	trexmehta@gmail.com
Co-Coordinator, Training and Document Repository	Geetika Tandon	plum@minutemanpress.com
Director, Technology	TBD	
Director, Membership	Raju Patel, TBD	purnayog108@gmail.com
Director, Office Matters	Gaurang Vaishnav	vicharak@gmail.com
Election Officer - Nomination	Nikhil Buch	nikhilbuch@yahoo.com
Election Officer	Dinesh Modh	nadi715@gmail.com
Joint General Secretary	Amitabh Mittal	amittal9@gmail.com
Joint General Secretary	Tejal Shah	tshahnj@hotmail.com
Organizing Secretary (NE)	Acting Sanjay Kaul	
Organizing Secretary (MW)	Sanjay Shah	shahsanjay@hotmail.com
Organizing Secretary (SE&S)	Sneha Mehta	snehajimehta@gmail.com
Organizing Secretary (WC)	TBD	
<b>General Secretary</b>	<b>Sanjay Mehta</b>	<b>mehtassm@gmail.com</b>
<b>President</b>	<b>Dr. Abhaya Asthana</b>	<b>abhayaji@gmail.com</b>
Advisory Board Chairperson	Jyotish Parekh	jparekh@sbcglobal.net



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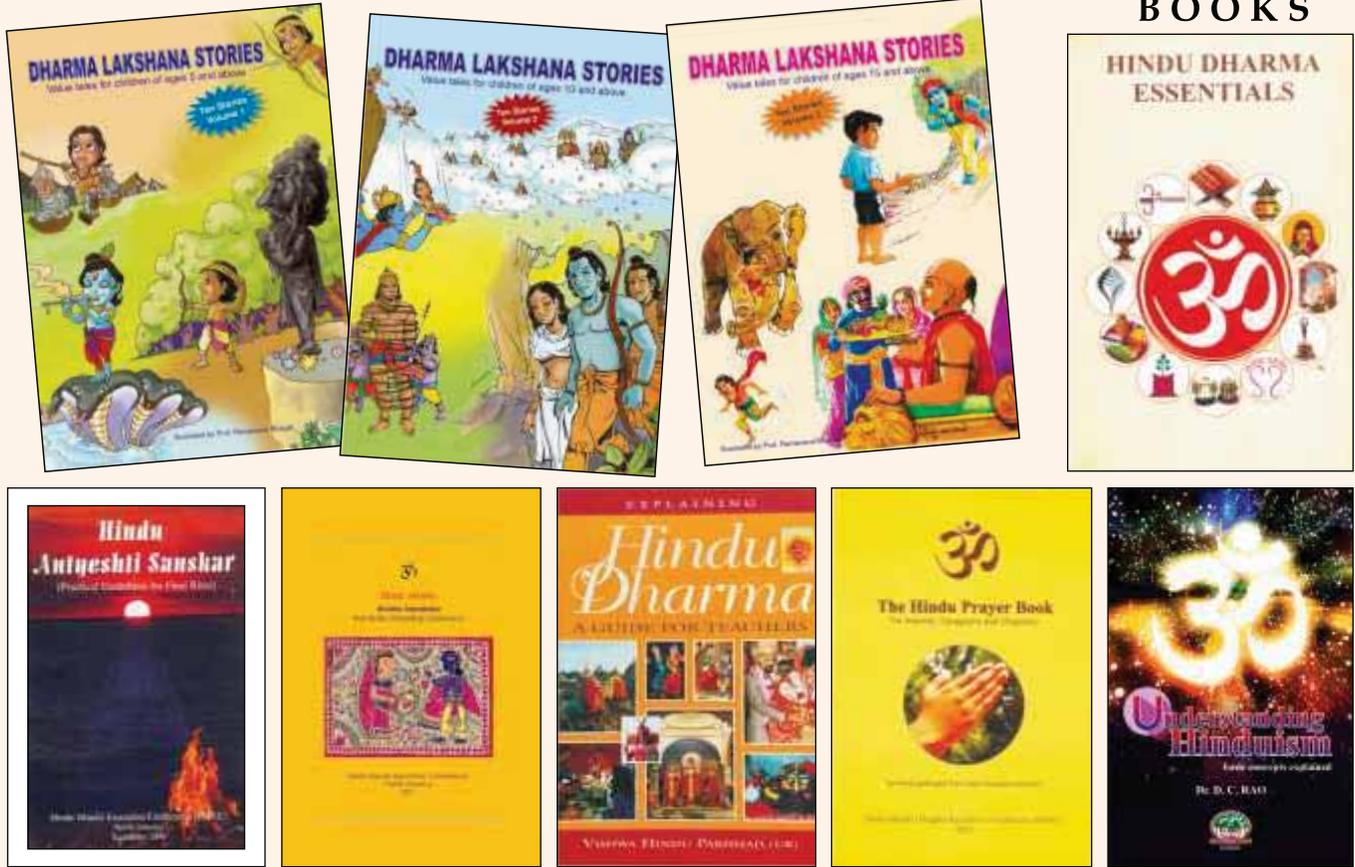
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*Om, Asato Maa Sad Gamaya; Tamaso Maa Jyotir Gamaya Mrityor Maa Amritam Gamaya*

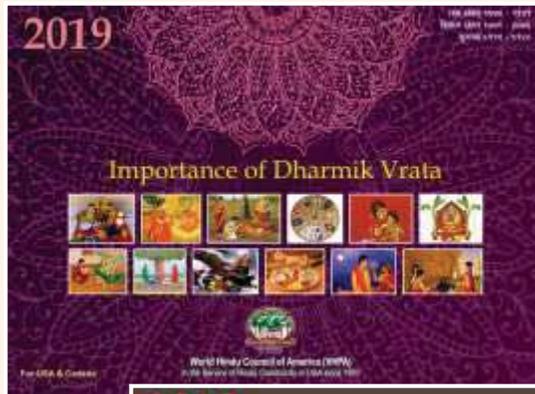
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