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HINDU VISHVA

Vishwa Dharma Digest

Shri Ram Janmabhoomi
Five Centuries of Colonial Subjugation Ends



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October-December 2019

पवनः पवतामस्मि रामः शस्त्रभृतामहम् ।
झषाणां मकरश्चस्मि स्रोतसामस्मि जाह्नवी ।।

भगवद् गीता १०-३१

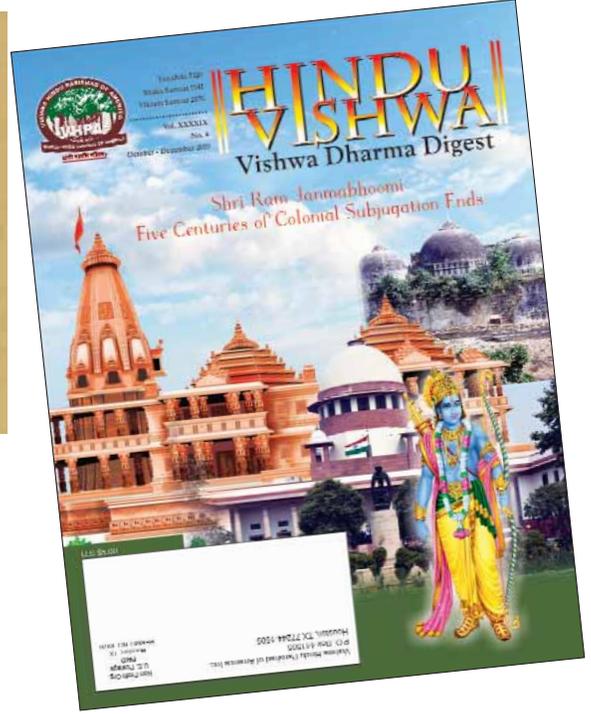
*Pavanah pavatam asmi ramah sastra bhrtam aham
jhasanam makaras casmi srotam asmi jahnvi*

Bhagvad Gita 10.31

Of the swift moving I am the wind, of all the wielders of weapons I
am Rama, of the fishes the alligator and of flowing rivers the river
Ganga.

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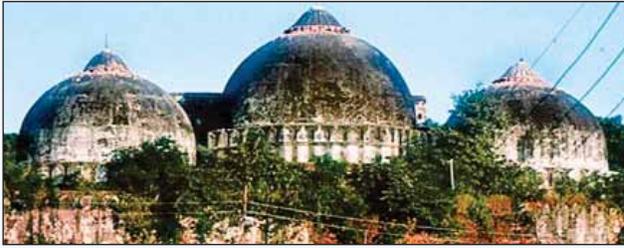
World Hindu Council of America (VHPA), founded in 1970 and incorporated in the state of New York in 1974, is an independent, nonprofit, tax-exempt and volunteer-based charitable organization serving the needs of Hindu community in USA. It aims to build a dynamic and vibrant Hindu society rooted in the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

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Take a Look Inside ...

Shri Ram Janmabhoomi Case

COVER STORY



Five Centuries of Colonial Subjugation Ends

The struggle for Ram Janmabhoomi has represented a struggle against barbarity that waves of colonial invaders brought to the Indian subcontinent over the past millennium.... That is why, for Hindus around the world, the 'Ram Janmabhoomi Movement' is a symbol of their centuries of struggle against colonialism and the brutality and tragedy that came with it

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Supreme Court Delivers Historic Verdict on Ayodhya Dispute

The Supreme Court of India ordered the disputed land (2.77 acres) to be handed over to a trust (to be created by Government of India) to build the Ram Janmabhoomi (revered as the birthplace of Shree Ram) temple. The court also ordered to give an alternate five acres of land in another place to the Muslims for the purpose of building a mosque.

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Puri's Govardhan Mutt moved out of Odisha government's control

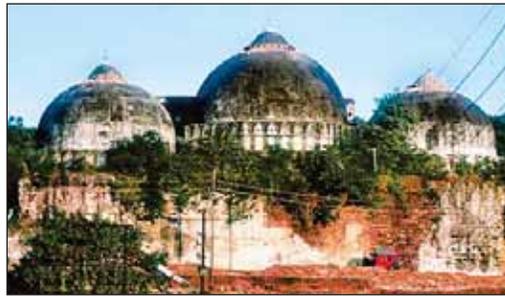
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Shri Ram Janmabhoomi

Five Centuries of Colonial Subjugation Ends

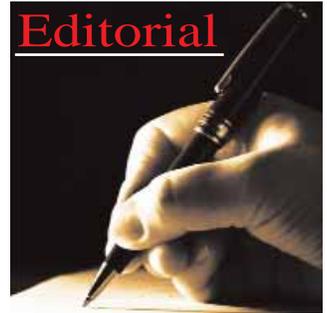
For nearly five centuries, the struggle for Ram Janmabhoomi has represented a struggle against barbarity that waves of colonial invaders brought to the Indian subcontinent over the past millennia. The ancient Temple that was destroyed in Ayodhya by the armies of Babur in 1526 CE, became a cause, a *raison d'être* for the native population of the Indian subcontinent.

Generation and after, refused to give up their struggle to reclaim it back. In the 17th century, Guru Gobind Singh (10th Sikh Guru and the founder of the Khalsa Panth) made multiple attempts to reclaim the site. The Marathas and then their successors, the Holkars, followed by a confederation of Hindu ascetics under the aegis of Nirmohi Akhara tried to reclaim Ram Janmabhoomi in the 18th century. It is a cause that was served by the sacrifice of thousands of Hindus, many of whom gave up their lives as they faced bullets while doing Karseva in 1990. This cause memorializes the women and children on Sabarmati Express, who were burnt alive in the tragic Godhra train pogrom of 2002.



That is why, for Hindus around the world, the 'Ram Janmabhoomi Movement' is a symbol of their centuries old struggle against colonialism and the brutality and tragedy that came with it. That is also why, to many Hindu Americans, their support for the

Editorial



movement is akin to the support that conscientious Americans gave to the Civil Rights movements, or to the movements of Native tribes to reclaim back their sacred grounds.

Finally, after seventy years of legal wrestling in the judiciaries of independent India, we have arrived at the last leg of our mission to reclaim Ram Janmabhoomi.

Collectively, Hindus in the US and around the world appreciate all the help received in this monumental struggle and continued support as we embark on the next phase of this journey. We hope that it will be the one, in which we can bring synergy to our efforts to bring about a positive experience, for future generations of Hindus from all over the world. ◆◆◆

Chronology of Ayodhya Dispute

- ★ 1528: 'Babri Masjid' built by Mir Baqi, commander of Mughal emperor Babur.
- ★ 1885: Mahant Raghbir Das files plea in district court seeking permission to build a canopy outside the disputed structure. Court rejects the plea.
- ★ 1949: Murti of Ram Lalla placed under central dome.
- ★ 1950: Paramahansa Ramachandra Das files suit for continuation of worship and keeping the idols.
- ★ Feb 1, 1986: Local court orders the government to open the site for Hindu worshippers.
- ★ Aug 14, 1989: Allahabad HC orders maintenance of status quo in respect of the disputed structure.
- ★ Dec 6, 1992: 'Babri Masjid' demolished.
- ★ 1993: Various writ petitions, including one by Ismail Faruqi, filed in Allahabad HC challenging various aspects of the Act. - SC transferred the writ petitions, which were pending in the High Court.
- ★ Oct 24, 1994: SC says mosque was not integral to Islam.
- ★ Sep 30, 2010: HC, in a 2:1 majority, rules three-way division of disputed area between Sunni Waqf Board, the Nirmohi Akhara and Ram Lalla.
- ★ May 9, 2011: SC stays HC verdict
- ★ Mar 21, 2017: CJI JS Khehar suggests out-of-court settlement among rival parties.
- ★ Sep 2018: SC declines to refer the case to a five-judge Constitution bench. Case to be heard by a newly constituted three-judge bench on October 29.
- ★ Jan 8, 2019: SC sets up a five-judge Constitution Bench to hear the case headed by Chief Justice Ranjan Gogoi.
- ★ Feb 26: SC favors mediation.
- ★ Aug 1: Report of mediation submitted in sealed cover to SC.
- ★ Aug 6: SC commences day-to-day hearing as mediation fails.
- ★ Oct 16: SC concludes hearing.
- ★ Nov 9: SC grants entire 2.77 acre of disputed land in Ayodhya to deity Ram Lalla, possession of land will remain with Central government receiver. SC also directs Centre and UP government to allot 5 acre land to the Muslims at a prominent place for building mosque. ◆◆◆



Trailblazing Hindu Mandir Executives' Conference in NJ

By Prakash Waghmare

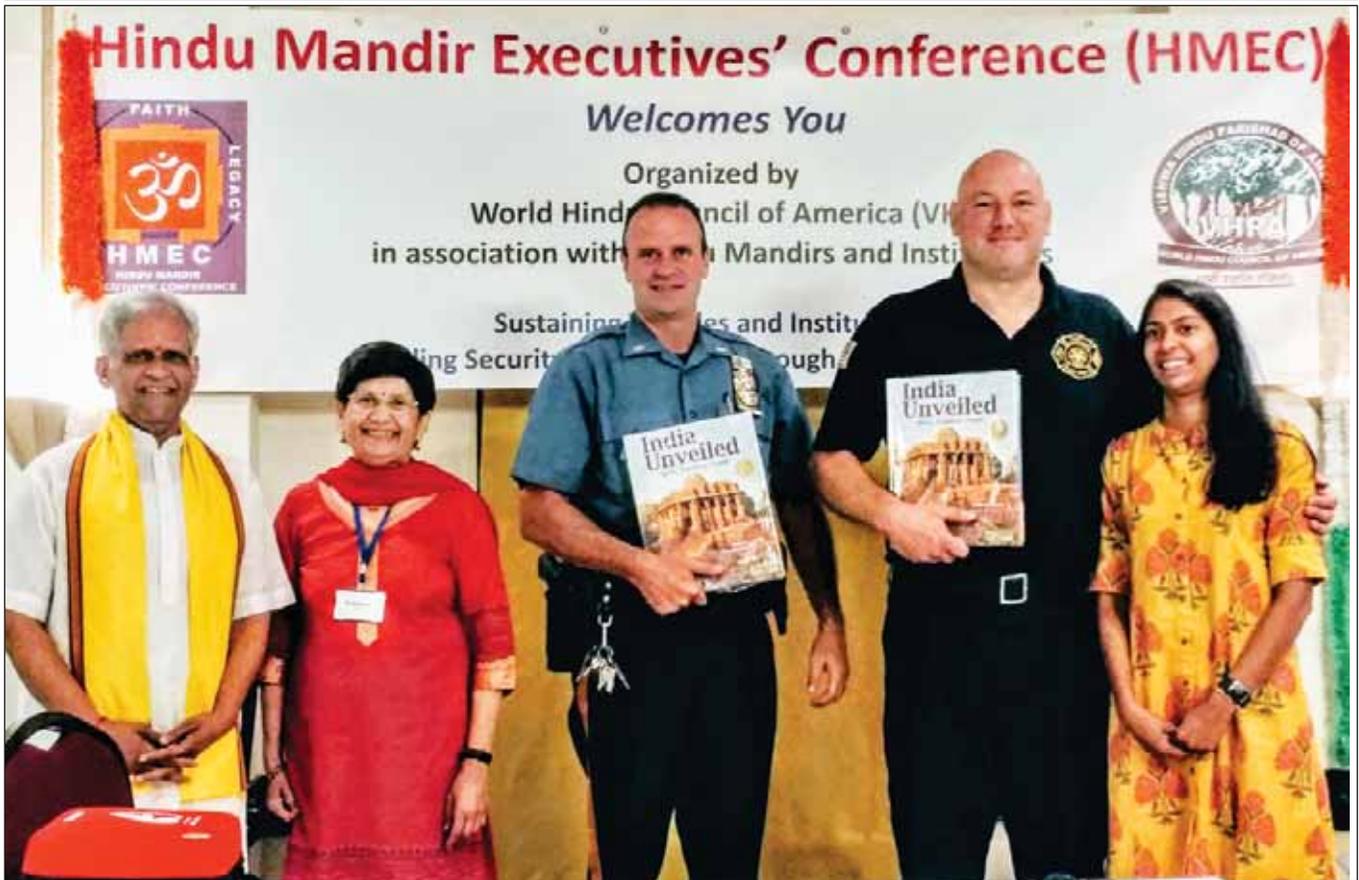


Vishwa Hindu Parishad of America (VHPA) sponsored historic 14th annual Hindu Mandir Executives' Conference (HMEC) in New Jersey concluded with resounding success on Sept 22 at Fairbridge Inn & Suites in East Hanover, N.J. This annual fair takes place in different regions of N. America, (includes Caribbean Islands), for the benefit of Hindu temples and religious organizations. The primary objective of this eminent gathering is to collectively enhance their relevance to the Hindu society-at-large and to the rising second generation. In this pioneering effort, VHPA's role is limited to that of a facilitator or a catalytic-supporter. According to Vipul Patel, the Convener, the theme of this year's HMEC was - "Sustaining Temples and Institutions by Building security and Strength through community Outreach and Seva programs". This year, several dozen Temples and Organizations participated in 3-day affair that had 35 speakers and approx. 200 delegates.

The main coordinators of the entire conference were Ami Patel, Tejal Shah and Sohini Sircar who kept the tightly paced sessions adequately focused on their subjects from the beginning. The conference began on Friday, September 20 evening with Swami Pratyagbodhanandaji, along with other seers, blessing the event with Sanskrit shlokas and lighting the auspicious lamp. This first session was devoted to safety initiatives and emergency precautions in case of Medical crisis, Fire, Vandalism or an active shooter prowling on the premises. This was expertly handled by representatives of 'Homeland Security', Chief Officers of local firefighting unit and emergency management unit.

Mark Curcio (Emergency Mgmt.) recommended that all places of worship should have a 'crisis management team', adequately installed surveillance gadgets, properly established rapport with local concerned authorities, and periodic safe evacuation drills under their supervision. Most of the temples it seemed lacked this preparedness. Sohini Sircar's (Hindu Student Council - 'HSC') weeks of interactions with these 'security professionals' was not only evident but also was overwhelmingly appreciated by them. Chaplain Shawn Lee's ('US Army Chaplaincy') assertion on how difficult it is to recruit qualified Hindu Chaplains for Army's spiritual wing came as a surprise to most of the people. This is something the Hindu diaspora needs to delve on in the interest of Hindu soldiers in the US Army.

Saturday, September 21 morning session focused on prevention, protection and sustenance. It dealt with adopting a public-relation road map for the surrounding community by educating children about Hindu culture in temple-based classroom, bringing our festivals on public platform to remove any misgivings rather than just internalizing their importance and adopting Seva projects. As part of community outreach by temples and institutions, Neha Srivastava suggested that they become catchment centers for society's ills and address issues like loneliness, caregiving, poverty, domestic violence resulting out of marital discord etc. Given an opportunity of 2 hrs. /wk. time and space, she offered to establish such pilot programs in temples that are willing to give a try. To sustain the cultural values among the college youths, Nikunj Trivedi of HSC gave insight into what they had accomplished in past 29 years. In spite of



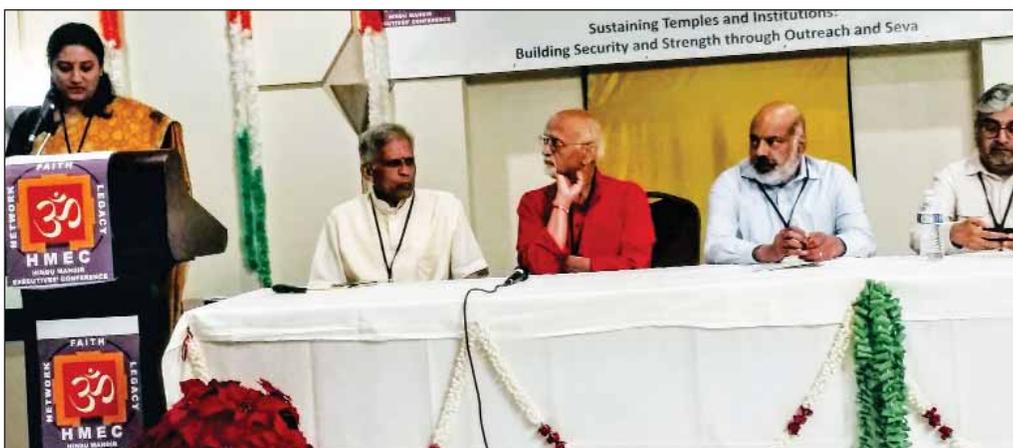
inadequate support system 150,000 students have been nurtured by them at 60+ college campuses.

HMEC is not only a vehicle for the executives of temples and religious organizations for their own networking, but also, to collectively overcome various hurdles faced by them by addressing commonality among them or by drafting reference charter-booklets. Abhaya Asthana, President of VHPA, along with his associate Sanjay Mehta (Gen Secretary, VHPA) expanded on this approach with Sant Gupta, Tejal Shah, Vinod Gupta explaining the subtext of it. It is remarkable to note that through HMEC initiative 'Hindu Mandir Priest Conference (HMPC)', Hindu Women Network (HWN), Hindu American Vanaprasthi Network

(HAVAN) have been established. Moreover, this has resulted in publication of informative books like Hindu Prayer Book and a book on Antimsanskar (last rites). Abhayaji, also talked on Hindu's biggest global event - World Hindu Congress - that took place last year in Chicago, USA where 3,000 delegates from 65 countries participated. Keeping up with the theme of the conference Swami Pratyagbodhananji, released a new book titled 'Hindu Temple Security Guidelines' that details the steps that need to be taken by the members of HMEC for the safety of their institutions and gatherings.

Saturday afternoon was devoted to 'Media' as a strategic tool of influence to connect with the larger audience and especially with our second generation. On

the outset, Ajay Shah who is vigilant about anti-Hindu defamation attempts, expressed displeasure about the way Hindus are portrayed in the Media by well-financed hate-groups. He advised that more concerted efforts on the part of Hindus are necessary to counter this onslaught. Continuing on



2017 Media-workshop, Fred Stella emphasized that HMEC cadre needs to be Media-savvy (print, audio-visual, Social-media etc.) as the technology is here to stay. He disclosed that, as the raw data was being compiled, a handbook, as a guide, to interact with the Media in positive manner was on its way. Bhakti Mehta-Modi, Parth Parihar and Yogi



Reconversion, and Temples as help-centers for the people in need - and not just acting as the citadel of rituals. Everyone agrees that spirituality in all its forms is not the only contribution of Hindus to U.S. To encapsulate and celebrate all their contributions & achievements a unique symposium - 'THREADS Conference 2019' - was hosted in Boston, MA on November 1-3. Jai Bansal, who is one of the conveners of this gathering revealed that the purpose is to share the story of Hindu-Americans, appreciate what

Jayanathaji touched on modern modes of communications prevalent among younger generation. As an off-shoot of previous HMECs, quite a few 'guidance books' are being prepared. Among them, some relate to youth issues, namely, love-hate relation with their own identity, silent suffering when ostracized, freewill marriage, social stigmas atypical to Hindus in alien culture, depression etc. In late afternoon there was a special youth session to tackle their existential problems.

The highlight of Sunday, September 22 was the deliberations on wide-spread 'religious conversions' in Caribbean Islands and in India. Pt. Ram Harodwar revealed that \$165 million were being spent in India alone to entice Hindus to change their religion and the government and the Hindu organizations need to arrest this illegal practice. In Guyana, it was alleged that there is a 25% drop in Hindu population since their arrival. The panel, consisting of Ram Sahadeo, Dwarka Persaud, Ram Harodwar and Fred Stella blamed the situation on governmental agencies, Hindu's callous indifference and religious extremists preying on the disadvantaged. The possible solutions? Education, Financial aid,

America has done to embrace them and increasingly engage them to shape a collective future.

For the benefit of participating institutions, Sanjay Mehta summarized the action items that the members had agreed on. The gathering resolved to (1) to create Hindu Seva and outreach portal, after database collection is complete (2) publish visitor's guide for various Temples spread across the landscape (3) establish 'HMEC Library' to catalogue progressive ideas, suggestions and practical projects. Before the historic conference came to an end, Bhakti Mehta-Modi made a constructive suggestion that it would serve everyone's interests if the 'Seniors' give more time and thought to what the youths have to say in executing any task. She further elaborated that the definition of respect for seniors has different resonance to the youths born in the USA and they also expect seniors to take them seriously and not brush them aside. The gathering appreciated VHPA's comprehensive efforts to bring various institutions together for collective brainstorming on issues that affect them the most.





Rakhigarhi and After-II: 'Invasion' or 'Migration'?

Editor's note: This is the Second part of the multipart article.

By Shrikant G Talageri

With the need to present a picture of superior intelligent academicians (themselves) versus antiquated yokels (us), the AIT proponents find it very convenient to divert the discussion on to side-issues such as the exact word to be used, and our failure to use it.

The whole question of whether the Indo-European languages were brought into India by the Steppe immigrants is often converted into an endless **Part II** quibble on the word "invasion". The whole discussion in the last three decades has been described as an AIT-vs.-OIT debate: "Aryan Invasion Theory" vs. "Out of India Theory". The basic point being discussed is of course whether immigrants from the Steppe brought the Indo-Aryan (=Indo-European) languages into India, entering through Central Asia between 2000-1000 BCE and replacing the local languages, religion and culture with their own. It has been variously described as an invasion (much more often than any of the other

descriptions), an immigration, and a process of "trickling-in". Witzel goes so far as to describe the process in the following incredible words: "small-scale semi-annual transhumance movements between the Indus plains and the Afghan and Baluchi highlands continue to this day (Witzel 1995:322, 2000) [...] Just one 'Afghan' IA tribe that did not return to the highlands but stayed in their Panjab winter quarters in spring was needed to set off a wave of acculturation in the plains by transmitting its 'status kit' (Ehret) to its neighbors" (WITZEL 2005:342).

But now, with the discussion on the relevant points getting too hot for them, and with the need to present a picture of superior intelligent academicians (themselves) versus antiquated yokels (us), the AIT proponents find it very convenient to divert the discussion on to side-issues such as the exact word to be used, and our failure to use it.

Witzel, for example, tells us (without also telling us that it is the rejection of the idea of an Aryan invasion, or even immigration, by archaeologists, including western ones, that has compelled them to stop using this word) that only "revisionists and autochthonists....still depend on the old, nineteenth century idea of a massive invasion of outsiders" (WITZEL 2005:347), and that more sophisticated scholars talk of an immigration or, as we saw above, of "small-scale semi-annual transhumance movements between the Indus plains and the Afghan and Baluchi highlands" (WITZEL 2005:342).

After the recent announcement of my new book, Tony Joseph twice saw fit to tweet on the subject, confining his comments only to the use of the word "invasion": on 12/3/2019, he tweeted "My book is not about 'Aryan invasion'. It is about 4 'prehistoric migrations' that formed the Indian population", and on 12/7/2019, he tweeted that my book "starts off with a wrong statement. The phrase 'Aryan invasion' doesn't appear in my book. Not even once!": as if to suggest that I have attributed false quotations to him which contain the word "invasion"! Indeed, being a well-trained propagandist, he does manage to avoid using this particular word in his writings, but then I have never directly accused him (or anyone else, even when they do actually use it) of using this word but only of describing an invasion and its aftermath and after-effects.

In the above mentioned recent article by Girish Shahane, he calls the idea of "invasion" a "strawman" created by the Hindutva supporters, and writes: "Hindutva activists, however, have kept the Aryan

Invasion Theory alive, because it offers them the perfect strawman, 'an intentionally misrepresented proposition that is set up because it is easier to defeat than an opponent's real argument'."

All this has led to some caution on the part of some of the people opposed to the AIT. Some, quite rationally, call it the AIT/AMT (the second term meaning "Aryan Migration Theory"). But some others feel bashful to call it an "Aryan Invasion Theory" at all because they feel it may draw flak from their "sophisticated" opponents, and then they get caught in the word-play trap laid by their opponents to divert the discussion into fruitless channels. It really does not matter whether you call it "invasion" or "migration": everyone knows we are talking about the alleged arrival and spread of immigrants from the Steppes who brought the Indo-European languages, as represented by the Vedic language along with a whole accompanying religion and culture.

But we cannot allow the AIT proponents to tell us which word is politically correct and which word we should use, and to set their own terminology and rules. It is inevitable and necessary to continue to use the word "invasion", though alternating, when it is more proper to the particular context, with the word "immigration"; and to refer to the AIT supporters as "AIT supporters" and to the AIT as "AIT". The AIT supporters are more dishonest: they act fastidious and adopt a fake holier-than-thou attitude when it comes to the word "invasion", and deride their opponents for using this word. But basically what they describe is nothing but an out-and-out invasion theory:



As we saw, Witzel tells us that only "revisionists and autochthonists [...] still depend on the old, nineteenth century idea of a massive invasion of outsiders" (WITZEL 2005:347), and that more sophisticated scholars talk of an immigration. In an earlier paper, he tells us that the "idea of a cataclysmic invasion has, in fact, been given up long ago by Vedic scholars" (WITZEL 1995b:323).

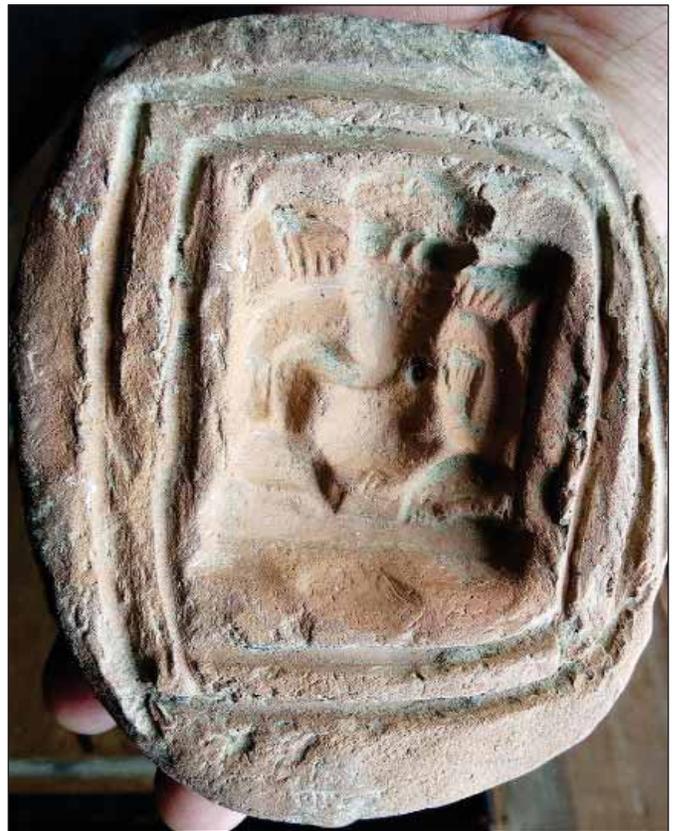
And then, in that very paper, he goes on to present us with a full-fledged invasionist account of the Indo-Aryan intrusion in the Harappan areas. As per this account, the Indo-Aryans fought their way through the mountains of Afghanistan, storming innumerable mountain fortresses, once after a long and bitter 40-year-long campaign, and finally reached the Harappan areas. "On the plains of the Panjab, the Indo-Aryans had further battles to fight", and the Rigveda, according to him, is replete with numerous "explicit descriptions of campaigns", in which the Indo-Aryans "destroyed" hundreds of forts and, on different occasions, "put to sleep", "put down" or "dispersed" 30,000, 50,000 and 100,000 natives (WITZEL 1995b:322-324)!

In another paper, he tells us that the Indo-Aryans had "new military techniques and tactics, especially the horse-drawn chariots", and that the "first appearance of thundering chariots must have stricken the local population with a terror similar to that experienced by the Aztecs and Incas upon the arrival of the iron-clad horse riding Spaniards" (WITZEL 1995a:114).

Witzel is very frequently quoted by Tony Joseph in his book, and is one of the "Advance Praisers" of the book, whose endorsement is quoted at the beginning of the book.

Shoib Daniyal, in the above mentioned paper, tells us: "David Reich explains that the preponderance of male Steppe DNA means that this encounter between the Steppe pastoralists and the people of the Indus Valley Civilization 'cannot have been entirely friendly'. This male bias is standard for Indo-European migration. In fact, when these Steppe pastoralists reached Europe, Reich's research found an even larger proportion of male Steppe genes. In large parts of Western Europe, Steppe migrants almost completely displaced local males in a short time span, leading to one Danish archeologist postulating that the coming of these Indo-European speakers 'must have been a kind of genocide'. This pattern, wrote David Reich in his 2018 book *Who We Are and How We Got Here*, 'is exactly what one would expect from an Indo-European-speaking people taking the reins of political and social power 4,000 years ago'".

Does all this sound like a "trickling-in" immigration, or an invasion?



Even when the supporters of the AIT, including the "geneticist" scientists, completely avoid using the word "invasion" or describing it graphically as above, the very situation they are describing is a purely invasionist situation. Let us examine what exactly they are telling us:

To begin with, their date of 2000-1000 BCE was based on a middle point between, on the one hand, the point of time, around 3000 BCE, when the different and later widely separated branches are linguistically known to have been "together" in an area of mutual interaction and contact where they still developed words and contexts in common, and on the other, the point of time, around 600 BCE, the period of the Buddha, when it is known from detailed records that Indo-Aryan languages were being spoken by settled inhabitants all over North India as far east as Bengal and Bihar.

The present genetic data, on the basis of which these geneticists and their followers have claimed "genetic evidence" for these (Indo-European speaking) Steppe people spreading through Central Asia to India, is based only on the ancestries of three groups of ancient DNA from the northernmost part of Pakistan, the Swat Valley, as late as after 1200 BCE. There is no earlier date-wise evidence, and there is no ancient evidence south of the Swat Valley.

The geneticists and their various spokespersons clearly declare that the Steppe people did not exist south

of Central Asia before 2000 BCE: Tony Joseph, in his book, very categorically claims that "the Indo-European-language speakers" were still migrating "from the Kazakh Steppe" towards "present-day Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan" after 2100 BCE: till then there were no Indo-European-language speakers anywhere in South Asia. They started "towards south Asia" only after 2000 BCE, and they "trickled-in" slowly into a till-then non-Indo-European-language speaking South Asia only during the course of "the second millennium BCE (2000 BCE to 1000 BCE)".

In fact, Tony Joseph in one place has the proto-Indo-Aryans still to the west of the Ural mountains in 2000 BCE: "around 2000 BCE, they finally broke through - or went around - the Ural mountains and spread eastwards across the Steppe" (p.179).

This is fully in line with the regular citing of the Sintashta site (far to the north and west of Kazakhstan, from 2100-1800 BCE) as a pre-Vedic site by these AIT "scholars" (see Tony Joseph's book). Also Shoaib Daniyal above: "In his remarkable 2007 book *The Horse, The Wheel, and Language*, David Anthony, a professor of anthropology and one of the world's leading authorities on Indo-European migration, pointed out that funeral sacrifices at Sintashta, an archaeological site all the way out on the Russian Steppe 'showed startling parallels with the sacrificial funeral rituals of the Rig Veda'".

All this very clearly emphasizes the extreme geographical distance of these "Steppe Aryans" from India, and their total non-acquaintance with India, before 2000 BCE.

The genetic evidence now cited basically has only two valid points:

a) The Harappan DNA (as proved by the three Indus Periphery specimens from the north and west of the Harappan area in the Harappan period, now confirmed by the Rakhigarhi specimen from an area east of the Harappan core areas also in the Harappan period) did not contain Steppe ancestry.

b) The present-day population all over India does have Steppe DNA as part of their ancestry.

The obvious conclusion should be that this happened at some time between the Harappan era and the present-day.

But this purely post-Harappan evidence (only from after 1200 BCE) and only from the northern Swat Valley is gratuitously treated as clinching "genetic evidence" that the Steppe people had spread all over the entire Vedic area in the period following the Harappan age,



precisely between 2000-1000 BCE!

Let us, for arguments' sake, accept all these points:

a) The Steppe people were still connected to areas beyond Kazakhstan all the way to the Urals, and totally unconnected with areas south of Central Asia, till 2000 BCE.

b) They had spread all over the area from southern and eastern Afghanistan to Haryana and western U.P. by 1000 BCE.

c) They had composed the text of the Rigveda, as Tony Joseph reiterates in his recent book on the authority of Michael Witzel, "between 1400 BCE and 1000 BCE" (p.177).

Then we end up with the absolutely incredible and impossible situation that these people who crossed over from Central Asia only after 2000 BCE (even if we assume they were waiting en masse at the borders and started pouring in like a flood as soon as the flood-gates were opened at the stroke of midnight on the New Year's Day of 2000 BCE), had so completely replaced or transformed the entire population (the teeming millions of the massive Harappan civilization) over the whole area from southern and eastern Afghanistan through the Punjab to the whole of Haryana and the westernmost parts of U.P. within 600 years (2000-1400 BCE), that the orthodox and traditionalist text, the Rigveda, composed by them over 400 years from this point of time, has the following characteristics:

1. It contains no memories at all of any place beyond the borders of southern and eastern Afghanistan, much less memories of having come from places far beyond these areas, and in fact shows deep and traditional reverence for the geography of the local area.

2. It contains not even the faintest sign or reference showing the contemporaneous or past presence in the area of any person or entity, friend or foe, with non-Indo-European (much less specifically Dravidian, Austric, Burushaski, Sino-Tibetan, Andamanese, Uralo-Altaiic, Semitic, Sumerian, or any other) names.

3. It has undoubtedly or arguably Indo-European (=Indo-Aryan) names for all the local geographical words in the Rigveda:

a) places (Gandhari, Saptasaindhava, Ilaspada, Kikata),

b) mountains (Mujavat, Susoma, Arjik),

c) lakes (Manusa, saryanavati),

d) trees, plants and grasses (kimsuka, khadira, salmali, asvattha, simsapa, simbala, parna, aratu, vibhidaka, pippala, urvaruka, vetasa, darbha, muñja, sarya, sairya, kusara, vairina, and in the Yajurveda and Atharvaveda: iksu, bilva, nyagrodha, sami, plaksa, pippali),

e) animals (ibha, hastin, varana, mahisa, anupa, gaura, mayura, prsati, ustra, varaha, mathra, chaga, vrsni, ura, mesha, sinha, simsumara, salavrka, kusumbhaka, cakravaka, casa, and in the Yajurveda and Atharvaveda: kasyapa, kapi, vyaghra, prdaku, sardula, khadga, ajagara, nakra, krkalasa, nakula, jahaka, salyaka, kurma, jatu, anyavapa, krkavaku, kapiñjala, tittiri, kalavinka, kanka, krauñca, grdhra, suka) and

f) rivers (Ganga, Jahnavi, Yamuna, Drsadvati, Hariyupiya, Yavyavati, apaya, Sarasvati, sutudri, Vipas, Parusni, Asikni, Marudvrdha, Vitasta, Arjikiya, Susoma, Sindhu, Tristmama, Susartu, Anitabha, Rasa, Sveti, Shvetyavari, Kubha, Krumu, Gomati, Sarayu, Mehatnu, Prayiyu, Vayiyu, Suvastu, Gauri, Kusava).

[Although desperate attempts have been made to find "non-Indo-European" words among the flora and fauna names in particular, it has been a failed linguistic exercise. For people who argue, without logic, that Sutudri is a "non-Aryan" word and Kikata is an Austric word because Sanskrit words cannot begin with ki- and such words are actually Austric words (!): the first word contains the Indo-European -udr-, "water", and the Indo-Aryan Mitanni writer of the horse-training manual in ancient Iraq was named Kikkuli].

Witzel in particular had the following to say on the river-names: "In Europe, river names were found to reflect the languages spoken before the influx of Indo-European speaking populations. They are thus older than c. 4500-2500 B.C. (depending on the date of the spread of Indo-European languages in various parts of Europe)" (WITZEL 1995a:104-105). But, in sharp contrast, "in northern India rivers in general have early Sanskrit names from the Vedic period, and names derived from the daughter languages of Sanskrit later on." (WITZEL 1995a:105). This is "in spite of the well-known conservatism of river names. This is especially surprising in the area once occupied by the Indus Civilization where one would have expected the survival of older names, as has been the case in Europe and the Near East. At the least, one would expect a palimpsest, as found in New England with the name of the state of Massachusetts next to the Charles river, formerly called the Massachusetts river, and such new adaptations as Stony Brook, Muddy Creek, Red River, etc., next to the

adaptations of Indian names such as the Mississippi and the Missouri". According to Witzel, this alleged "failure to preserve old hydronomes even in the Indus Valley" is indicative of "the extent of the social and political collapse experienced by the local population" (WITZEL 1995a:106-107).

Even if anyone were (and very many are) stupid enough or dishonest enough to accept the above impossible situation as a possibility, could anyone in their senses deny that the whole alleged scenario indicates not a "trickling-in" immigration, but a bloody and genocidal invasion followed by a process of total mass-hypnosis and mass-amnesia?

So, let us not allow dishonest politically-motivated "scholars" to dictate to us what words to use in debate. At least in this case, "invasion" is the exact word which describes what the AIT supporters are postulating. Whatever they call it, and whatever we call it, they are supporters of an "Aryan Invasion Theory".

Why are the supporters of the geneticists objecting to the use of the word "invasion" even when what they are describing is a bloody and genocidal invasion which is supposed to have completely and magically transformed the entire Harappan area to this impossible extent in a short period between some point after 2000 BCE (when they claim that the Steppe people first stepped into India from Central Asia) and 1400 BCE (when they claim that the composition of the Rigveda commenced) - both these claims being based purely on the strength of the alleged presence of Steppe DNA in the northernmost Swat Valley as late as 1200 BCE?

What is more, the complete transformation suggested by the AIT is not restricted to language alone: "What is relatively rare is the adoption of complete systems of belief, mythology and language from neighboring peoples [...] Yet, in South Asia we are dealing precisely with the absorption of not only new languages but also of an entire complex of material and spiritual culture, ranging from chariotry and horsemanship to Indo-Iranian poetry whose complicated conventions are still actively used in the rigveda. The old Indo-Iranian religion, centered on the opposition of Devas and Asuras, was also adopted, along with Indo-European systems of ancestor worship." (WITZEL 1995a:112) - not to mention Indo-European names to replace all their local geographical words, and a sudden mass amnesia about whatever allegedly existed earlier.

The reason why they object to what they are describing being referred to as an "invasion" is because archaeology completely rejects the idea of any major change in the material culture and population in the Harappan area, which would have inevitably resulted

from such an invasion:

So much so that (to take just one such example) in an academic volume of papers devoted to the subject by western academicians, George Erdosy, in his preface to the volume, stresses that this is a subject of dispute between linguists and archaeologists, and that the idea of an Aryan invasion of India in the second millennium BCE "has recently been challenged by archaeologists, who- along with linguists- are best qualified to evaluate its validity. Lack of convincing material (or osteological) traces left behind by the incoming Indo-Aryan speakers, the possibility of explaining cultural change without reference to external factors and - above all - an altered world-view (Shaffer 1984) have all contributed to a questioning of assumptions long taken for granted and buttressed by the accumulated weight of two centuries of scholarship" (ERDOSY 1995:x).

Of the papers presented by archaeologists in the volume (being papers presented at a conference on Archaeological and Linguistic approaches to Ethnicity in Ancient South Asia, held in Toronto from 4-6/10/1991), the paper by K.A.R. Kennedy concludes that "while discontinuities in physical types have certainly been found in South Asia, they are dated to the 5th/4th, and to the 1st millennium B.C. respectively, too early and too late to have any connection with 'Aryans'" (ERDOSY 1995:xii); the paper by J. Shaffer and D. Lichtenstein stresses on "the indigenous development of South Asian civilization from the Neolithic onward" (ERDOSY 1995:xiii); and the paper by J.M. Kenoyer stresses that "the cultural history of South Asia in the 2nd millennium B.C. may be explained without reference to external agents" (ERDOSY 1995:xiv).

The present report, Narasimhan et al, tries hard to downplay the very vital objection of the archaeologists, by casually referring to it and dismissing it as follows: "Our observation of the spread of Central_Steppe_MLBA ancestry into South Asia in the first half of the second millennium BCE..." At this point, let us pause to note that they should have said "Our observation of the spread of Central_Steppe_MLBA ancestry into the Swat Valley in northernmost Pakistan in the late second half of the second millennium BCE...", and as I have pointed out in my recent book, the chart in their earlier version of the report uploaded on the internet last year (I don't know if they have cleverly changed it now) gives the lie to even this, since the Swat DNA in their chart is not shown to have the "red" and "teal" ancestral sources contained in the Steppe_MLBA DNA.

Strangely enough, let me quote the article by Girish Shahane written in 2018, listed earlier, to explain why claiming that the Steppe_MLBA DNA, with the red, teal

and orange ancestries, when it enters the DNA of the Swat samples, leaves only one of the three colors (orange) in the Swat DNA "is like claiming you could mix three colours thoroughly and daub them onto a plain piece of paper in such a way that only one of the three colors was deposited on the paper's surface". Any rebuttals to your own argument, Mr. Shahane?

But to continue the shysters presentation in the Narasimhan et al report: "...If the spread of people from the Steppe in this period was a conduit for the spread of South Asian Indo-European languages, then it is striking that there are so few material culture similarities between the Central Steppes and South Asia in the Middle to Late Bronze Age (i.e. after the middle of the second millennium BCE). Indeed the material culture differences are so substantial that some archaeologists report no evidence of a connection. However, lack of material culture connections does not provide evidence against spread of genes, as has been demonstrated in the case of the Beaker Complex, which originated largely in western Europe but in Central Europe was associated with skeletons that harbored ~50% ancestry related to Yamnaya Steppe pastoralists (18). Thus in Europe we have an unambiguous example of people with ancestry from the Steppe making profound demographic impacts on the regions into which they spread while adopting important aspects of local material culture. Our findings document a similar phenomenon in South Asia...".

Really?!! Do we really find a "similar" replacement in Central Europe of the teeming millions of a materially rich Harappan-like non-Indo-European civilization mysteriously transformed overnight so completely, with this magical transformation immediately recorded in a new, richly detailed Rigveda-like Indo-European text recording not only the magically transformed new culture of the proportions we have seen above but also a total mass amnesia about that transformation?

So, we must understand why the AIT supporters are so desperate to stop the use of the word "invasion" and why we have to go on throwing that word in their faces.



About the Author



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550th Birth Anniversary Shri Guru Nanak Dev

The Prophet of Equality and Harmony

By Umesh Gulati, Ph.D.

The advent of Guru Nanak in India during the fifteenth century was a great blessing to the world. India in the fifteenth century faced a great social, political, and spiritual crisis. Islam had established itself in the country, by ushering in the Muslim rule, a few centuries before. While the ruling class desecrated many Hindu temples, the priests, too, exploited the Hindus. To enrich themselves, they fed people with the religion of rituals and superstitions, completely devoid of its real essence. Muslims too, were divided into factions and sects. Guru Nanak summed up the degradation of the country, in the

following words:

*Fools pass for learned ones,
sophistry for wisdom,
and everyone seeks for
nothing but pelf.*

Baba Nanak, as he was affectionately called by his close companions, was born on April 15, 1469, at Talwandi (now known after him, as Nanakana Sahib), some forty miles south west of Lahore, Pakistan. Both his father Kalyan Das Mehta, and his mother Triptan, were devout Hindus. Since his birthday conflicts with the festival of Baisakhi (the beginning of the harvest season in Punjab), and also with the anniversary of the

establishment of the Khalsa Panth, by Guru Gobind Singh in 1699, it is celebrated in the month of November, on the Purnima (full-moon) day.

Nanak's father wanted him to become a Patwari (record keeper) like him, and enrolled him into a school with that objective. Nanak's mind, however, was not made for learning analytical knowledge. On the contrary, it was given to knowing the more integrative knowledge of the Spirit. It was no wonder that he quickly mastered Punjabi and Sanskrit, (and later Persian and Arabic), and composed a poem in Punjabi at so such a very young age which surprised his teachers. In this poem, which is preserved in the Guru Granth Sahib, the young saint explains the meaning of a truly learned person: "He who unravels divine knowledge, is a real pundit."

Saints like Nanak are lights unto themselves. He who knows the Lord, all is revealed to him by the Lord. Truly, said Nanak: "I speak only what Thou make me to speak." After Nanak quit school, his father tried to get him interested in some secular pursuit, like cattle grazing, or farming. One day when he led his cattle for grazing, he chose to sit under a tree in meditation, while the cattle grazed at another's farm. Seeing him to be uninterested in any productive work, Nanak's parents married him off at an early age of 14, ostensibly to make him responsible. But that did not change much. Once his parents gave him 20 silver rupees, to buy goods wholesale from the market, to sell retail in the village for profit. But Nanak distributed the money among the poor. For him there was no truer trade than feeding the hungry and clothing the naked. Serving God in man, was Nanak's watchword.

At last, as a result of the loving entreaties of Nanak's sister Nanki, his father sent him to her house in Sultanpur, where his brother-in-law, Jairam, got him a job as a storekeeper, with Nawab Daulat Khan Lodhi. As Nanak was charitable by nature, he would give away a greater part of his salary, mostly in kind, to the poor. While at work when he reached the figure 13 - tera (meaning yours), he would frequently repeat "Tera, main Tera." (yours, I'm yours, Lord).

It was during his stay at Sultanpur that Nanak disappeared, (being absorbed in Samadhi for three days in the woods) and was presumed drowned in a nearby rivulet. On his return he had no words to express his experience, so he took recourse to saying in negatives:

"Na koi Hindu; na koi Mussalman"

("There is no Hindu; there is no Mussalman"). For, what else does one see in *Samadhi*, but unity, and pure Consciousness? In that state, duality disappears, conflicts vanish, and subject and object become one. In the context of the present times, he may as well have

said,

*"Na koi Hindu, na koi Sikh,
na koi kalaa, or, na koi chitta."*

("There is no Hindu; no Sikh, no black nor white.")

The Nawab understood Nanak's mind, and invited him to join him, and the Qazi for a prayer in a Mosque. During the prayer, Nanak remained standing, and didn't kneel. The knower of God is fearless like a child who tells the truth, as he sees it, and the pure mind of Nanak could see through peoples' minds. So, when the Qazi demanded the reason for Naanak's impertinence, the latter replied, "What prayer was I expected to join? While pretending to be praying, you were occupied with the thought of the newborn foal, who was loose in the yard, and feared that it might fall into an unfenced well." Turning to the Nawab, Nanak said, "You were not praying either, because you were thinking of purchasing horses in Kabul." Both the Nawab and Qazi admitted their guilt and fell at Nanak's feet for forgiveness.

There is a saying in India that "a river is that which flows, and a monk is that who moves from place to place." Nanak truly reflected that spirit. Although he had been married and had two children, he was a monk par excellence. He avoided all worldly comfort. While traveling along with his disciples Bala, and Mardana, he often avoided settled places. He depended mostly on wild berries, and fruits, and didn't seek the charity of people. When offered, he accepted only enough food that would last for that time, and as he never hoarded for the future.

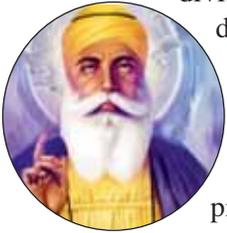
At Aminaabad, he preferred to eat with Lalo, a low-caste carpenter, but rejected the invitation of Malik Bhago, a high-caste government official. When Malik demanded the reason, Nanak replied: "In your delicacies is the blood of the poor, while the coarse bread of Lalo, who earns by the sweat of his brow, is sweet like milk." Indeed, according to the *janam sakhis*, he took some part of the food brought from Lalo's house in his right hand, and that of Malik's in his left, and pressed his fists. While milk came from his right hand, blood oozed from the left hand.

Guru Nanak was strictly monotheist, and taught the oneness of God. He called the Supreme Being as *Ikk Onkar* (One, without a second). According to Nanak, God is eternal, infinite, and all-pervasive; He is transcendent, as well as immanent, and with or without attributes, impersonal or personal - *nirguna* or *saguna*. After his ecstasy near Sultanpur, Nanak composed a poem that forms the preamble to the *Japuji*, the opening text of the Guru Granth Sahib.

There is only One God. He is the Supreme Being. Only His name is true. He is the creator of all life and

matter. He was in the beginning. He was in all ages. The true One is, was, O Nanak, and shall forever be.

Guru Nanak, however, didn't believe in the descent of God as an Avatara, or incarnation. But, having realized God himself, he was impelled to teach humanity the path of righteousness, and thus relieve its suffering. That is what the role of a spiritual teacher is. And a guru, meaning a person who dispels ignorance about man's divine nature, is God's close substitute. "A rose by another name," said Shakespeare, "would smell as sweet." Baba Nanak was indeed the true guru of all humanity. He said that "all men and women are the children of God, and therefore have inherited His divinity." It is because we forget our divine origin, our true self, that we



Serving God in man, was Nanak's watchword.

commit sins, and evil acts. By practicing spiritual discipline, as prescribed in Japuji - purity, simplicity, and charity - one can overcome evil, and become virtuous. Guru Nanak said, "Truth is higher than all else, but higher by far, is the living of truth."

According to Guru Naanak, the ultimate objective of man's life is to achieve moksha or mukti, which means freedom from the ego, and from the cycle of birth, and death. Man's bondage arises because of his egoism, which separates him from God, keeps him under the spell of ignorance, and alienates him from the universal Will or *Hukam*. There are five deadly passions, which are responsible for man's spiritual blindness, or nescience (*agian*). They are: *kama* (sensuality), *krodha* (anger), *lobha* (greed), *moha* (attachment) and *ahankara* (pride). A person with these passions is called *manmukha*. These passions cause his suffering in this world.

It was to free man from his sufferings that Nanak embarked on his uddasis, spiritual travels, and preached the gospel of harmony, love and peace. His message was simple. He didn't ask for austerities, and penances, fasts, mechanical rituals, and escapes to pilgrim places, stressed by the so-called yogis, and Naths (yogis of the Gorakhanath tradition) of his time. Instead, he urged them to consider their body as the temple, or the house of God, and to use it to gain spiritual knowledge, and serve humankind. He stressed that the battle of life must be fought fearlessly, with a perfectly controlled mind, and a sensitive heart. By immersing oneself in Nam, or Sat Nam, which is the true name of God, or shabad, one can transcend this samsara, the finite world of coming and going. He exhorted his disciples, called Sikhs (Sanskrit

shishya), to abide by the principle of earning their livelihood, by honest labor, engaging in prayer and meditation, and sharing the fruit of their labor with all: *kirat karni, Nam japna, te vanda chhakna*.

His Uddasis (holy wanderings) that had begun when he was 34, took him to the four corners of India, and even to foreign lands like Saudi Arabia, and Iraq. In his discussions with the yogis, recorded in the *Siddha Gosti*, Guru Nanak spelled out his method of achieving liberation for man - not by running away from the world, but by controlling his senses, living a detached life, being sensitive to the needs of the downtrodden, and having love and sympathy, for all. A person of these virtues is called *gurmukha*, in the *Siddha Gosti*. In contrast to the self-centered *manmukha*, a *gurmukha*

sees himself in all, and all in himself, and becomes an active agent for promoting the collective well-being of all. Indeed, he sees God in everything, and every being.

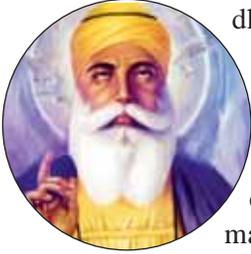
According to the *janam sakhis*, one time in Mecca, Nanak was sleeping with his feet turned toward Kaba, the holy mosque. When someone objected, he asked him to turn his feet toward the direction where God was not. It may be mentioned here that the term *Gurmukh* got transformed into *Khalsa*, meaning "pure" in Persian, by Guru Gobind Singh in 1699.

Finally, at the age of 52 he settled down at Kartarpur, a habitation that he himself had founded on the eastern bank of the river Ravi, and remained there until his death on September 22, 1539. There, a community of his followers drawn from all castes, and occupations, grew around him. An institution of far reaching importance, the *langar* (a free kitchen or communal dining hall), emerged at this time, where people shared a meal without distinction of caste, or creed. A key element in this exercise was the spirit of *seva*, or selfless service. To further breakdown the hierarchical system in the society of his time, Guru Nanak himself ate with all the people, sitting side by side with them, and he enjoyed being equal to them.

Out of this *langar* tradition grew two other institutions, *dharamshala*, or *dharamsal*, and *sangat*. The former was the place where people gathered to pray, and to sing Guru Nanak's hymns. In the *Japuji*, Guru Nanak calls this world as *dharamsal*, or the place for virtuous deeds, and the human body as an agent for ethical actions, further reinforcing the idea that religion is not a matter of believing in a dogma, but living it.

The first *dharamsal*, according to the *Puratan janamsakhi*, was established at Talumba, in the Multan

district of the present-day Pakistan. It is this same dharamsala which came to be called gurdwara, from the time of Guru Gobind Singh. While dharamsala was the forerunner of gurdwara, *sangat* stood for an assembly, or congregation of people (called *bhais* or brothers), assembled for prayer or religious ceremony. All spiritual and social matters were to be decided by the



and prejudice.

In the opinion of this author, Guru Nanak preached the same gospel of eternal religion, Sanatana Dharma, which has come from the mouths of great rishis (sages) and mystics of India, and there is no hard evidence to suggest any Islamic element in his teachings. So, there is indeed a continuous Vedic tradition in the body of Sikh religion, which in essence, is Hinduism shorn of the scum of superfluous rituals, accumulated over a long period of time. What makes us stand in awe and wonder

**There is only One God. He is the Supreme Being.
Only His name is true. He is the creator of all life and matter.
He was in the beginning. He was in all ages.
The true One is, was, O Nanak, and shall forever be.**

consensus arrived at by the *sangat*. Needless to say, that it is these *sangats* that laid the foundation for the future Sikh community, or *Sikh Panth*.

As mentioned earlier, Guru Nanak did not respect meaningless rituals and pujas in temples, that didn't come from the devotees' hearts. He didn't think much about worshiping of idols, and also cared little about a time-honored custom of splashing river water toward the east, for the welfare of the departed souls. Most importantly, he didn't accept caste divisions in the Hindu society, and expressed his opposition to untouchability, in a beautiful song:

*The real pariahs are
the evil thoughts
cruelty, slander and wrath.
Let Truth, self-restraint,
and, good acts be your rites,
and your ablutions,
the remembrance of God's name.*

This, I believe, is the quintessence of Nanak's teachings, stressed by every saint, before and after him - that religion doesn't consist in certain symbolic expressions, or in the outward observance of rituals, pujas, etc., but in the cultivation of love and sympathy for our fellow beings. The fact that Guru Nanak labored so much against rituals, was because he could see through the hypocrisy of those who use these rituals as a cover. If rituals and rites would be performed to purify our hearts as they were meant to do, he would have been all for them. It is unfortunate that any good custom or law that started with good intentions, becomes corrupted over time, and loses its initial intent. Knowing that, he recommended japa, or the constant remembrance of God, which he called Satnam. *Japa*, then, is a spiritual detergent, as it were, in which our mind should be constantly soaked, to make it free from any trace of pride

of Babaa Naanak, however, is that he was one of the few saints of India, who spoke and wrote in the popular dialect of North India, and thereby made the true Vedic religion accessible to the illiterate masses.

His institution of the langar tradition, we believe, is his greatest legacy, and along with Sangat, he laid down a practical way of achieving the ideal of equality, and casteless society in India. Without imbibing the spirit behind these two institutions, bhajans and kirtans (devotional singing), kathas (discourses), pravachans, or akhanda paths (holy readings) will be of no avail. People may be divided functionally into different roles. But, in God, we are all one. Finally, he uplifted the status of women, by permitting them in dharamsalas and langars, on par with men. He believed that man cannot attain spiritual emancipation without woman's help. In that respect, he was way ahead of his times.



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By Rutvij Holay

"Jai Shri Ram" - You never hear those words in most schools, and may even get mocked for saying so. Yet, these were the first words I heard while entering the school. Having been in the CBSE schools, I had never heard those words. I had never seen a student touching the feet of a principal, and calling her "Tai" (Sister in Marathi). I had never seen a school performing a Puja to Bharat Mata. This school in Deolapar, a small village an hour outside of Nagpur, was truly a school like no other I had seen.

I was blessed to have the opportunity to visit the school, and to be able to see the results of your work. By reading this, I hope you may realize how much of a difference your work makes, and be inspired to continue this work, to make more schools like this possible.

We were picked up around 8 or 9 AM, by the principal, Manda Kathokeji, who came to take us in a van. She explained to me that this van was used to pick up the students at the beginning of the year, so that bad weather, or other circumstances, would not stop them from coming. I didn't realize how extraordinary it was,

until I went to the government sponsored state-schools, where half the students were absent, due to the rain.

After an hour or so, we arrived at the school, and the teachers from the school touched the feet of my aged (Grandma) and said, "Jai Shri Ram", which was the first of many times I would hear those words. We went a bit further inside, and just outside the school gates we saw a teacher, one of the first students at the school, who had a conversation with Mandaji. She mentioned she had graduated with a BA in Sanskrit.

In an age where all of us are focused on degrees in computer science and other STEM subjects, I learned that here she decided to take the time, along with many others to learn about our mother tongue, and then come to teach at this school. She did something which shouldn't be extraordinary, but is nowadays. She chose to give back. Every school can give knowledge, that's what they're meant for. Yet, in these schools, we find something else, something that I haven't seen in schools for a long time, or in the world. In this school, we find values. Values, which are so strong, you can see them before we even enter the school.

As we went to the administrative office, we were

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stopped 4 or 5 times by groups of students, who said, "Jai Shri Ram, Tai" to Mandaji. This was just another indication of the family-like closeness of the school. When we got there, she introduced me to people, such as Anamol Raut, who was the principal of the elementary school.

While there, I asked how students were persuaded to come to the schools, and she told me that teachers personally went house to house asking if there were kids. And, if there were, they told them about the benefits of going to school. If they said yes, they would be given residence and tuition, free of charge, thanks to your donations.

We went in and sat down, with hundreds of students in front of us. The first thing we did is do a Puja to Bharat Mata, which we were given the honor of leading. We hear of schools teaching patriotism, or singing the national anthem, and "whatnot" - But, to start off every day by placing the country as our own mother, is taking patriotism to another level.

We then were introduced and given a grand welcome. They gave us flowers and allowed to us speak a bit. My Aai (Mother) gave a speech commending the students for getting an education, and about their bravery for staying away from their parents. She was right by the way. While so much of their schooling is 'thanks' to us, their parents, and their teachers, we can't do the work for them. It is they who spend the night studying, and working tirelessly towards their goals to have a shot at succeeding in life. And they do that, well. The former students I met were very well off in life, both financially, and morally, because of you.

My Aaji then proceeded to sing a song, after which I gave a speech about the importance of giving back, and that they should consider volunteering for the same organization that helped them. However, as I went through the rest of the visit, I realized I didn't need to. These students were taught about why they should give back, and they did.

The amount of happiness I felt at seeing these students is indescribable. We hear so much about how charities keep the money for themselves, and how we don't do any good by giving money. But seeing the quality of the school, from the teaching, to the hostels, to the food, I could tell we truly aren't just preaching about giving back, but we truly are doing so.

My Kaku, who hadn't heard of Support-a-Child before, was now overwhelmed by the good work being done, and couldn't help but get involved herself. She requested Mandaji to give ₹500 to the topper at the school. The work he did is a testament of the academic determination the students have to make life better for

them, and those close to them.

The event was then concluded, and we went outside. Sheela, the leader of our chapter of SAC, had asked me to talk with some students, and ask them about the school. Mandaji got some students, and a crowd developed around us, shortly after. We talked for 2 or 3 minutes about the state of the school, and the students told me that it was satisfactory, meaning that we weren't being presented with some special version of the school.

They were very interested in America, but interestingly, they were also interested in knowing what activities RSS has there. I told them about Shakhas run by the HSS, VHP, Support-a-Child, and all the other programs our selfless karyakartas run. They wanted to come, but not just for the fanciness of Los Angeles and, New York, and what not, but to help make sure Hinduism stayed strong in the United States. Their minds were so sharp, that they thought not just about Dharma in India, but made sure they lived up to the verse,

"Vishwa Dharma Prakaashena

(With the enlightenment that comes with Dharma)

Vishwa Shanti Pravartake

(In our mission of keeping peace in the world)

Hindu Sanghatanaa kaarye

(In ensuring the unity of Hindus worldwide)

Dhyeya Nishtaa Sthiraastunah

(Let us be focused on this aim)"

Well, minus one student, who wanted to become a Hollywood actor, but we convinced him, that Indian movies were better.

The students treated me like family, and invited me to eat with them. However, my family called me to eat in the office, with the other teachers. I then went to the lounge, where they gave a full nutritional and traditional meal. It was of equal quality to the meals we eat at home.

After finishing my food, I went into the room where students were eating to see how they ate. The teachers had a tough job, as the kids did not know the basics such as speaking Marathi, or eating in a group. Yet, as I saw the older kids, I could tell they were doing a good job of teaching them.

I saw one younger kid being scolded for wasting food, and thought back to my younger days, where the teachers told me, "You don't have to eat it if you don't want to." I had taken what those teachers said to heart, and wasted lots of food, and everyone at my school did the same those days. I now realized why these kids will become more successful and efficient, because they are taught discipline. Coming from a background where food was scarce, they have learned to treat it like god. With this discipline, we will not only get our future Narendra Modi or Amit Shah, but Abhay Asthana or



Rohit Khanna.

As my Aai (mother) had made some other commitments that day, we had to head over to the Cow Research facility. There we saw some cows, which were very frail. At first, I was concerned about their treatment. Then Mandaji explained to me that they had rescued these Cows, which were being illegally smuggled for beef.

They used the excrement and urine of these cows to make various products. We bought some of these, and out of them I especially enjoyed their facewash, which was useful for dealing with pimples. Seeing the utility of these cows when they are living, any businessman in the meat business should realize it is more profitable to keep these animals alive, than to kill them. By these schools, we can set a global model, for how animals should be used.

On our way back, I talked with Mandaji and Anumolji, (who had business in Nagpur), about how great the school was. I asked them why there were so many Gondi people in the school, and they told me it was reserved by the government for the scheduled castes.

This, I couldn't understand. They had such a superior education system, that combined the best of our Guru-Shishya tradition with Western schooling, and not everyone could access it. I asked them, "if there is a poor

Brahmin, or poor person of any Jati, or tribe, what difference does that make, compared to if they were a member of the scheduled tribes". They agreed on this point, yet we can't do anything unless the government removes this system.

Are there people who need more help than others? Yes. But an economic reservation would help all of them, and not the one based on caste. As Non-Resident Indians, we have a certain level of respect in India. We must make sure to use this for good. If enough of us speak up, we can make sure this education is there for everyone.

The school was amazing and the only reason it was possible was because of you. You, the ones who donate to make sure schools have the funding to run. You, the ones who organize the fundraising events, to send the money to India. You, the ones who do small jobs here and there, whenever you can. It's all because of you that the work done by us, by people like Mandaji, by the students, is possible.

Please continue to do this work, and make sure these schools keep up the work they do, and all of us will be forever in your debt.



EKAL VIDYALAYA FOUNDATION OF USA
NOVEMBER 9, 2019

Ekal Vidyalaya Makes History: Reaches 100,000-School Milestone



November 9, 2019 will remain as the historic day in the annals of Ekal Vidyalaya Foundation (EVF). On this day, in star-studded, glamour filled "Future of India" Gala in New York City, Ekal reached 100,000 school milestones within minutes of its beginning. Going into the gala, Ekal had 99,200 schools and so the evening was full of anticipated excitement to ring the bell for magical 100,000-school landmark. As soon as Mohan Wanchoo, took the reins of the evening as the chairperson of the gala, he took everyone by surprise with his trailblazing announcement. He pledged \$1 Million over the period of 5 years patching, with immediate effect, shortfall amount for 800-schools to reach the magical figure of 100,000-schools. These additional schools will be established shortly and will benefit 25,000 children bringing annual literacy total to 2.7 Million children. Mohan Wanchoo's pronouncement was not only celebrated with thunderous applause and sparkling fireworks,



but it also set in motion exuberant outpour of generosity, for the rest of the evening. By the end of the evening \$3.1 Million were raised. This was in addition to Los Angeles Gala were \$2 Million were raised.

This year, NYC magnificent Gala was hosted at lavishly decorated majestic Gotham Hall and was attended by the elite of the society and Ekal's dedicated supporters. Although rooted in literacy, Ekal has blossomed into empowerment of rural-tribal folks across India. The evening's keynote speaker and star-attraction was Bollywood celebrity and philanthropist Vivek Oberoi. In addition, distinguished speakers included 'Raju Reddy', a successful entrepreneur whose company was acquired by Hitachi, and Ragy Thomas, leading social-media management & marketing enterprise. Ranjani Saigal, the Executive Director of Ekal, traced 32-year history of the Ekal, including its transition into a nation building movement. Vivek Oberoi completely stole the show with his pledge to put all his entrepreneur might behind rural issues and spearhead small-scale solar power solutions for energy requirements of villages. He said, "I have already received a commitment of over half a million dollars for such initiative". At the conclusion of his captivating speech, he applauded Ekal getting Iconic Gandhi Peace Prize from the government of India for its social work in rural-tribal areas with gender equality. This award, which is given to only one

organization each year was recently bestowed on Ekal Abhiyan by Hon PM Modi and President Ram Kovind. For the benefit of people assembled, the Peace Prize itself was ushered on the stage by a select group of people and presented to the gathering by Prakash Waghmare, a member of PR national committee and Suresh Iyer, President of Ekal-USA. There was a brief panel discussion also moderated by Amrita Saigal, a young entrepreneur to highlight various aspects of Ekal that appeal to the Donors. Ragy Thomas pledged strong support to education and pledged \$100,000 to accelerate its pace. Raju Reddy, partnering with Ekal expressed desire to bring transformation to rural Telangana. Sarva Mangal Family Trust and Keshap Group confirmed to match technological intervention in education in digital-tablets format. A momentous turn occurred when 13-yr Riya donated \$1000 from a fund-raiser she had at her home. Vivek Oberoi was so touched by this that he appealed to the gathering to match her cute gesture and the gathering responded by additional \$30,000. Several dignitaries were honored, including India Consul General of New York, Sandeep Chakravorty and New York Congresswoman Carolyn Maloney. Ekal also recognized several supporters for their distinctive projects. Among them were Dr Kavita Navani of Sankalp for aiding 625 Ekal schools, Himanshu Shah of Shah Capital for supporting Gramothan Resource



Center, Adish & Asha Jain and Vandana & Vivek Sharma for corroborating in integral village development, Subra & Anu Dravida for promoting digital literacy through Ekal-on-Wheel project. Perfection of Man Foundation made significant announcement at the end of the evening to support planting of a Million trees in Ekal villages. Pradeep Goyal, Chairman of Ekal Abhiyan Trust and S.K. Jindal, a Trustee had specially had flown from India to grace this occasion and to boost the morale of everyone to make gala a grand success. No gala is complete without the musical treat and this was no exception. To preserve the upbeat nature of the Gala's success, Bollywood singer Shibani Kashyap kept the crowd sizzling with her singing and enticed them to dance to her tunes. Unlike most of such events, the remarkable thing about this event was the participation of young professional in large number. This is an indication that Ekal's future is on rock-solid foundation.



Curing Depression with Spirituality



By Stephen Knapp (Sri Nandanandana Dasa)

Editor's note: This is the first part of the two part article.

Depression, according to recent statistics, is practically an epidemic, with over 70 million people suffering from its effects, such as a feeling of moroseness, uselessness, lack of energy, inability to sleep, and a poor attitude toward life in general, among other symptoms. Depression causes a pessimistic view of things. It also discourages enthusiasm and stifles one's initiative. It may also produce despair and bring about sickness in the mind and body. It can make one resort to rash and thoughtless actions that a person may later regret. Much of the time such thoughts are completely unnecessary. Thus, it is imperative that we help cure depression so that people can live with more happiness, ingenuity, energy, and are thus able to reach a higher potential in life.

The reason for depression may be different for each person, and there are a variety of causes. So it must be analyzed and understood. So what can we do to help cure

such an attitude, as long as it is not a biological problem?

Spiritually, there are many ways to help take care of this condition. So let us take a deeper look at this.

CAUSES OF DEPRESSION

Physical, Biological or Medical Factors

1. There are physical factors such as digestive problems, diabetes, anemia, or other diseases which cause discomfort. This will naturally cause a lackluster mental disposition. Having parasites is another biological factor that will deplete a person of their energy and well-being.

2. Sometimes the diet will also cause depression. There may be a lack of vitamins and proper nutrition. Or there may be too much of something, like sugar, which can also cause highs and lows in blood sugar levels which will certainly create changing mood shifts.

3. There is also the depression that new mothers may feel right after giving birth to a child. The hormones are often quite imbalanced at that time and a new mother may feel a multitude of changing feelings about things.

4. A weak nervous system, or overwork and tension

are also causes of a depleted mental disposition. And a negative attitude itself can cause further digression in one's outlook on life.

External Factors

1. It is often seen that something as simple as the weather or a cloudy day can cause melancholy and depression.

2. One's social status that may be viewed as unsatisfactory may also cause one to feel dejected.

3. Sometimes a young girl in one ethnic group may be attracted to a boy from another group and then be very depressed and disappointed because such an arrangement would never be approved by the parents.

4. Having a husband that forces the wife to be or remain alienated from their surroundings or from family and society will also cause loneliness and depression in such a woman. This is also found amongst certain ethnic groups or religions.

5. Associating with other negative people or listening to music with dark lyrics or messages, will also cause a person to have a most negative outlook.

6. Being a victim of a burglary or robbery, or losing everything in a fire, tornado, hurricane, or similar causes.

Psychological or Emotional Factors

1. There may also be the recollection of bad habits or mistakes that we wish we could have corrected or had never done that still haunt our memory with guilt.

2. Emotions that are aroused such as anger, revenge, jealousy, and envy will also affect a morbid state of mind.

3. The inability to face difficulties or worries about the future can also bring depression. Unnecessary fear and anxiety will also cause despair.

Metaphysical Factors

1. Other unknown causes such as curses that have been cast can affect one negatively.

2. There are other subtle influences, such as ghostly beings, that may affect a person in the wrong way.

3. Disappointment in, or the perceived neglect from, one's spiritual master or religious organization that a person may belong to if things do not go well, can also cause deep scars and depression that can affect a person for years.

These are a few of the causes that may bring about a feeling of depression or misery in a person. And what is worse, if the depression is not remedied, then it can escalate to feelings of suicide. When a person in despair feels that all of their basic defenses are broken and there is no one to turn to, nor can they find a comforting voice to console or support them, then they may conclude that there is no way out but through death. If their cry for help is not heard or seems to be ignored, or if they do not

know where to find help, then suicide may be considered as a last resort. But it must be understood that suicide is never the end. And suicide, and the state of mind that one has to compel one to commit suicide, is never a way for progressing into the next realm. Death is never the final act. It only opens the door to additional challenges that must be met or endured, depending on how one leaves their body.

Suicide and the Reactions That Follow

Depression is very common today, and almost everyone goes through it at some point in life. Many are not able to overcome this negative state of mind. They seek medical and psychiatric treatment, and in extreme cases even resort to suicide, thinking that such a step will solve all of their problems or allow them to escape from life.

All the Vedic scriptures and sages of the East and the West have vehemently condemned the act of suicide.



They declare emphatically that absolutely nothing is solved or gained by getting rid of the physical body by force. On the other hand, the results of suicide are disastrous in the extreme.

Scientists and psychologists today, researching in psychic phenomena, have corroborated some of the teachings of the sages. The sages state that at the time when the soul is to depart from the body, the dying person sees, as on a cinema screen, all the actions done by him during the present lifetime, from childhood up to the moment of death. And from all these varied scenes, the most prominent one arrests and engages the soul's attention, and the soul leaves the physical body in that state of consciousness.

If there is intense attachment to someone or something, then the soul will depart with that person's image in mind. Intense hatred means that the hated person's image will remain in the mind as the predominant thought or image at the time of death.

A person who had been strongly addicted to liquor and drugs will leave the body with thoughts of liquor and

drugs, or the desire for more intoxication. Sometimes they leave the body while under the influence of intoxicants, which has a most regressive effect on entering the next realm. On the other hand, a person who had lead a pious and virtuous life, with thoughts of God,

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will depart from the body with thoughts of God. The last thoughts determine the conditions and nature of the next birth. This is what the sages have said about the phenomenon of death.

This argument seems reasonable because the last dominant thought in our mind at the time when we just drop off to sleep can often be the thought that dominates our mind the next morning. It is for this reason that we are advised to sing the Divine Names of God or hymns at the time of death in order to focus the attention of the dying person on holy and noble thoughts.

It is needless to add that if the soul departs from the body with thoughts of anger, hatred, jealousy, worry and fear, or in a state of great mental turmoil, then such thoughts and agitation will be carried over and immediately experienced in that realm also. In fact, this state of mind will help determine which realm we go to next. That is why sages say that suicide does not solve anything whatsoever. On the contrary, it makes the condition of the soul much worse.

They give an analogy to explain this truth. When we experience a nightmare during sleep, we wake up abruptly with a shock. But we feel a sense of relief at the same time, because the consciousness has rushed back to the refuge of the physical body. In suicide the soul does not have a physical body to return to as in the case of a nightmare. Hence, it undergoes great misery and suffering, perhaps more than during its sojourn in the physical body. Furthermore, it is said that such a soul has to roam about as a ghost for a long time contemplating his misfortune for the foolishness of killing himself. Plus, you also leave others, such as parents or your children and friends, in so much pain as you leave them behind to suffer your absence, losing you, wondering what went wrong. This is also your responsibility for which you are accountable.

As the body is a precious instrument given to us by God for realizing Him, forcefully discarding it will bring adverse reactions. The repercussions may last for a long time and the soul may encounter unfavorable conditions for many births. Hence under no circumstance should one resort to this most thoughtless and rash action of suicide. You never know where life is going to take you, so please hang on and find out. Often times we take things too seriously. Life is but an adventure if we can just detach ourselves a little bit. The only thing that really matter is how much spiritual development you make in this life. Everything else will pass.

BLESSINGS IN DISGUISE

Adversities, trials, difficulties, calamities, diseases, afflictions, pains and sufferings are all blessings in disguise. They strengthen the will and increase the power of endurance. They turn the mind more and more towards God. They instill in us discrimination and dispassion. They draw out all our latent faculties. They force us to perform even beyond our ability. They develop all the talents and capacities lying dormant within us. As it is often said, if it doesn't kill you, it only makes you stronger. It is often the reversals or challenges in life that draw out of us many of the abilities that we never knew we had.

It is easy to bask in the sunshine of prosperity. The crucial test is your reaction under adversity and hardship. God wants us to enjoy eternal bliss and peace. For this purpose the body and mind have to be thoroughly purified and strengthened, then they may be able to bear the pressure of His matchless bliss and peace. This process of purification and strengthening cannot be affected without one confronting adverse conditions and circumstances.

Furthermore, nature's law of cause and effect operates with relentless precision. Many of the difficulties that we encounter in life are but paybacks or lessons that we need to learn because of past karma. The wise and discriminative person will allow the effects of his past actions to bear fruit by meeting all the conditions of life with patience, good cheer, calmness and faith in God.



*This article and more information at
www.stephen-knapp.com*

Letting Falsehood Spread is No Virtue

Today, India has over 200 million Muslims and probably much more than 40 million Christians, as many of the converts keep their Hindu names for caste benefits. Are they India's enemies, as Swami Vivekananda hinted? Enemy is a strong word. Yet if those who converted believe what they are taught, they will definitely look down on Hindus. It seeps into their psyche that "they" (Hindus) don't accept the true God.

By Maria Wirth

"Why Indians had to suffer so much for the last 1000 years when they were generally good-natured and did not attack others?" Someone asked Sadhguru Jaggi Vasudev. It was a question which troubled me too. He replied on the lines that Indians had not done their job in analyzing their enemy.

Why did Prithviraj Chauhan for example let Mohammad Ghouri off in spite of knowing that he had not stuck to any rules of war? The young Indian *raja* obviously had not analyzed what made his attacker so unprincipled. He didn't seem to be aware about the tenets of Islam, which are so different from his own Hindu Dharma.

The situation has not changed much. Today, there is still very little clarity about the enemy in spite of Swami Vivekananda or Sri Aurobindo seeing where the danger comes from. Vivekananda stated that every Hindu who leaves the Hindu pale is not one Hindu less but one enemy more. How? Is it possible that a religion makes people into enemies? This surely needs to be analyzed.

There are big differences between Hindu Dharma on

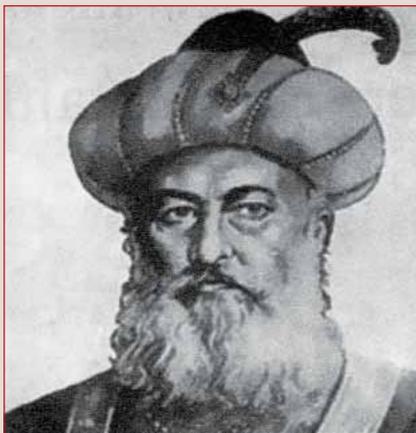
one side, and Islam and Christianity on the other, which we usually are not aware of. We need to know them and have the courage to point them out, in the interest of all humanity.

The first big difference is this:

While Sanatana Dharma and the Vedas are most ancient and the foundation for the great, benign Indian culture, Christianity and Islam are newcomers and they brutally destroyed existing cultures and replaced them with a rigid belief system.

The cultures of Inkas, Mayas, Aztecs, Egypt, Babylon, Greece, Persia, and Afghanistan - they all have disappeared and their history was falsified. In what is now Pakistan and Bangladesh, the ancient Hindu culture has disappeared, too. India also has suffered immensely, millions were killed and a treasure trove of knowledge went up in flames when libraries with innumerable texts were burnt.

But are religions not meant to be beneficial? Is religion not about God, the cause for our existence, and man's relation to that great Being? About worshipping that great Being and surrendering to it? Is there not even the right to religious freedom enshrined in Constitutions and



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endorsed by the United Nations? Why then all this brutality? What went wrong?

It's easy to see but nobody wants to look that way: The reason is that belief in improbable claims about the "Will of God" was enforced with violence in the beginning, later with indoctrination of children and severe punishment for criticizing or leaving the religion. Over the centuries naturally the numbers of their followers swelled. Very few pointed out what went wrong, because it put their lives at risk. Those religions literally killed dissent.

We need to go back in time to see more clearly what went wrong:

The Vedas, the most ancient knowledge about the origin of the universe and our own existence, postulate one great Being (usually called *Brahman*) from whom this universe emanated and who permeates all parts of it. It means, *Brahman* is also within us, though veiled by thoughts and other mind activity due to his *Maya Shakti*. The ancient *Rishis* analyzed this creation well, and discovered *Devas* the essential powers for our existence.

They "saw" that the microcosm is like the macrocosm; they reached out into the universe, by diving deep into themselves, mapped the sky and left profound knowledge for posterity in all fields of human endeavor - profound knowledge that was present in cosmic consciousness from the start and was revealed to them due to their intense Tapas.

There is ample evidence that Indian civilization influenced large parts of the globe in ancient times. Over the long history of millions of years (according to Indian texts which should be taken seriously), different forms of worship to different deities, who were seen as a representation of the ONE *Brahman*, developed, but there was no friction between the different groups. They existed side by side. Nobody insisted that only one way needed to be followed.

This changed when emperor Ashoka wanted all people in his kingdom to follow only one of the Indian sages, Gautama Buddha. Buddha had died long before Ashoka was born, but in several councils, a Canon with his sayings was compiled, and this was meant to be followed

by Ashoka's subjects. He even sent missionaries to other countries.

So Ashoka broke with the tradition that everyone was free to choose his way to realize *Brahman* as his own essence and established what the British later called "Buddhism" as the best way. Anyone, who splits away and wants followers, naturally needs to emphasize that his creed is "better". And if others are not convinced, it is followed up with some "pressure" if one has power. Later Adi Shankara challenged Buddhists in debates and most Indians came back to their original, less dogmatic Dharma.

Meanwhile, far away from India, and only some 1700 years ago, the Roman emperor decided to make a small Christian sect into a state religion. He must have felt it would be advantageous if all his subjects believed the same thing. In short: the messiah for whom the Jews were waiting, has come already in the person of Jesus Christ but was not recognized and even killed by the Jews.

However, this sect showed a very authoritative and violent streak, as soon as it got state patronage. It demolished existing temples, burnt books and murdered even a famous woman philosopher Hypatia in Egypt. And soon Christians stomped over Middle East, North Africa and Europe, forcing the new belief on the population.

Why were they so intolerant? The reason was that they claimed that the great true God, the creator of the universe, the "Father in heaven", has finally (2000 years ago) sent down to earth his only son Jesus Christ to save humans from the original sin, and all must follow what Jesus has said. And what did Jesus say? He allegedly said that nobody reaches the Father except via his son. So the Church claims, belief in Jesus is absolutely necessary to be saved from eternal hellfire.

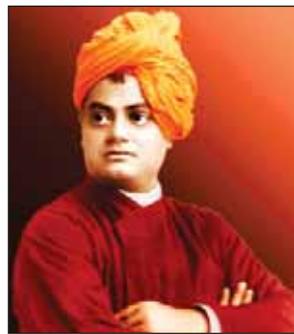
A few centuries later, a similar story was repeated: Mohammad, an Arab of the 7th century, declared that the one true Allah has spoken to him via Angel Gabriel and what he said must be followed by all human beings. And what does Allah want from humans? He wants all to believe in Mohammad as the last prophet, to whom He, Allah, has communicated his wishes. And his greatest wish apart from believing in Him and His prophet: He wants his followers to fight (do *Jihad*) till all believe only in Allah. Those, who resist, will suffer terribly in hell for all eternity.

Mohammad himself showed the way how to fight. He attacked for example Jewish tribes, butchered their men even after surrender, and took their women as slave

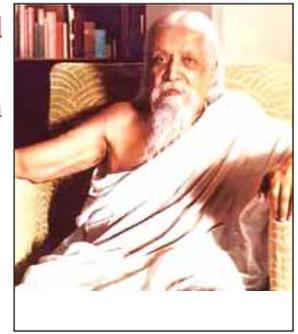
concubines and their property as booty. After his death, his followers stomped over the Middle East, North Africa, into Spain and parts of Eastern Europe, and forced those, who had earlier been forced to become Christians, now to become Muslims. The conquest was bloody and highly "successful" due to terrible cruelty.

Muslim invaders also stomped into India and left a trail of bloodshed. Yet here, they could not exterminate the ancient culture because the new creed was simply no match for it. Yet due to the incredible brutality, Muslim invaders made big inroads into Indian society and many Hindus converted to Islam and later, under the Portuguese and British, to Christianity.

Even now in independent India, Christianity and Islam have not given up their attempt to eliminate Hindu culture. The different Churches do it with enormous vigor, lots of money and sadly, great success, through "projects", like the Joshua project. Islam does it by having many children, by love Jihad and also by trying to convince Hindus and Christians of the 'superiority' of Islam over a religion which "worships monkeys and rats". Whoever objects to being pressured to convert, risks even being



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brutally killed.

One thing has become clear over the centuries. Christianity and Islam are dangerous for "others" and also dangerous for insiders who are not fully conform and express doubts about 'the only truth'. Islam and Christianity killed tens of millions common citizens, only because they didn't pay allegiance to their religion or rather "cult".

Today, India has over 200 million Muslims and probably much more than 40 million Christians, as many of the converts keep their Hindu names for caste benefits. Are they India's enemies, as Swami Vivekananda hinted? Enemy is a strong word. Yet if those who converted believe what they are taught, they will definitely look down on Hindus. It seeps into their psyche that "they" (Hindus) don't accept the true God. When I was a child, even Protestants were looked down upon by us Catholics. We Catholics 'knew' that we were right and others wrong, and heathen were very wrong.

In the 1980s, I spent some time in Shantivanam, a

Christian ashram, which was very liberal to us foreigners who were friendly towards Hinduism and Buddhism. Yet once I heard Bede Griffiths, a Benedictine monk and the head of the ashram, talk to Indian nun novices. I was shocked how strongly he indoctrinated them that they alone have the true faith, and questioned him afterwards. His reply, 'I have to strengthen their faith so that they know where the border to Hinduism lies.'

Hindus are not bothered about borders. They tend to accept all faiths. Whatever helps to connect with one's essence is welcome. Yet this is not the mindset of followers of those religions, which need borders to survive. Hindus usually don't understand this mindset. They expect common sense and brush aside claims that they will burn in hellfire if they don't convert. They can't imagine that anyone could seriously believe such nonsense.

But they are wrong. Many people do believe it. Such belief is dangerous and highly divisive. It leads to hate crimes. Since there is no proof and there can never be proof, such dangerous belief needs to be called out and criticized. It must NOT be taught to kids.

Here is where Hindus didn't do their duty and still don't do their duty. It may look cool or secular to let everyone believe what he wants, but such attitude is foolish when it threatens your survival.

While Christians have stopped killing in recent centuries, Muslims have not stopped. It goes on daily. And those terrorists genuinely believe that they do the right thing and will get a 'higher status in paradise' (Q 4.95). Which youth would throw away his life in a suicide attack if he wasn't convinced that he will be better off after killing Kafirs?

The situation is serious. It is bad enough that pious Christians look down on Hindus. But it is even worse that pious Muslims not only look down on others, but also can, with a straight face, tell lies to us (Taqqiya) and even harm and kill us without having any bangs of conscience. It's allowed. The usual counter that Quran 5.32 forbids killing even one person is a deception. First, Allah addresses the "Children of Israel" in this verse (obviously taken from Jewish texts) and second, a person who does mischief is exempted and can be murdered. And what bigger mischief can there be in the eyes of a believer than not believing in Allah and his prophet?

Fortunately, there are many who have lost faith. Especially Christians get out of the churches in droves, ever since heresy is not punished any longer. Many Muslims, too, have doubts. A Muslim acquaintance recently estimated that even in Saudi Arabia about 10 percent are atheists. There are numerous videos by ex-Muslims on the net who criticize their former belief

openly. It's dangerous for them. The social pressure is great and their own family may kill them. Moreover, in many countries apostasy is punishable by death.

And here again, Hindus don't do their job. They don't support those who leave their dogmatic faith. And worse, the government even encourages people to stay in their religion by giving 'minorities' benefits.

What can be done? Let's all think about it. But one thing is needed for sure: we need to be honest and not afraid to expose the harmful aspects of Christianity and Islam, both of which make no secret that they want to eliminate Hinduism.

Everyone has the right to worship the One Supreme. This is guaranteed by the right to religious freedom. It makes sense, as there must be a great Intelligence and Power at the base of this incredible universe. But nobody has the right to make baseless claims that the Supreme loves some and doesn't love others and even throws the majority of humans into eternal hellfire - all those who do not accept that only ONE person (there are two...) has received the full truth. This doesn't make sense. And it has brought so much suffering upon humankind.

Obviously such claim (about one specific person needing to be followed), is not true. Yet for long, Hindus couldn't counter it for fear of their lives. But now Hindus slowly find their feet. Many realize the immense value of their heritage and that they were cheated in believing that it has no worth.

Will they also have the courage to insist that their heritage is respected and taught to students in India and all over the world? The insights of the Rishis have never been proven wrong when tested, and have inspired science, art and harmony in society.

It's no virtue to let falsehood spread. ◆◆◆



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

'Muslims Must Voluntarily Hand Over Gyanvapi Mosque, Mathura Complex to Hindus'

Mangaluru: Karingamannu Kuzhiyil Muhammed aka KK Muhammed, part of first ASI team that excavated the historical site at Ayodhya averred that the Muslim community should now voluntarily come forward to hand over Gyanvapi mosque in Varanasi and Krishna Janmasthan Complex in Mathura to Hindus. They missed a (good) opportunity to do so at Ayodhya thanks to the influence that the Marxist historians had on them, Muhammed averred.

By Jaideep Shenoy

In an interaction with Harsha Bhat at a session on 'Excavating Truth' at Mangaluru Lit Fest on Friday, said various excavations carried out at Ayodhya by ASI pointed to just one truth that a temple existed there. "When I did state this to the media first, uncharacteristic for government servant to do so, I did bear in mind that an archaeologist is speaking about the issue, and me being a Muslim, I had double the responsibility to speak only the truth," he said.



"We must strive for united India rather than fight about it," Muhammed, who retired as regional

Director with ASI in 2012, said. Dwelling on his madarasa schooling, Muhammed said his open mindedness that Abubakkar, his Islamic teacher showed in exposing them to Ramayan that helped shape his personality. "Hinduism is a greatly tolerant religion and because India is a Hindu majority country, India remains secular in truest sense of the term," he said.

Espousing the need for capsuled course on Indian art, culture, architecture, painting as part of Indian education system, Muhammed said a system bereft of these characteristics will not help the youth relate to their own culture. "We need to adopt Indian heroes such as Lord Ram, which Muslim countries have done," he said, adding it was such references that excavations threw up which tipped Supreme Court in coming out with a 'fair judgement' on the case. Expressing disappointment that the present BJP government had in a way belied expectation that one had about promoting Indian culture, Muhammed said it is imperative to market our heritage. Nepal and Sri Lanka are doing this far better than India with their world heritage sites, he said, adding that India with its Buddhist connections, can have half the world's Buddhist tourists lining up on Indian shores if it follow's Nepal and Sri Lanka's lead.



Source: <https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/city/mangaluru/muslims-must-voluntarily-hand-over-gyanvapi-mosque-mathura-complex-to-hindus/articleshow/72292663.cms>



DC Chapter Celebrates Upcoming Shri Ram Mandir in Ayodhya



The World Hindu Council of America, Washington DC Chapter hosted a grand celebration for the upcoming holy Shri Ram Mandir at the Ram Janma Bhumi, Ayodhya, on Dec 07, 2019, and marking the end of five centuries of colonial subjugation of Hindus, after the Supreme court verdict on Sri Ram Janma Bhoomi.

The event was hosted at a Hindu Mandir in the greater Washington DC area, and was attended by over 400 participants throughout the day. The event started at 9:30 AM with Vedic Puja, Paath, Bhajans. Devotees of Sri Ram ji chanted the Ramayan, Dhyana Slokas, Rama Janana, Sita Kalyana, Rama Pattabhisheka and Mangala. Thereafter children from Samskruth Bharati recited Sri Ram Raksha Stotras.

At noon Bhagwan Sri Ram ji's grand Aarti was performed in-front Sri Ram's murty, and later



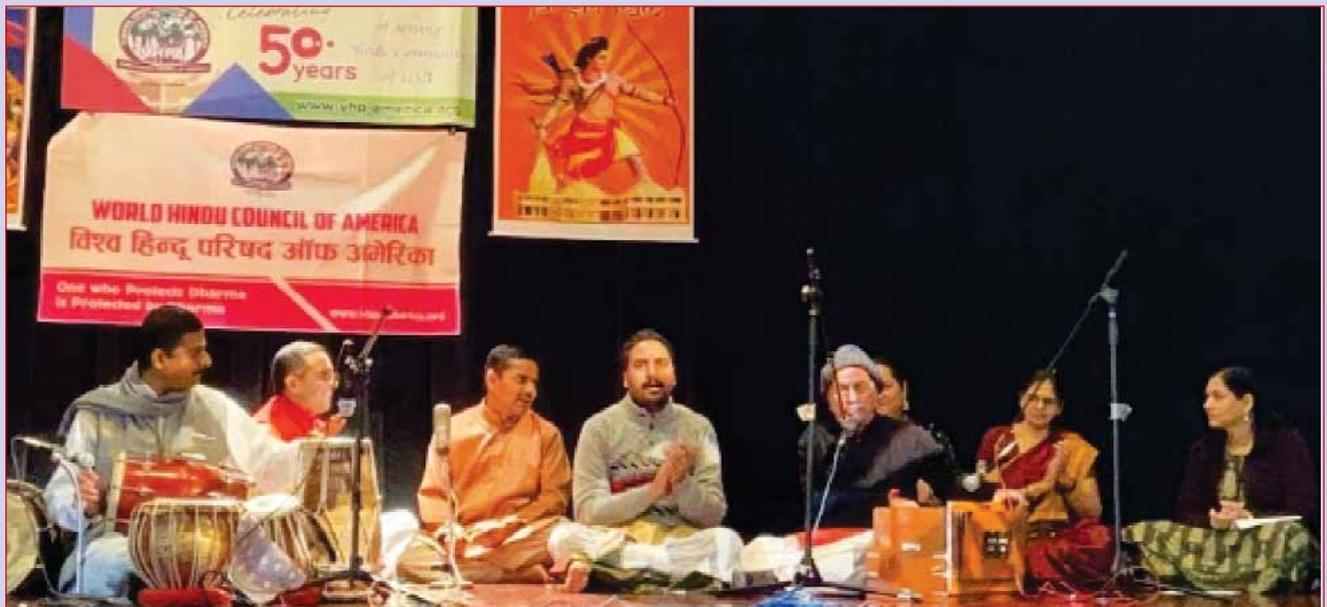
Prasad/food was served to all participants throughout the day.

In afternoon Bhajan Keertans related to the praise of Sri Rama was organized. After Bhajans, sessions on the history of Ayodhya and relevance of adopting values from the life of Sri Ram ji in our own lives was presented to the audience.

Between 3-6 pm, many accomplished classical dance performers from 10 professional dance academies in the DC metro area, presented enchanting dance dramas on Sri Ram and Ramayan.

During the program, a video showed the continued sacrifices and historic struggle of millions of devotees to liberate the Sri Ram Janma Bhumi. Prayers were offered to those devotees who sacrificed their life for Sri Ramji and his ideals.

DC Chapter thanked all participants, volunteers, performers of Vedic Puja Paath, children and youth singing Sri Ram Sankeertans, Shlokas; Bhajan Keertan singers, professional dance academy Gurus, and performers, all of whom put together such enchanting dances and performances on such a short notice.





Shri Ram Janmabhoomi Issue

Supreme Court Delivers Historic Verdict on Ayodhya Dispute

The final judgement in the Ayodhya dispute was declared by the Supreme Court of India on 9 November 2019. The Supreme Court of India ordered the disputed land (2.77 acres) to be handed over to a trust (to be created by Government of India) to build the Ram Janmabhoomi (revered as the birthplace of Shree Ram) temple. The court also ordered the government to give an alternate five acres of land in another place to the Sunni Waqf Board for the purpose of building a mosque.

Summary of the verdict

The five-judge bench of the Supreme Court unanimously pronounced its verdict on 9th November 2019. The judgement can be summarized as follows:

- ★ The Court ordered the Government of India to create a trust to build the Ram Mandir temple and form a Board of Trustees within three months. The disputed land will be owned by the Government of India and subsequently transferred to the Trust after its formation.

- ★ The Court ordered the entire disputed land of area of 2.77 acres to be allocated for the construction of a temple while an alternative piece of land of area of five acres be allocated to the Sunni Waqf Board for the construction of a mosque at a suitable place within

Ayodhya.

- ★ The Court ruled that the 2010 Allahabad High Court's decision, division of the disputed land was incorrect.

- ★ The Court ruled that the Demolition of the Babri Masjid and the 1949 desecration of the 'Babri Masjid' was in violation of law.

- ★ The Court observed that archaeological evidence from the Archaeological Survey of India shows that the 'Babri Masjid' was constructed on a "structure", whose architecture was distinctly indigenous and non-Islamic.

- ★ The ruins of an ancient religious structure under an existing building does not always indicate that it was demolished by unfriendly powers, the Supreme Court held in its 1,045-page judgment in the Ayodhya case.

- ★ The court observed that all four of the Janamsakhis (biographies of the first Sikh guru, Guru Nanak) state unambiguously and in detail that Guru Nanak made pilgrimage to Ayodhya and offered prayers in the Ram temple in 1510-11 AD. The court also mentioned that a group of Nihang Sikhs performed puja in the "mosque" in 1857.

- ★ The Court said that Muslim parties, including the

Sunni Waqf Board, failed to establish exclusive possession of disputed land. It said that the Hindu parties furnished better evidence to prove that Hindus had worshipped continuously inside the "mosque", believing it to be the birthplace of the Hindu deity Rama. The Court cited that iron railings set up in 1856-57 separated the inner courtyard of the mosque from the outer courtyard, and that Hindus were in exclusive possession of the outer courtyard. It said that even before this, Hindus had access to the inner courtyard of the mosque.

★ The Court ruled that the suit filed by Nirmohi Akhara could not be upheld and it had no shebait rights. However, the court ruled that Nirmohi Akhara should be given appropriate representation in the Board of Trustees.

★ The Court rejected the claim made by Shia Waqf Board against the Sunni Waqf Board for the ownership of the Babri Masjid.

Supreme Court dismisses all 18 review petitions

A five-judge bench of the Supreme Court headed by the chief justice of India (CJI) SA Bobde dismissed all the 18 petitions seeking review of the verdict in Ayodhya title dispute on 12 December 2019.

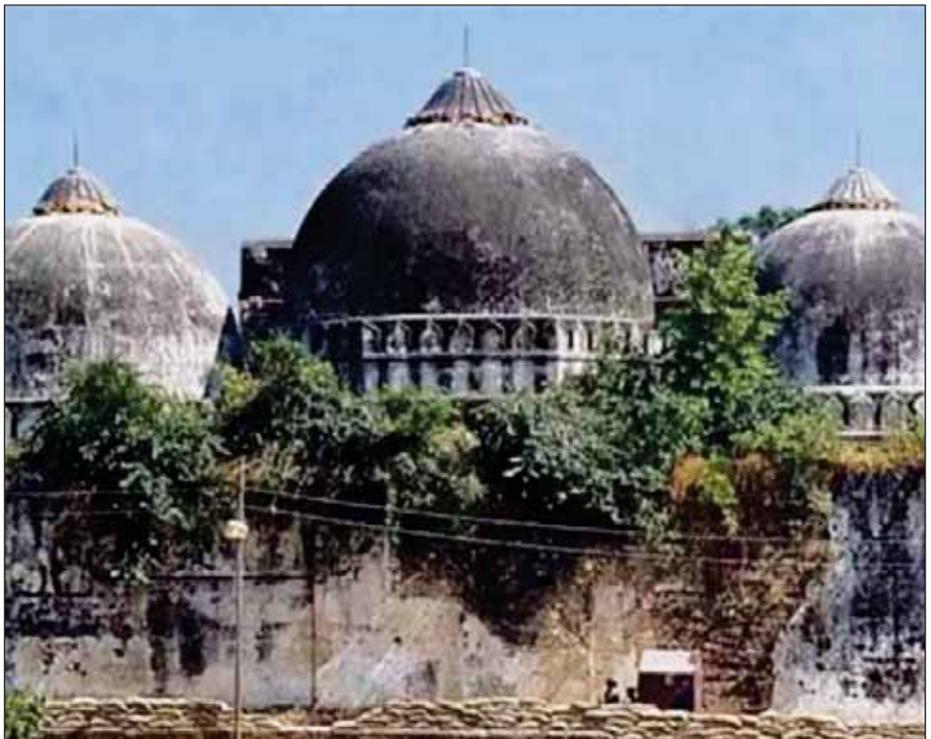
The bench held that the review petitions were lacking in merit. The bench also added that those who are not parties to the suit cannot be permitted to file a review thus dismissing pleas sought by 40 activists.

On November 9, a five-judge bench, headed by the then CJI Ranjan Gogoi, had in a unanimous verdict decreed the entire 2.77-acre disputed land in favour of deity 'Ram Lalla' and directed the Centre to allot a five-acre plot at a prominent place to the Sunni Waqf Board for building a mosque in Ayodhya.

Following the verdict, on December 2, the first plea seeking review of the Ayodhya verdict was filed in the apex court by Maulana Syed Ashhad Rashidi, legal heir of original litigant M Siddiq and also the Uttar Pradesh president of the Jamiat Ulama-e-Hind.

On December 6, six petitions were filed in the apex court seeking review of its Ayodhya judgement.

On December 9, two more review petitions were filed, one by the Akhil Bharat Hindu Mahasabha and the other by 40 persons, including rights activists who have



jointly moved the court seeking review of its verdict.

Maulana Syed Ashhad Rashidi had sought review of the verdict on 14 counts and said that "complete justice" could only be done by directing reconstruction of Babri Masjid.

He had also sought an interim stay on the operation of the verdict in which it had directed the Centre that a trust be formed within three months for construction of the temple at the site.

Akhil Bharat Hindu Mahasabha, which sought a limited review of the November 9 verdict, had moved the court against the direction to allot a five-acre plot to Sunni Waqf Board for building a mosque in Ayodhya.

It had also sought deletion of findings declaring the disputed structure as a Mosque.

The review plea filed by 40 persons, including historian Irfan Habib, economist and political commentator Prabhat Patnaik, activists Harsh Mander, Nandini Sundar and John Dayal, had said they are "deeply aggrieved" by the verdict as it "errs in both fact and law".

It had sought a full bench for hearing the review plea saying it is not merely a title dispute but a "contestation about the core of India's constitutional morality, and the principles of equal citizenship, secularism, justice, rule of law and fraternity".





From our very earliest days we are taught to dress properly, wash behind the ears, brush our teeth, and so on. We are taught how to present ourselves before others and how to mind our manners. We learn the importance of feeding our body and protecting it from heat, cold, rain, snow and ice. All this is taught to the child. But no one teaches the child to take care of the mind.

Society teaches that money will bring happiness. Large billboards on the side of the highway advertise that lottery winners live happily ever after. They also advertise that vacationing in Hawaii will shake your blues. They should be sued for false advertising. Our experience of happiness lies not with the outside world but with our own mind. Two people may be going through the same experience with two diametrically opposite reactions. They may have completely opposite reactions to the same person and to the same thing. One feels happy, whereas the other feels miserable in exactly the same situation. Situation is the same; difference is the mindset of the person.

If you are suffering from a disease, know that your mind will play a very significant part in your healing process. If you have no faith in the medicine you are taking, the medicine will simply not work. If you believe the medication will work, you will get better even if the

medicine was only a placebo in the form of a sugar pill.

It is not without reason that Hindu scriptures talk repeatedly about taking care of the mind and controlling it. They say, "The individual who has conquered his mind has conquered the entire world."

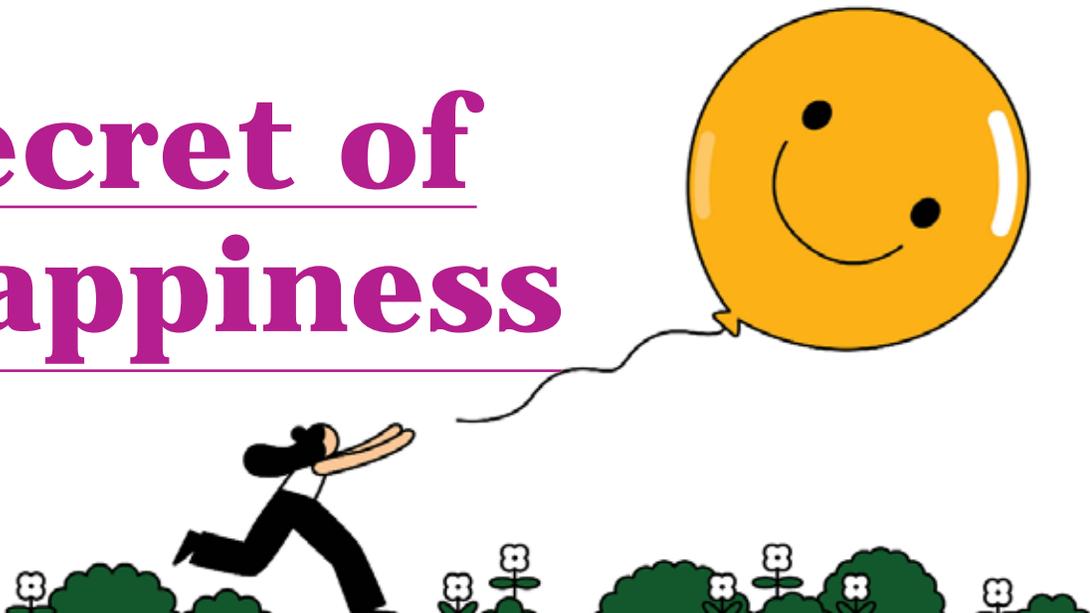
To still the mind, remain silent for an hour or two every day and practice gratitude and positive thinking. Meditation must become a part of your daily life. Mindfulness must be practiced every waking moment.

Gratitude

Dictionary defines the word 'Gratitude' as 'the quality of being thankful; readiness to show appreciation for and to return kindness.' I looked up the word after a conversation with someone who was dealing with a stressful personal situation which was resulting in episodes of anxiety. One of the coping mechanisms the healthcare professional had recommended was 'practicing gratitude'. This means taking time out every day to be thankful for and to appreciate all that is good in life.

There has been a lot of research done on Gratitude in recent years and it has been observed that being grateful helps a person feel more positive emotions, relish good experiences, improve physical health, deal with adversity, and build strong relationships. This should not come as a surprise to anyone with faith.

Secret of Happiness





Prayer to God is all about communicating with God. The communication is not about asking for material things or about granting favors. Instead, it involves being thankful for the countless gifts our Divine Father has generously given to us and continues to give. Every opportunity is a sign of His love, and every challenge proves how much He lovingly wants us to grow. He not only knows what we deserve but also knows what we are capable of. With every challenge, He helps us to evolve.

By reflecting on all the blessings God has showered on us, we become better version of ourselves. We become kinder and more patient with others, which creates a cycle of them being more patient with us and others. As we prepare to celebrate Thanksgiving in America, let us resolve to give daily thanks to the Almighty who never tires of giving.

Beam With Pride

I am sure that everyone has had a reason which has made them beam with pride. This can be personal success or recognition, success of a loved one, or even an argument that was rightfully won!

I have seen many parents beam with pride in the success of their children. The success can be a well recited poem when they are four, a well-earned game, a graduation, a well-executed dance recital, or a multitude of other reasons. Similarly a husband basks in the glory of his wife when she is promoted at work and a daughter gleefully proclaims "That's my dad!" unable to contain her pride as her dad scores the goal at the family picnic soccer game.

Let me give you a few other important reasons on why we should all have that spring in our step and why we should be beaming with pride.

1) Our eternal father is the all-powerful and omniscient God. He knows not only what is in our heart but also in the hearts of all living creatures. There is nothing that He cannot do and there is none He cannot defeat!

2) Our eternal father is the kindest and the most gracious God. He is one who holds our hand when we are going through difficult times lifetime after lifetime and forgives us over and over again for all the mistakes we make.

3) Our eternal father is always with us. There is never a moment when we are not under His protection. He is the one whose arms we run into when we are afraid and He makes it all okay. He is the kindest, most beautiful, most powerful, most knowledgeable Lord, Father and Beloved, shouldn't we be beaming with pride?

The Art of Juggling: Work-Life balance

Bryan Dyson, the ex-CEO of Coca-Cola, delivered a commencement speech at Georgia Tech a while ago. That speech resonates with a lot of people. He said, "Imagine life as a game in which you are juggling five balls in the air. You name them - work, family, health, friends and spirit - and you're keeping all of these in the air. You will soon understand that work is a rubber ball. If you drop it, it will bounce back. But the other four balls - family, health, friends and spirit - are made of glass. If you drop one of these, they will be irrevocably scuffed, marked, nicked, damaged or even shattered. They will never be the same. You must understand that and strive for balance in your life."

Interacting with people, I see that the balls that people are constantly juggling are "Work, family, friends, and health," and in that order of priority. The fifth ball, which Bryan calls 'spirit' and I call 'God' is one that never leaves our hands because we are all struggling to juggle with the four that are already in the air. We are not very good jugglers and are constantly dropping one of the four balls. This causes us a lot of heartache and disappointment.

Here is my humble advice. If you are dropping a lot of balls, then don't juggle. Instead, make devotion a priority. Just like a ship lost at sea can get on course after seeing a light house, so can we all benefit from the inner peace we receive when we spend time in meditation.

Bring in the New Year by learning how devotion to God can help bring balance and equilibrium in all aspects of your life.

This is my end-of-the-year gift to all of you.



Visit www.radhamadhavsociety.org
Email: s_didi@radhamadhavsociety.org

The other three Hindu monasteries of Dwarka, Shringeri and Joshimath, established by Adi Shankaracharya, are managed by their Shankaracharyas and are not under government control.

Puri's Govardhan Mutt moved out of Odisha government's control

By Debabrata Mohanty

Odisha government passed an amendment to free Puri's famous Govardhan Math from state control on Saturday following persistent demands by the Puri Shankaracharya.

The amendment gives Puri Math parity with the other three Hindu monasteries of Dwarka, Shringeri and Joshimath, all established by Adi Shankaracharya and managed without government interference.

Law minister Pratap Jena said the amendment to the Hindu Religious Endowment Act, 1951 was made keeping in mind the "religious pre-eminence and importance" of the Govardhan Math and will exclude it from the "religious institutions" defined under the act.

Set up in the 9th century, the Govardhan Math is the oldest Math in Puri and one of the four important Hindu 'dhamas' (holy abodes) established by Adi Shankaracharya.

The State government indirectly controlled the Puri Math since Lord Jagannath, who is the religious owner of the Math's properties, is considered a perpetual minor.

The state controls over 16000 temples and 450 Maths or Hindu monasteries through government appointed trustees and Mahants (priests) for the day-to-day management and is the sole arbiter as regards to the sale of Math

properties.

Puri Shankaracharya Swami Nischalananda Saraswati has for long opposed state control of temples and Mutts alleging that it resulted in their mismanagement and decline of the Hindu religion.

"The bureaucrats managing the temples and Mutts are involved in managing the temple finances which result in corruption," he recently said. The state government's decision follows criticism of the recent demolition of



Puri Shankaracharya Swami Nischalananda Saraswati had been demanding lifting of government control over Govardhan Mutt

several ancient Puri Mutts associated with the Jagannath temple, including the ancient Vaishnavite monasteries--the 700-year-old Emar Math, 300-year-old Languli Math and 521-year-old Bada Akhada Math. The Puri Shankaracharya has been against the demolition of the monasteries.

Early this month, the SC in an interim order, asked the Jagannath Temple Management Committee to invite the Puri Shankaracharya and ensure that the rituals were performed regularly every day without any remiss and obstruction. ◆◆◆

Source: <https://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/amendment-to-bring-puri-s-govardhan-mutt-out-of-odisha-government-control-moved/story-9JCJu5tCW6vnL17Zu2w48O.html>

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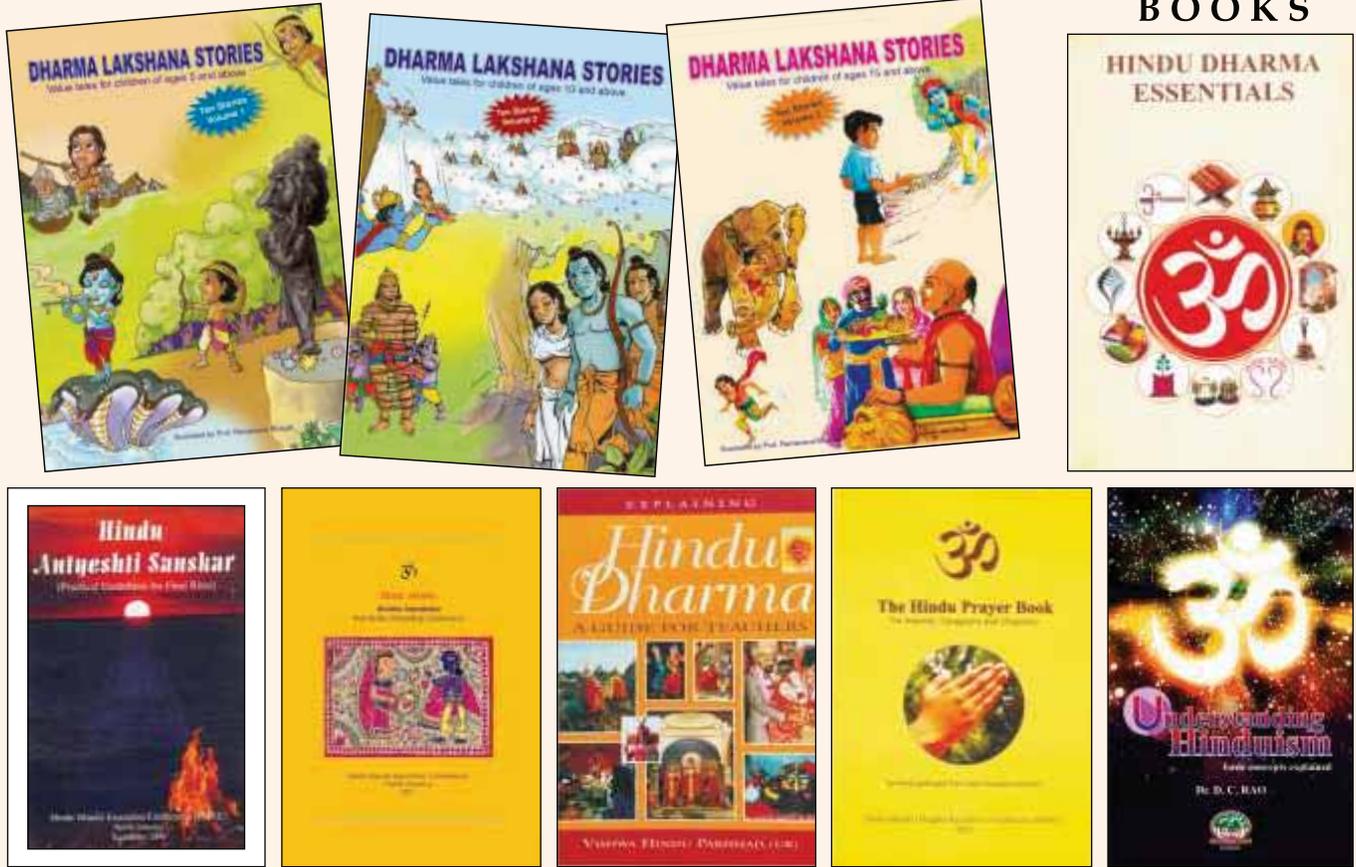
ॐ असतो मा सद् गमय । तमसो मा ज्योतिर्गमय । मृत्योर्माऽमृतम् गमय ।।

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

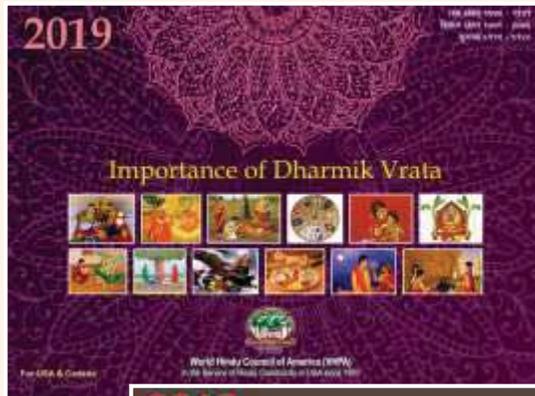
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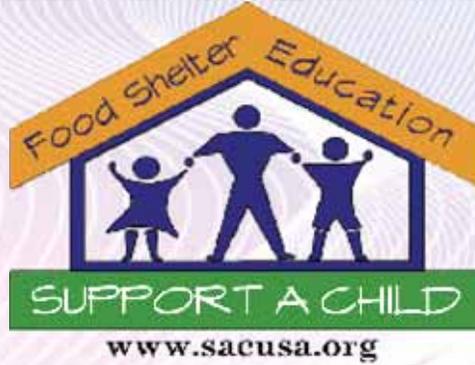
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