



Yugabdh: 5123
Shaka Samvat: 1943
Vikram Samvat: 2078

VOL: LI
No: 4
Oct -Dec 2021

HINDU VISHVA

Vishwa Dharma Digest

SONG OF THE NATURE



Suggested Donation \$5.00

Non Profit Org.
U.S. Postage
PAID
Houston, TX
PERMIT NO. 8376

Vishwa Hindu Parishad America Inc.
200 New Bond Street,
Sugar Grove, IL 60554-9171



VHPA Announces

ANJLEEBAHEN PANDYA MEMORIAL FUND



Anjeeben Pandya
(1949-2021)

Anjeebahren's life was dedicated to the cause of Hindu Dharma. She exemplified selfless service. She was an organizer and leader par excellence. To keep her memory alive, we are announcing scholarships to deserving women at the Hindu University of America (HUA) and Emerging Hindu Women Leadership Internships for high school and college students.

Please make a tax deductible contribution and help us reach our goal of **\$300,000**.

MAIL CHECK TO:

VHPA

P O BOX 200,

SUGAR GROVE , IL 60554

WORLD HINDU COUNCIL OF AMERICA (VHPA)

National Office:
200 New Bond Street,
Sugar Grove, IL 60554-9171

www.vhp-america.org

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

Volume: LI

No: 4

OCT - DEC 2021



EDITORIAL TEAM

Managing Editor
Shyam Tiwari
srtiwari@hotmail.com

Editor
Sanjay Gupta
sgatlanta@gmail.com

Advisor
Dr. Abhay Asthana
abhayaji@gmail.com

Ronica (Rajranee)
Jaipershad
ronica@ronica.com

जरामरणमोक्षाय मामाश्रित्य यतन्ति ये ।
ते ब्रह्म तद्विदुः कृत्स्नमध्यात्मं कर्म चाखिलम् ॥

- श्रीमद्भगवद्गीता 07.29

Intelligent persons who are endeavoring for liberation from old age and death take refuge in Me in devotional service. They are actually Brahman because they entirely know everything about transcendental and fruitive activities.

jarā-maraṇa-mokṣāya
mām āśritya yatanti ye
te brahma tad viduḥ kṛtsnam
adhyātman kārma cakḥilam

Bhagvad Gita 07.29

ABOUT THE HINDU VISHWA

World Hindu Council of America (VHPA) publishes the Hindu Vishwa issue quarterly, except when combined with special publications. For subscription, please fill out the membership form on the last page.

Advertising Inquiries: Shyam Tiwari
Tel: (770)962-2669 **Email:** srtiwari@hotmail.com

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

The views expressed in the articles presented in this publication are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the organization, officials, editorial staff or the donors. © Copyright 2021 World Hindu Council of America (VHPA). All rights reserved. No parts and contents of this publication may be reproduced in any form, without the written permission of VHP of America, Inc.

In this issue

EDITORIAL

03

SAC Reaches a Major Milestone Since Inception

04

Song of the Nature

06

Gov. of Rhode Island Confers Special Recognition on Dr. Madhu Jhaveri

08

It's Brazen: A Conference on 'Dismantling Global Hindutva'

09

Dr. Mahesh Mehta, VHPA Founder and a Great Visionary, Leaves Us for Eternity

11

Faith and Self-Surrender for God-Realization II

13

A Beautiful Hindu Wedding Ceremony

17

CHINGARI Holds Vigil Across US

19

Vedic Literature Says Caste by Birth is Unjust II

21

The Meaning of the Motherhood of God

26

Vedic Origins of the Europeans: The Children of Danu

31

Create Your Sunshine

36

DR. MAHESH MEHTA, VHPA FOUNDER AND A GREAT VISIONARY, LEAVES US FOR ETERNITY



11

FAITH AND SELF-SURRENDER FOR GOD-REALIZATION II



17

CHINGARI HOLDS VIGIL ACROSS US



19

SONG OF THE NATURE



06

THE MEANING OF THE MOTHERHOOD OF GOD



26

Bangladesh Hindu Genocide

THE LATEST IN THE SERIES OF GENOCIDES AND THE IDEALOGY BEHIND IT

Not a day goes by when we do not hear any distressing news of another mass massacre of Hindus in their native land that they have nurtured and tended from time immemorial. This recent wave of the extermination campaign that was unleashed, started from the deserts of Arabia almost a millennium and a half ago, reached the hapless community of Hindus during their most festive period of the year in Bangladesh. The community was targeted by rampaging murderous mobs aided by the Jihadi state because of the fabricated fiction of the concocted insult to the ‘word of Allah’. What kind of God is so insecure that ‘He’ needs a bunch of coward Momins to terrorize, kill, rape, and rampage innocent people? The Bangladeshi Hindu community that, until a short time ago, the equivalent of a human life span, was roughly half the population has now been decimated to a single digit by percentage in that country. It is widely reported and projected that there will be no Hindu left in Bangladesh by the middle of this century. This fate is not so different from that of the Hindus, Buddhists, and other indigenous communities that called home the large swathes of geography north and west of the current boundaries of present-day India. Unfortunately, this is the latest but forebodingly not the last such tragedy to befall on Bangladeshi Hindus, in particular, and the native

and indigenous communities around the world in general.

It is incomprehensible for people born in Sanatan dharma traditions to understand, analyze and mount an effective response to these genocidal ideologies because of our naïveté about seeing only goodness in others and ignoring the evils prevalent in these fundamentalist faiths. Just as a good doctor looks not only at the symptoms but also the root cause underlying the malaise that afflicts the body, we need to examine the source of hate that has sustained these marauding campaigns for over a millennium. So, what is the way forward? We should be clear-eyed about fighting not just the manifestations of the disease but also the deep-rooted hate-mongering by the doctrine of annihilation of ‘others’, ‘disbelievers’, ‘polytheists’, ‘kafirs’ and ‘pagans.’ The tool in this fight is our ancient tradition that speaks of ‘Satyameva Jayate’(Truth alone triumphs). We should insist on truth and remove the burqa of petro-dollars that inhibits the self-appointed guardians of righteousness and human rights to vocalize these issues. We must believe in the goodness and dharmic nature inherent in every human being and continue to form alliances to annihilate these diabolic forces instrumental behind such gruesome atrocities. ■

SAC Reaches a Major Milestone Since Inception

Support A Child journey from a very humble beginning is now inching towards a key milestone of 4000 children in 2021. It is a tremendous achievement while donations are still pouring in at the time of printing. We hope to not only meet but exceed the goal with the generous and unwavering support from our donors.

Every year, SAC volunteers work very hard to organize quality programs to raise funds while promoting Indian culture and traditions. These programs showcase talent from India, as well as local talent here in the US. The year 2021 fundraisers included several such events. The first in this series was a virtual “Hasya Kavi Sammelan” featuring talented poets from Bharat. This was followed by another online live musical show by Grammy nominated tabla and percussion maestro Pt. Subhen Chatterjee and Bandish Fusion. During the festival season of Navaratri, an outdoor, in-person “Raas-Garba” was held by the Illinois chapter, which was attended in large numbers, with strict covid testing and temperature checking enforced. An in-person dance



and music extravaganza, “Rang Tarang”, showcasing local talent, was organized by the Ohio chapter. Another performance that was enjoyed by patrons across the US was “Aapki Pasand, Sanjavanee Ke Sang.” Internationally acclaimed singer Sanjeevani Bhelande and her team of talented musicians performed live on YouTube from Bharat, singing songs requested by their virtual audience here in the US. The last fund raiser of year '21 was an enchanting musical evening. The fundraiser showcased the talents of some exciting up-and-coming artists in Harikatha. Harikatha literally translates to “the story of Lord

Vishnu”. It is a form of Hindu traditional discourse where the narration of the story is interspersed with songs related to the story. This show was organized by the SAC youth wing, a show truly “by the youth for the youth.” These fundraisers help raise awareness about the SAC initiative and showcase reports of the work being done on ground in Bharat, as well as testimonials by the children who are beneficiaries of SAC.

The programs were very well received by the community, and donors gave generously for the cause.



OPERATIONS:

This year has been challenging for everyone due to Covid-19 pandemic, however volunteers of SAC have shown exceptional focus and have continued with the fundraising efforts. In spite of all odds, we managed to raise and send the total amount of \$519,931.48 to Bharat in year 2020.

Total expense in the year 2020 was \$55,260.92

Number of States in India (Donations Given) 19

Number of States in US (Donations Received) 35

Total Donations Received \$416453

Support-A-Child (SAC), a Seva program of the VHPA, was established in 1985 as an initiative of the Vishwa Hindu Parishad of America (VHPA), to help eradicate illiteracy and improve the living conditions of children from poor and disadvantaged families in India. A non-profit organization registered in the USA, SAC is run totally by volunteers' efforts, with minimal overhead costs. Today SAC has a strong presence with 27 active chapters in 16 states in the USA, each dedicated chapter coordinators backed by a strong national team. Support-A-Child (SAC)

has grown from 900 children to 3,400 children in the last five years. The SAC team salutes all our very committed and dedicated donors, and appreciates the very low dropout rate of donors. SAC also supported two new KVK (Shri Ashok Singhal Koushal Vikas Kendra) To ensure "Satpatri Daan", SAC collaborates with various organizations dedicated to serving the poor and needy in India so that help reaches where it is most needed. Some of these organizations are Bharat Kalyan Prathishthan (BKP), Sewa Bharati, Sewa Dham, Vivekanand Kendra and Seva in Action. Among these, BKP is our main partner which runs several hostels in cities as well as in remote villages and tribal regions of India, where poverty and lack of resources prevent youth from getting any education. To address the needs of this neglected population, schools have been started in remote areas of Manipur, Tripura, Meghalaya, Jharkhand, Assam, West Bengal, Rajasthan, Gujarat and Andhra Pradesh. Now we see the presence of SAC Supported Hostels in all the states of Bharat. BKP, a project of VHP, with the help of about 200 associated organizations or trusts all over Bharat, is dedicated to jan-kalyan and is an embodiment of the lofty principle of "Nar-seva Narayan-seva." ■

forest. The breathtaking view spoke wonders, a story in itself.

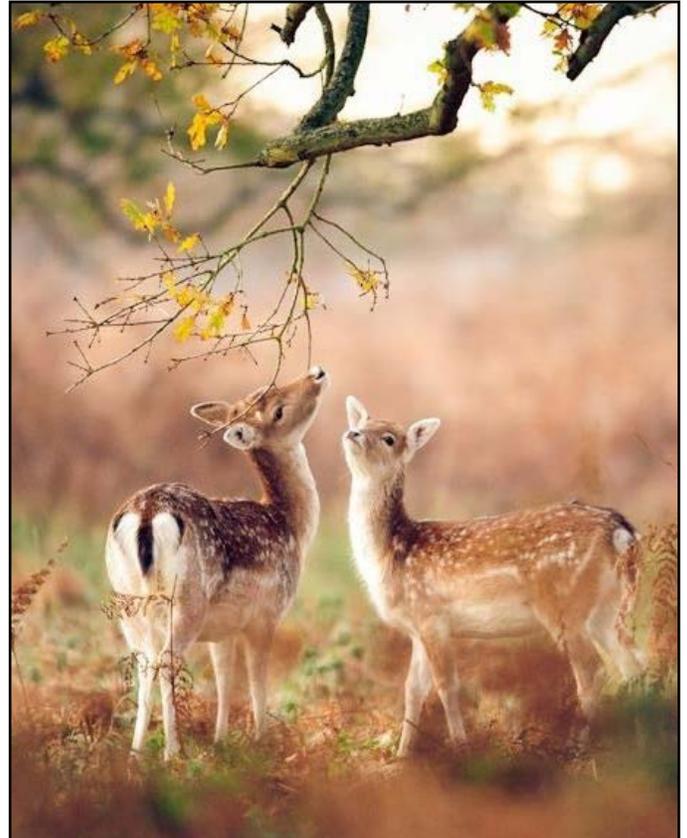
When she had had enough, she let the colors dissipate. She breathed the scent of the vivid flowers surrounding the clearing, and got up. Twirling around, her dress spinning, she stroked Night to sleep, and coaxed Day to fully awaken. It was time, and the forest knew it too. It urged the animals to awaken, so they didn't miss it. The fauna stirred, awaking sleepily, but excited.

Finally, she began to sing. The song was sweeter than the best mangoes and the most fragrant flowers. It was like honey and chocolate, and sugar and custard. It told a tale of a young girl tasked with taking care of the world, and her friends, Day, Night, the Sun, and the Moon. As she sang, the sky turned impossibly blue, so blue, if you had seen in it a painting, you would've thought it was unrealistic.

The lilting melody drew in all the animals, and they swayed to the rhythm. The tiger and deer listened next to each other peacefully, and the crocodile and monkey danced together. While she sang and twirled in glee, all was still. The wind stayed motionless, listening.

Finally, the song ended. She stroked the tiger, and fed the deer a flower from her hair. The animals returned to their spots, feeling peaceful.

The end of her tune brought about sunset, and she asked the Sun to go down. It complained, like always, but obeyed the girl. She rose the Moon, and put the Sun to sleep with a mix of dark blue and indigos. She tapped her friend Night on the shoulder, and told Day to go tuck the Sun in. The moon happily rose. The color of the sky slowly darkened, until no one could see into the pitch black that hung above. The stars appeared at her command, like diamonds glittering



above the Earth, chattering amongst themselves.

When it turned midnight, she said goodbye to the trees, the plants, the animals, the Moon, and the stars, and laid down. As she fell asleep, the grass rose, and the dirt underneath her melted. She sunk into the Earth, and the grass covered her, like she was never there. The girl disappeared into the black soil, waiting to be reborn and start her journey all over again. For the girl was Nature, and her friends were the Sun, the Moon, Night, and Day. She had ballads written about her by her children, the flora and fauna of the world. And everyday she sang. And every day there was peace. ■

About the Author

Aarushi Ammavajjala is a 9th grader from South Forsyth High School in Atlanta, Georgia. Aarushi moved with her parents for all of 2020 to Vrindhavan and was with Gurus and the Divine. This piece of writing reflects on her time at Vrindhavan speaking on the Divine Mother, subtly connecting the greater concept of Advaita. She has always been passionate about the environment,

and loves to write short prose and poetry. She recently received a Gold Award for creative writing in the Bow Seat Ocean Awareness Contest 2021 for youths 11-18 showcasing passion for the environment through different outlets, creative writing being one of them. Here is the link to her winning entry: <https://bowseat.org/gallery/the-river-mother/>

It's Brazen: A Conference on 'Dismantling Global Hindutva'

It shocked Hindus: a conference on 'Dismantling Global Hindutva', supported by 38 US universities. Speakers are the usual leftists mainly with Hindu names. And of all dates, it was scheduled from 10-12. September.

The title is brazen or is it just truthful? Do they say now openly what has been the plan since over 1000 years? The plan to rid the world of ancient pagan cultures? Inka, Maya, Egypt, Greece, Babylon... all are gone. Yet Hindus still exist. Hindus still chant Vedas in their mandirs, still celebrate festivals, still revere great personalities from past ages and even now take more pride in being Hindu thanks to the realization that Hindu Dharma is most profound and the best of all options.

This must be painful for the enemies of Hindus. Christianity, Islam, Communism and their faithful followers may have felt that a clear sign is needed: Hindutva must be dismantled globally.

No difference between Hinduism and Hindutva

To obfuscate the issue, a distinction is being made between Hindutva (= Hinduness) and Hinduism. Hinduism is okay, but Hindutva is bad, as bad as ISIS as it also uses terror to achieve a Hindu Rashtra where minorities have no place, so it is claimed.

It's a lie. But media and the leftist academia rely on the ignorance of people and that a lie becomes truth if it is repeated often enough.

There is no difference between Islam and Islamism, and there is no difference between Hinduism and Hindutva, except that the fundamentals of Hinduism are inclusive

and beneficial, whereas the fundamentals of Islam clearly divide humanity between good believers and bad unbelievers.

Maligning Hindutva

The media onslaught in recent years against Hindutva was unrelenting. RSS was compared with ISIS and Arundhati Roy hinted on Deutsche Welle in Februar 2020 that the genocide of Muslims by the Hindu-nationalist Modi government has already started. A research scholar from Italy asked me to reply to heavily loaded questions on RSS, for example "Why does RSS draw inspiration from Hitler?"

What can Hindus do against Christianity, Islam and the Left, all of whom drive the false narrative of Hindus being dangerous, and who have a military-style strategy to achieve their goal of dismantling the most benign faith and culture?

Hindus usually rely on 'Satyameva Jayate'... Truth will triumph. But this doesn't mean that we should sit idle and not help truth coming to light.

Not wanting to be controversial...

Unfortunately, Hindus seem to have one trait which their compatriots in the left and the converts to the Abrahamic religions don't share. It is the desire not to be controversial and to be nice to others, even if those others are not nice to them.

This trait developed due to their painful history when Hindus had to lie low in the face of brutal Muslim and Christian oppressors. Yet this trait continued after 1947 and this does not help India.

It's time to be clear and truthful, and we must not be afraid to call out the basic faults of Christianity and Islam in a proactive manner.

What are the basic faults?

The most prominent fault is that they got the nature of 'the one true God' or Creator very, very wrong.

Hindus, Christians and Muslims, all agree that there is one true 'God' or cause for this universe. In fact, Hindus claimed this long before Christianity and Islam. It can be assumed that this Vedic knowledge about the one Brahman was copied/ stolen by Christianity and Islam.

This claim of one God is the positive aspect of the Abrahamic religions. They also tell their people, like Hindus do, to have faith and trust in a great God who looks after them if they are “good”. This makes sense and would give children an anchor, if the clergy of those two religions had not made a huge error.

Their texts claim that the one true God is jealous, that he loves only their own group and hates Hindus and other Kafirs. And being ‘good’ means to believe in their book and to be nice to people from their own religion. Others are seen as inferior who will be rejected by God.

For Muslims being good also means to do Jihad and make the whole world for Allah (Q 9.29, 8.39) and for Christians it means to try by hook or crook to convert ‘heathens’ to save them from eternal hellfire.

Christianity is not any longer as blunt as Islam, but the same mindset drives them, too, like “We alone have the truth. God loves us. Unless ‘they’ accept our true religion, ‘they’ won’t be saved. So let’s help them and finish off their demonic pagan culture...”

This is unacceptable and of course not the Will of ‘the one true God’ whom Hindus call Brahman.

The Human Rights Charter of the United Nations and the Constitution of many countries do not allow to demean anyone on the basis of religion. Yet Christianity and Islam demean all Hindus and others as Kafirs and pagans/ heathens and predict a terrible fate for them in future. Such attitude makes genocide possible.

Driving the narrative instead of being driven

Can Hindus for a change DRIVE the narrative, instead of being driven and of only reacting and defending?

Can we demand that Christianity and Islam drop untrue divisive dogmas and that these dogmas must NOT be allowed to be taught to children? For example, Hindu representatives could submit a petition to the UN or to the International Court of Justice demanding this.

Can we, including well-known Gurus, support courageous people like Waseem Rizvi that many ayats in the Quran are indeed hateful? Or do we still have doubts if they are hateful? If so, please get a copy in a language you understand.

Or do we feel “Let Muslims sort it out among themselves”? Such attitude is in all likelihood cowardice and not some virtue.

Can the Hindu panelists call a spade a spade in TV debates and can we also, in talks with friends from different communities, dare to be controversial if truth requires it?

Those who support this conference need to realize that it doesn’t pay to attack Hindus.

And Hindus need to realize that we are alone in this. But we have a great advantage: we have truth on our side. The ‘true God’ is not a despot who wants to roast us in hell.

If only there were genuine debates, like in ancient times ... Like between Adi Shankara and Mandana Misra. The Christian and Muslim representatives would have no other option but to accept Hindu Dharma, and the dark shadows of the Kali Yug would end.

Someday it will happen. ■

About the Author

Maria Wirth is a German and came to India for a holiday after finishing her psychology studies at Hamburg University. She visited the Ardha 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

Source: <https://mariawirthblog.wordpress.com/2021/08/30/its-brazen-conference-on-dismantling-global-hindutva/>

conference held in 1993 to commemorate the centenary of Swami Vivekanand's Chicago Address of 1893. Dharma Samsad (Parliament) in the USA was held in 1998 followed by a 10-day Dharma Prasaar Yatra in ten major cities with the participation of 15,000 people in 1999. In the United Nations Millennium Peace Summit in the year 2000, 108 eminent Hindu spiritual leaders (Sant-Mahatmas) and scholars from Bharat participated in spiritual discussions at the United Nations (UNO) followed by lecture tours across the US and followed by Hindu Sangam program at Staten Island, NY, where the then Prime Minister of Bharat Shri Atal Behari Vajpayee was also present.

Hindu community internationally sought Maheshbhai's advice. He traveled across the world to help motivate and organize the Hindu community. He served as a Central Vice-President and a member of the Board of Trustees and Governing Council of Vishwa Hindu Parishad.

A strong proponent of Indian democracy, Maheshbhai was the cofounder of Indians For Democracy (IFD) that organized protests from USA during 1975-77 against the clamping of illegal and undemocratic Emergency in Bharat by the then Government of PM Indira Gandhi. He was the founding member of the Friends of India Society in 1976 and very successfully championed the cause of democracy in Bharat. Maheshbhai helped found Overseas Friends of BJP. Maheshbhai was a close confidante of Bharat's Prime Minister Shree Narendrabhai Modi for many years. He was one of the organizers of the Madison Square Garden (NY) program in September 2014, attended by 20,000 members of the Indian diaspora where the Prime Minister of Bharat Shri Narendra Modi was the chief guest.

The President of Bharat awarded him Pravasi Bharatiya Samman Award in 2017 for his Community Services.

Shri Gaurang Vaishnav, Advisory Board Member of VHPA and Executive Vice President of Global Indians for Bharat Vikas) who worked with Maheshbhai for

48 years said, "Maheshbhai was a Yogi without ochre robes". He lived for dharma and Hindu society. He was a compassionate man; he was rational, but not a rationalist. He was deeply spiritual. He was extremely well-read and a teambuilder par excellence. It is hard to find a person with all the qualities that Maheshbhai possessed." It can be rightly said that Dr. Mahesh Mehta was the father of Hindu Movement in USA. With Maheshbhai's exit from this world, an epoch has ended.

Maheshbhai was the soul of VHPA. He was a great motivator and an exceptional organizer. He inspired a large number of volunteers to work for the VHPA. There are hundreds of workers in USA and many other countries who were inspired by Maheshbhai to serve the society at large and Hindu society in particular. His legacy will live through countless workers who were inspired by his leadership, his dedication and his untiring efforts to serve the Hindu society.

Maheshbhai was a thinker and influential orator. He had a deep understanding of our Sanatan Dharma, its fundamentals, its glorious as well as dark periods of history. He was well aware of the potentials of the future and the current state of Hindu society. A gifted writer, he penned a book titled, "Hindu Philosophy in Action, In Search of Universal Well-being" tracing the journey of VHPA. His message was not just for Hindus; it was for humanity at large.

Professionally, Maheshbhai was a well-known research scientist in the field of membrane technology, he held two doctorate degrees and an MBA. VHPA shares in the grief of Raginibahen, Maheshbhai's wife who was the silent force behind Maheshbhai's success. May Ishwar grant the departed Aatma eternal peace and the family strength to pass through this difficult time. AUM Shanti.

Needless to say that the news came as a huge shock and of disbelief for many worldwide as evident from the common sentiments expressed by Shyam Tiwari, VHPA's VP for Publications, "Maheshbhai's departure leaves a huge void with no visible substitute in sight for a long time to come" ■

Faith and Self-Surrender for God-Realization II



At any rate, let us share with readers a couple of incidents from the life of Swami Vivekananda to illustrate how he had surrendered to the will of God for his daily meal. As you all know that Sri Ramakrishna, his Guru, died in 1886. So, Swami Vivekananda, like his other brother disciples, took to the life of a wandering monk going from one end of India to another. Mostly these wanderings were on foot, except as and when a devotee bought for him a railway ticket. So around 1891, he was wandering in the desert of Rajasthan. At one point a devotee had bought him a third-class railway ticket. But he had no money to buy any food. Since it was a practice among monks not to carry anything, even money, he couldn't buy any food. In other words, for food he surrendered to the grace of God. (Readers would recall how Sri Ramakrishna couldn't even touch money or carry any food or other item given by some devotee for a later time.)

Anyway, in the same compartment was also a rich merchant, enjoying his delicious dinner that he had brought from home. Since the Swami was very young at that time, just in his late twenties, the merchant mocked at

him saying that how it made a difference when one worked for one's living rather than squandered his life for religion. At any rate, when the destination came both got down, the merchant sat on a bench in a covered area, while the Swami sat on a bare platform. He did so because he was very ordinarily dressed. So he sat down under a tree and was very hungry. Then a wonderful thing happened, which Swami Vivekananda later narrated to his disciples.

From a distance, a man appeared onto the platform. Pointing to the Swami with a finger he said: "Babaji, babaji [in India a holy person is often addressed that way, which stands for father], I have brought food for you." He came closer and closer. The Swami thought that the man had made a mistake and told him so. "No, no, no", replied the man, "I mean you. I am a sweetmeat seller here. I am a devotee of Lord Rama. I was taking my midday nap after my worship and lunch. Lord Rama came to me in a dream and said: 'my devotee is in distress. You go and serve him.' First, I slept without caring. I didn't listen to that dream instruction. But again, and again I was pushed. 'Go soon, go soon.' Then I immediately got up, prepared sweets and *luchis*, etc., took water and then came to the platform. And from a distance, I could identify you. You have been shown to me in the dream. So, please take these." Swami Vivekananda was touched by this experience and, with tears in his eyes, he took the food and blessed him. The merchant who was listening to all this conversation between the two felt very much ashamed and went to the Swami and asked for his forgiveness, which he very gladly gave. (The Life of Swami Vivekananda By His Eastern and Western Disciples, v.1, 348-49.)

There is another incident. In Vrindavan, while going around the Govardhan Hill, the Swami vowed that he would not beg his food from anyone and eat only what was offered to him without asking. During the first day, he became exceedingly hungry at noon. Besides the heavy shower that came pouring added to his discomfort. But he continued to walk through the woods. Soon he heard a voice calling him from behind. The Swami didn't pay any attention and began to run instead to test this apparent act of Providence. But the man who was calling him soon

overtook him and insisted that he must accept the food. The Swami accepted it, saying nothing. Shortly afterwards, the man disappeared into the woods. Ecstatic for this miraculous act of the Lord, and with tears streaming from his eyes, the Swami cried out, "Glory to Shri Radha! Glory to Shri Krishna!" It is quite clear that in the wilderness the Lord had taken care of His devotee. (The Life ... 218-19.)

Do these two incidents show that God Himself came down to protect His devotee? I for one don't think so. For after all God is not some being like us, except with much bigger powers, although Lord Krishna says in the Bhagavad-Gita that the Lord never forsakes those who have surrendered unto Him. Unlike Christianity, which says that God incarnated only once in the personality of Jesus, Vedanta believes that every one of us is divine, which means that everyone is an incarnation of God. Not that we are all identical to Sri Rama or Krishna, Chaitanya, or Sri Ramakrishna, etc., for they are considered incarnations of God by millions of people. As Sri Ramakrishna used to say that although God abides in everyone, His manifestation or power, is different depending on the medium through which it manifests. Given this premise, we believe that since Swami Vivekananda was a Self-realized person, his thoughts (about hunger, etc.) were so powerful forces that reverberated in the equally pure minds of some people who read them and came forward to his rescue. We are sure that it has happened in everyone's case sometimes, that you were thinking of someone, and the same person just calls you on the telephone. In the case of perfect persons, such a thing happens more often.

It should not be concluded from the above two incidents from the life of Swami Vivekananda that to be a monk is an easy thing; in fact, all the direct disciples of Sri Ramakrishna, except Swami Adhbhutananda, were from educated families and themselves were well educated. Swami Vivekananda was preparing for his law exams, and after that, like his late father he wanted to join a legal profession and support his mother and other siblings. But he had the divine calling, and he renounced everything and surrendered to the will of God. His brother disciples



A Beautiful Hindu Wedding Ceremony

With a significant presence on TV and in the movies plus the growing Indian Diaspora, the Hindu wedding festivities are becoming well known and famous throughout the world. They are colorful, enjoyable, with delicious food, lots of pageantry and music.

The ceremony itself originated in Ṛgveda and is the most ancient and spiritual ceremony in the world. The various rituals bring out the best of the Sanātana Dharma philosophy of Life while binding the couple physically, mentally and spiritually. They induct the couple into *Gr̥hastha Āśrama*, the lives of married householders, which is the bedrock of any stable society.

The wedding ceremony is the most important of all wedding events. However, it may not be well structured to meet the needs of the modern

demographics, especially in the Western Countries like America. Many ceremonies lack the formality, discipline, logistics and respect that are so necessary if we want to create a positive image of our culture.

It is probably so because of the way many ceremonies are planned and conducted, not only in India but also in other countries. The duration of the rituals can be too long and fragmented. The audience may not understand the meaning of the Sanskrit Mantras but may remember only some interesting traditions, like stealing the groom's shoes! This lack of understanding, even with well-written programs, may allow guests to socialize, attend to their mobile phones or even munch during the ceremony. Many people find the ceremony boring, skip it altogether and attend only the reception.

Thus, we may be missing an excellent opportunity to bring out the beauty of this ceremony to familiarize

people about the Sanātana Dharma, especially to the second or third generation Hindus and to their Western friends.

Any wedding ceremony is an auspicious event. After all, it is the wedding of Lakṣmī and Viṣṇu as the bride and the groom! Therefore, the parents, the couple and the Paṇḍita have to make every effort to make it a dignified and respectful event. Their vision of a beautiful wedding will dictate many choices such as the venue, events, maṇḍapa design etc. For example, they can plan the ceremony indoors to avoid potential inclement weather, external distractions and other logistic issues. The maṇḍapa can be set up on a stage with no pillars to create good visibility of all rituals. The ceremony can be timely and seamless from processional to recessional with a good logical flow.

By tailoring the ceremony to the specific couple, the Paṇḍita, as the “Master of the Ceremony”, can bring out the best of their Hindu heritage and Western upbringing. He or she can effectively communicate to the audience the deep significance of each step. Although the ceremony is primarily for the couple, the Pandit can include the parents, the siblings and the audience in various rituals as necessary. After all, it is not just the wedding of the couple but also the union of two families with the guests as witnesses and their social supporting structure.

A well-prepared ceremony takes an hour or so with all the important steps. Many rituals, even the Vivāha Homa, look beautiful, especially for photography, with the couple and others in standing positions. This



simple fact shows respect for our deities as well as the ceremony and ensures good visibility that directs everybody’s attention on the rituals. If properly conducted, the ceremony can result in a pin-drop silence with serene atmosphere.

The pre-wedding pujas like Grahaśānti are an excellent way to review the fundamentals of the Sanātana Dharma with the youngsters. We also need to perform previous Saṃskāras if the couple has not undergone them earlier. We should try to remove the misconceptions that the Saṃskāras like the Upanayan and Samāvartana are only for the Brāhmaṇa boys. They are for boys and girls from all Varṇas to develop their spiritual and educational upbringing.

The Hindu weddings, especially in the western countries, are a fusion of multiple cultures, generations, religions, races, traditions and customs. Almost 50% of weddings in America are between Hindus and non-Hindus. It is important that we conduct the ceremony in a non-dogmatic, non-proselytizing, spiritual and respectful way. A pragmatic, all-inclusive ceremony can bring together the authenticity of the Vedic rituals that would appeal to the present demographics of the couple and that of the attendees.

It takes a village to raise a child but it takes the whole society to strengthen the marriage institution. It should be an honor to go to weddings to witness the induction of the couple into the second phase of their lives and bless them for a long, happy and blissful married life. ■

About the Author

Mr. Padmakar Gangatirkar, an engineer by profession, has been officiating Hindu Weddings in North America for over 20 years. He has developed a unique style of officiating them with a well-balanced combination of rituals and interesting delivery that connects with the couple, the parents and the guests alike. He conducts the weddings based on authentic scriptures with focus on their significance with detailed logistical considerations. He is the author of the book, “Tying the Perfect Knot, A Practical Guide to Hindu Weddings” available on Amazon.

Please send your comments to pamag43@gmail.com.

CHINGARI

Holds Vigil Across US



About 30 Hindu activists from the Tampa Bay area converged on a busy intersection in Tampa on September 18, a warm Saturday to register their protest against the kidnapping, enslavement, rape, forcible conversion to Islam, and marrying off of hapless Hindu girls to older men in Pakistan.

The situation for girls belonging to minority religions in Pakistan has gone from bad to worse. There is a concentrated and well-orchestrated effort by vested powers, both religious and political, with the connivance of the police and the judiciary to terrorize and decimate whatever small minority is left in the theocratic State of Pakistan.



While West has taken notice of this ongoing cruelty but nothing has been done by any government. If anything, the USA continues to give billions in aid to Pakistan.

Therefore, it is high time that the man on the street is educated about the menace of Pakistan. This protest vigil was organized by CHINGARI, i.e., Coalition for Hindu Girls Abducted and their Rights, a project of Vishwa Hindu Parishad of America (VHPA.)

The activists, led by Nainan Desai, a reputed leader in the area, divided into four groups and stood at all four corners of the intersection of North Del Mabry Highway and West Kennedy Blvd. that sees heavy traffic at all hours of the day. They held placards that read, “Help Protect Minorities of Pakistan,” “100’s of Hindu Girls Kidnapped, Trapped, Enslaved in Pakistan every year,” “Stop Slavery of Hindu Girls in Pakistan,” “Stop the Rape of Hindu Girls in Pakistan,” etc. There was no slogan-shouting but members actively approached the vehicles stopped at the traffic light and gave out a fact sheet that detailed the plight

of Hindu and other minority girls in Pakistan and reports from credible media sources. The reception from the drivers was very positive.

Vigils were held the same day at several locations. Besides Tampa, Jersey City, NJ; San Jose, CA; Las Vegas, NV; Chicago, IL; Minneapolis, MN; Atlanta, GA; Sugar Land, TX, and Toronto, Canada saw enthusiastic volunteers highlighting the cause of Hindu and other girls (many of them minor) in Pakistan.

All participants were dressed in red of different shades signifying the color of a “Chingari,” i.e., a spark.

All small and large fires start with a spark. Chingari project expects that the spark lit on this fateful day will grow to a large fire that will attract worldwide attention to the complicity of Pakistan’s rulers in perpetrating this horrible atrocity on its Hindu and other minority citizens and will compel the human fraternity to force Pakistan to mend its ways. ■

qualities and practicing behavior befitting a saintly person. It is a fact that by such a practice, the heart becomes purified, freeing one from the influence of the modes of passion [raja-guna] and ignorance [tamo-guna].” (BP, 42.16)

“According to learned authorities, those who possess these godly qualities are actually scholars of the Vedas and Puranas, and understand the confidential purport of the Bhagavad-gita. By faithfully following the principles of varna and ashrama, people in all four yugas have attained the perfection of life.” (BP, 42.17-18)

CLASSIFICATIONS BASED ON THE BODY ARE COMPLETELY FALSE

By now we should be able to see that even a person who has taken birth from a family who has been considered of a low varna can raise him or herself up to a higher classification by having proper training and showing appropriate codes of conduct and lifestyle.

“When a Shudra has become advanced by undergoing the [Vedic] samskaras, he can no longer be considered a Shudra. The conclusion is that a person’s external dress or appearance cannot be the criterion for his being accepted as a Brahmana.” (BP, 39.29)

However, the samskaras or rituals and training in themselves cannot be the sole means of determining one’s social position. This certainly helps, but there must be more than that, which, as already explained.

“If the undergoing of samskaras is the main criteria for being accepted as a Brahmana, then all those who have undergone samskaras are certainly Brahmanas. If that be the case, how can they be compared with personalities like Srila Vyasadeva, who did not undergo the samskaras. If we consider this, we see that there is no support for the theory of different castes. Although different castes are recognized in society, this is just an artificial conception of materialistic people. The material body is composed of the five gross elements—earth, water, fire, air, and

sky. These elements cannot be the cause for one being accepted as a Brahmana [or anything else], because they combine for some time and then merge back into their source. Indeed, the body of an atheist, mleccha, or a yavana is made of the same material elements. [Thus, such designations based on the body are completely false].” (BP, 39.30-33)

“Religiosity as described in the Vedas can also be found in people who are sinful, violent, of bad character, and cruel. Therefore the determination of one’s social status does not depend on undergoing [purificatory] samskaras.” (BP, 39.34)

“Therefore, [from the conclusions that have been presented so far] there is no difference between a Brahmana and a Shudra in terms of bodily features, mentality, experience of happiness and distress, opulence, prowess, tendency toward gambling, shrewdness in business, ability to earn wealth, steadiness, restlessness, intelligence, detachment, virtue, accomplishment of the three objectives of life [dharma, artha and kama], cleverness, beauty, complexion, sexual capacity, stool, bones, holes of the body, manifestations of love, height, weight, and bodily hair. Therefore, even if the demigods were to try very hard to find distinctions between Brahmanas and Shudras [and everyone in between] in this way, they would not be able to do so.” (BP, 39.35-39)

“One should not think that all Brahmanas are white like moon rays, that all Kshatriyas have a complexion like the color of a kimsuka flower, that all Vaishyas have a golden complexion like the color of an orpiment fruit, and that all Shudras are black like half-burnt coal. How can there be four classes of human beings when their walking, complexion, hair, happiness, distress, blood, skin, flesh, bone marrow, and fluids are totally identical? There is nothing special about anyone’s complexion, height, weight, figure, period of stay within the womb, speech, wisdom, working senses, life-air, strength, illnesses, objectives of life, and methods for curing diseases.” (BP, 39.41-43)

“A father may have four sons and it is assumed that all of them belong to the same caste as their

father. Similarly, all living entities are produced by the one Supreme Father and so, how can His children be divided into different castes? Just as the color, texture, structure, feel, and juice of different portions of a fig are the same, so are the human beings that are emanating from one source, and so it is improper to differentiate between them. The brothers, children, daughters-in-law, births, marriages, beauty, complexion, and artistic ability must be the same for the member of the lineages [or gotras] coming from Kaushika, Gautama, Kaumdinya, Mandavya, Vashishtha, Atreya, Kautsa, Angirasa, Maudgalya, Katyayana, and Bhargava.

“Although some learned scholars accept the material body as being a Brahmana [or something else], this indicates that they are in the bodily concept of life [without spiritual perception], which exists in a condition of dense ignorance. This is like a blind person desiring to treat others’ eyes by applying a black ointment. Both are ludicrous. Because the material body has a beginning, it also has an end. After death, the elements of the body merge into the totality of material elements once again. Therefore, the body [alone] cannot be accepted as a Brahmana [or any other varna].” (BP, 39.45-51)

In conclusion, therefore, “Only ignorant people accept this material body as being a Brahmana. According to their understanding, the position of being a Brahmana cannot be achieved simply by undergoing the various purificatory processes.” (BP, 39.54)

ONE MISSES GOAL OF LIFE WHEN PREOCCUPIED BY CASTE

“If after attaining the human form of life, which enables one to possess things like attractive bodily features, abundant wealth, great power and prestige, one does not live according to the prescribed religious principles, it cannot be predicted what species of life he will thereafter be forced to accept on various planets. This is the fate of one who is so proud that he dares to challenge the supremacy of

God. Being intoxicated by pride, thinking that their caste, race, beauty, social status, and education are very wonderful, people do not bother to understand their actual self-interest, and because of that in their next life they will suffer like eunuchs.

“Material existence can be compared to a huge pit in which thousands of millions of living entities are drowning. Knowing this perfectly well, which intelligent person would be very proud of his caste?

“There are many human beings who are presumed to be fully satisfied, having been born in aristocratic families, and yet because of their own misdeeds, after death they will be forced to take birth in this world in some lower species of life. In this world, no one can remain permanently in some situation.” (BP, 39.3-6)

If this does not make it clear regarding the impermanent nature of the living being, and that even one’s high, intermediate or low birth is temporary, then I do not know what can. Yet, we see that so many people are going through life, completely asleep in regard to the real purpose of this existence. Thus, they may think their present position is so grand, not knowing that if they do not use this life properly for real spiritual progress, after death their next life may not be very great at all. But how many lifetimes must we go through this before we learn our lessons about the real truth of the matter, that our real position is as a spiritual being, beyond the body and its superficial designations, and everything else is temporary and secondary?

THE DIFFERENCE OF PROPER CONSCIOUSNESS AND INTENT, OR MERELY GOING THROUGH THE MOTIONS

In the next few verses it is pointed out that a person must also have the proper concentration and focus, along with the proper intentions in their actions if they are expected to be qualified in their positions. Otherwise, it is seen that anyone can chant mantras and do rituals, but merely going

through the motions, especially for adoration, profit and distinction, is not what is needed to suitably accept or be qualified for a higher status in one's social classification.

“Generally, those who are twice-born—the Brahmanas, Kshatriyas, and Vaishyas—undergo all the Vedic samskaras. For this reason, they are certainly to be considered as superior to the Shudras who engage in all kinds of frivolous activities.

“In spite of undergoing the samskaras, if those who are twice-born engage in violent and sinful activities, such as killing a Brahmana [or worse], having sexual intercourse with the wife of the spiritual master, stealing, killing a cow, drinking wine, cheating, speaking lies, exhibiting great pride, speaking atheistic philosophy, blaspheming the Vedas, denying the authority of the Vedas, plundering the wealth of others, acting whimsically, earning money by dancing or cheating, eating all types of abominable food, and performing any other prohibited activity with the body, mind, and speech, they can never be considered purified, even if they perform thousands of sacrifices [rituals].

“Therefore, the ability to chant mantras, perform fire rituals, practice penance, and sacrifices does not make one a Brahmana, just as a Shudra remains a Shudra, despite the ability to perform all these activities [when merely going through the motions].” (BP, 41.5-9)

“Similarly, the Brahmanas who indulge in sinful activities must be considered fallen. Therefore, the only sane conclusion is that the concepts of Brahmana and Kshatriya etc., are temporary designations and not ultimate reality.” (BP, 41.52)

EXPECTED CHARACTERISTICS AND ACTIONS OF EACH PERSON OF THE FOUR VARNAS

What follows are a very few of the qualities, actions and characteristics that are typical of people in each of the four varnas.

“Brahma said: Genuine Brahmanas know very well what is to be accepted and what is to be rejected.

They avoid sinful behavior, carefully control their senses, mind, and speech, and carefully observe the prescribed etiquette. They follow the rules and regulations that are prescribed for them in the scriptures, and constantly work for the welfare of others. They work for the protection of religious principles in this world and are fixed in trance, meditating on the Absolute Truth. They restrain their anger, and are free from material attachment, envy, lamentation, and pride. They are attached to the study of the Vedas [and their supporting literature], very peaceful, and are the best well-wishing friends of all living entities. They are equal in happiness and distress, reside in a solitary place, observe all the vows prescribed for them with their body and mind, and are pious by nature. They are reluctant to perform any abominable act, and are freed from illusion and false pride. They are charitable, compassionate, truthful, and very learned in the scriptures. They know the Supreme Brahman and have high regard for the revealed scriptures.” (BP, 42.1-7)

From this verse we can understand that if a Brahmana is not free from such things as anger, material attachment, envy, lamentation, and pride, along with the other qualities mentioned above, then such people do not have the real mentality of a Brahmana, even if they do appear to have some expertise in other areas, or are born in a Brahmana family. Thus, they are not genuinely qualified to be spiritual authorities for the rest of society, but, indeed, have much more work to do on themselves for their own progress and development.

Another class of beings are also known as Brahmanas, as explained: “Brahma was born from the navel of the purusha-avatara [Vishnu]. All living entities were manifested by Him, and among them, those who are devotees, surrendered souls unto that Supreme Personality of Godhead, are also known as Brahmanas.” (BP, 42.9)

Furthermore, “Those who have some realization of the Supreme Brahman, and who act according to the prescribed codes of good conduct, are called

Brahmanas, and they are glorified by the other members of society.” (BP, 42.11)

In regard to the other main varnas, namely the Kshatriyas, Vaishyas, and Shudras, their expected standards are also described: “Those who give protection to others, saving them from all kinds of danger, are known as Kshatriyas. Those who engage in farming, cow protection, and trading are known as Vaishyas, and those who have no capacity to study the Vedas [or deep spiritual knowledge], and are engaged in serving members of the higher three classes are known as Shudras.” (BP, 42.10)

“Lord Brahma has prescribed the methods for members of all the varnas that will enable them to achieve perfection by performing their respective duties.

“Among the human beings, those who are comparatively more powerful and are thus able to give protection to others, saving them from all types of danger, should be known as Kshatriyas. Persons who approach the Kshatriyas to beg some charity after instructing them on the messages of the Supreme Lord as found in the Vedic literature should be known as Brahmanas.

“Those who are almost as powerful as the Kshatriyas but engage in agriculture, cow protection, and trade [such as banking and business], should be known as Vaishyas. Those who, not very capable of working independently, and who are easily overcome by lamentation and illusion, should engage in the service of the higher three classes of men and thus be known as Shudras. In this way, according to their nature and qualities, there are prescribed duties for Brahmanas, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas, and Shudras.” (BP, 42.19-24)

“The qualities of a Brahmana are peacefulness, austerity, self-control, purity, tolerance, simplicity, knowledge, the practical application of the knowledge, and inquiry into the nature of the Absolute Truth. Heroism, power, determination, resourcefulness, courage in battle, generosity and leadership are the natural qualities of work for the Kshatriyas. Farming,

cow protection and business are the natural work for the Vaishyas, and for the Shudras there is labor and service to others.” (BP, 42.25-27)

In this way, everyone has a natural tendency for some aspect of the particular traits described, and are also a part of the social body of civilization to help contribute to its balance and progress, and the well-being of one and all.

IN CONCLUSION

If people can understand the real basis of the Varna system, and be trained in acting accordingly, raising themselves to their original spiritual level, then the false, superficial and bodily based sectarian spirit can ultimately be put to rest. Then there is every possibility that such people can develop a spiritual vision of one another with a mood of love, care, cooperation, sacrifice, and service. This is the real purpose of the Varna system anyway, to see that everyone is a part of the larger social body, and part of the Supreme, and that each person, by their actions and occupation, has a contribution to make to the well-being of all. If people actually understood this and saw society in this way, it would tend to nullify what is called caste-based discrimination, which has been part of the misunderstanding and misapplication of what is called the caste system that we find today, which was not a part of the traditional Vedic varnashrama system.

“It is therefore to be concluded that humanity is essentially one, but distinctions of caste have been made according to a person’s qualities and work [mentality and consciousness]. As far as general behavior is concerned, the entire human race is one. There is only a difference in people’s occupations and attitudes. Those who divide society into castes according to birth cannot see that human beings are essentially one.” (BP, 42.33-34)

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

The Meaning of the Motherhood of God



THE GENESIS OF GOD AS MOTHER

The Hindus of India look upon God not only as Father but as Mother as well. They also view God as pure impersonal spirit, Brahman. God as Mother was also recognized by many cults of the Mediterranean region that existed in ancient times. Karen Armstrong, once a Catholic nun, and the author of 'A History of God', has documented hundreds of little Mother

Goddess figurines in Europe, Asia and the Middle East, dating from the early Neolithic period. She found hardly any male effigies from that era. Then as agriculture began to transform human life, the fertility of the soil was experienced as a sacred force. The earth seemed to produce plants and nourish them as a mother gave birth to a child and fed it from her own body.

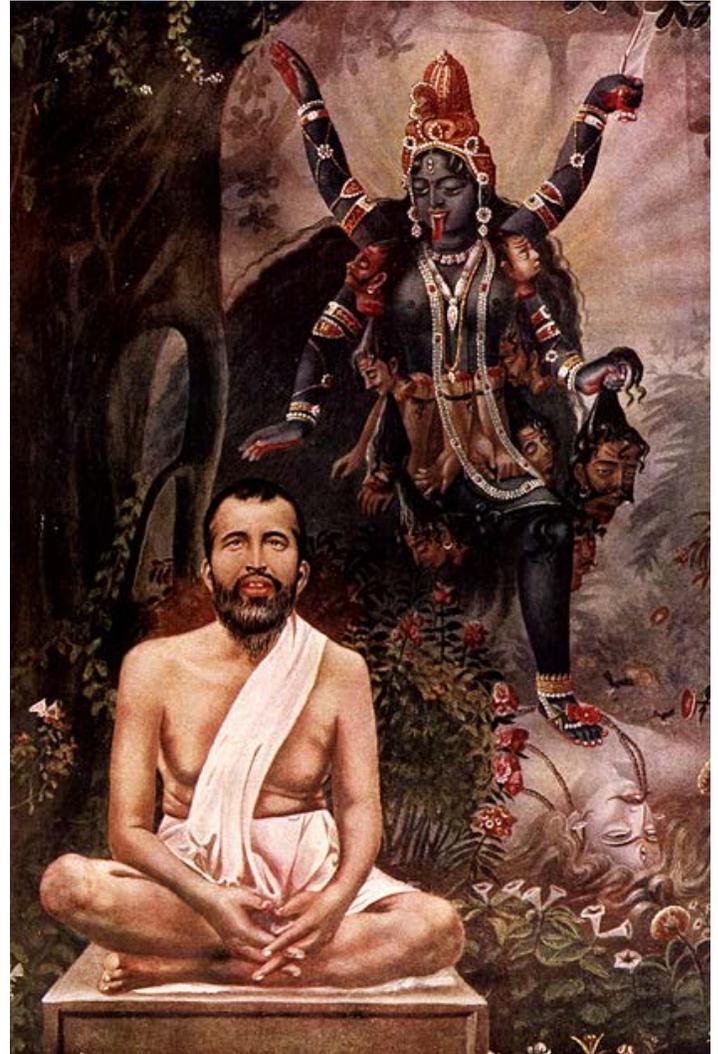
When human beings created the plough, and later, began to build cities, more masculine qualities were revered as manifestations of the divine force that kept all things in perfect order. Male gods began to personify the sacred. Still, for the early Israelites, religion was not monotheistic. The Bible shows that most of these people continued to worship gods and goddesses like Isis of Egypt and Aphrodite of Greece alongside Yahweh until they were deported to Babylon in the sixth century BC.

It was only in exile did the religion of Judaism become fiercely monotheistic in its denial of any other gods or goddesses. Temples and synagogues were rid of images of God, mother cults were suppressed and banished out of existence.

So while Judaism and Christianity destroyed all cults that preferred God as Mother, in India alone, not only were the original Mother cults preserved and developed but also given their spiritual and philosophical foundation. Unlike God as Father whose love is conditional, God as the beloved Mother is ever-loving, compassionate and forbearing. She protects and nourishes Her children irrespective of their virtues and vices. Again in India, one also sees the blending of the ancient Mother cults and the later Father cults that formed the great religion of the Hindus. Thus even when the Supreme Deity of the Hindus is the male Vishnu, His Consort, Lakshmi, appears alongside Him. In the Vaishnava tradition of Hinduism, it is said that while the Lord rules by law, Lakshmi rules by love. For Her ever-available mercy can reduce the harshness of the Law of Karma for those that turn to Her with pure hearts. In the Shakta tradition, on the other hand, the Supreme Deity is the Goddess, assuming different names, Durga, Kali, or Devi.

EFFECT OF MALE AND FEMALE ASPECTS OF GOD

How is this discussion relevant in the broader context of our societal issues? Would it make any difference to the relationship between man and woman or with our relationship with one another in general? Yes, it



would. The word God as it is understood in many cultures, somehow evokes in the human mind a male form or a masculine principle. As a result his supposed 'maleness' has reinforced and impelled human attitudes and activities, and has given some kind of divine sanction to male domination. As Mary Daly pointed out in her well-written book, *Beyond God the Father*, 'If God is male, then the male is God.'

This is rather a rhetorical statement. But we cannot deny that the way we look upon God has some thing to do with our attitudes about mundane matters, and the way we relate with one another. Cultural anthropologists have delineated many aspects that distinguish one culture from another, and how these differences affect their everyday relationship with one another. Masculinity-dominated cultures expect men

to be assertive and women to be nurturing, with no possibility of role reversals. More feminine cultures, on the other hand, tend to emphasize the nurturing quality of life and interpersonal relationships. Besides, in such cultures these traits are largely shared among both men and women. The masculine cultures are also more competitive, advancement-oriented and driven for acquiring money and things. Feminine cultures, on the other hand, are more cooperative and willing to accept the status quo. Japan was classed as the most masculine country followed by the German speaking and the Latin American countries, and the U.S. The four Scandinavian countries were the most feminine. India or China did not figure in the study under consideration.

MASCULINE AND FEMININE INFLUENCE ON LANGUAGE

To explore this correlation between language and culture, we should first understand the concept of the Motherhood of God as practiced in India. For that we will turn to the Devi Mahatmayam or Chandi, the most authoritative book on the subject of God as Mother in the Shakta tradition of Hinduism. Devi Mahatmayam means the glory of the Devi, or the Divine Mother. She is conceived of as the universal Shakti or Primordial Energy and the whole universe is the expression of that Shakti. She brings forth this world from within Herself, protects it, and finally reabsorbs it into Herself at the time of final dissolution. The Indian philosophy of Vedanta conceives of the Ultimate Reality out of which the universe has evolved as infinite Pure Consciousness. This ultimate Reality is described in its two-fold aspect of the Impersonal-Personal, as Brahman-Shakti. In its inactive state, It is Brahman, while in Its dynamic state It is the feminine Maya or Shakti.

Sri Ramakrishna (1836-1886), one of the most revered saints of India in recent times, compares the immobile Brahman to a snake coiled up, and Shakti to the same snake in motion. That motion constitutes the evolution of the universe from within Itself, which is entirely within the realm of that Shakti aspect of the Divine Reality. This Shakti is the inseparable

power of Brahman, as heat is the inseparable power of fire, elsewhere he called Brahman, the Supreme Being, as Kāli when It is active and engaged in the act of creation, preservation and destruction, In other words, Kali is more than just the name for another deity or goddess. More importantly, it stands for the Primordial Energy, which Sri Ramakrishna called Divine Mother.

In the Indian presentation of Shiva as Nataraja, the Great Dancer, dancing the world of manifestation into existence, we have the integration of Shiva (the male principle) and Shakti (the female principle) into a unity. Without this joining of Shakti with Shiva, He is powerless to project this universe.

While God the Father of the Judeo-Christian and Islamic religions is a watchful and just ruler who demands obedience to his commands, Vishnu or Shiva, and the Divine Mother of the Hindus are looked upon in a different way. Vishnu means that which pervades everything, while Shiva means pure consciousness. So they are the support and inner guides of all beings. They are, indeed, our very Soul. So is the Divine Mother. She is our very own, our Atman or the Self. How can She forsake her children? Her love is unconditional. That indeed is the Mother-heart of the Devi (Goddess). Vedanta therefore calls Her Jagadamba, the mother of the world. If God is love, as many scriptures say, then this value is present in all beings, but more intensely in the female of all species, having the greatest courage to protect the offspring, even at the cost of life, It makes, therefore, great sense to visualize God as the Divine Mother who is the embodiment of love.

In real life, however, people everywhere live in fear, being afraid of losing their jobs, or getting killed in an accident. Peace is a luxury for most people. Many of us live in the midst of violence of different kinds like street crime, hate-violence, terrorist attacks, and suicide bombings. All these disturb the peace of innocent people throughout the world. Why, because for most of us the divine spark of the Universal Mother and Her tender-heart has lost its meaning under the thick layer of our love for power, pelf, and prejudice.

It is said that God created man in his own image. It is also true to say that man, too, has created God in his own image. In fact, in the ancient world, people created images in the same way as a poem or a great piece of music. Culture has reinforced tradition: Medieval artists and hymn writers portrayed God as a wise old king. Michelangelo painted the deity as a muscular, bearded giant. A small minority of Protestant fundamentalists insist that all biblical statements must be interpreted literally, so that, if the Bible calls God 'He', this means that God is male.

We act as we think. If our ideal of worship is an omnipotent male deity, who is just, compassionate, and also jealous, we will, over the period of centuries, cherish and acquire such masculine attributes. Scientific discoveries around the middle of the last millennium, and the advent of industrial revolution reinforced these masculine attributes in the West. Religion lost its glow along with the humanitarian values that followed from it. There was also a corresponding ideological shift toward individualism and materialism. Family values declined, often resulting in the breakup of families. Money has become the measure of one's worth and status in society.

Perhaps there is no area that expresses greater force of masculinity than man's relationship with nature. In the West, we got from Greek thought the concept of Promethean spirit, the power of the human spirit to dominate the forces of nature, and if necessary, other nations as well. Man dominating his environment is, no doubt, a form of human excellence. It has brought about a tremendous improvement in the level of living everywhere in the world. In the Indian culture, however, that is not the highest excellence to which man can rise. The highest excellence of man lies in conquering our senses and ego, and realizing the Self or Brahman. Since Brahman and the Divine Mother are one and the same, such spiritual realization is highly rewarding as it confers on us immeasurable happiness, as Mother is the embodiment of Bliss.

Can we really achieve such a value-based outcome? As we mentioned earlier, the Divine

Mother is nothing but the Primordial Energy, which is of the nature of Consciousness, permeating both our external and internal nature. Anything that we think, speak or act, the energy of the Divine Mother flows through it. So while genetic motherhood alone is exclusively a feminine privilege, spiritual motherhood is the privilege of all humanity. The Devi Mahatmyam, the scripture that sings the glory of the Goddess, gives us this universal dimension of the mother-heart pulsating in various forms in the hearts of all men and women. One of the verses of that scripture sings thus: 'That Devi, who exists in all beings as mother, I salute Her again and again.' Another verse sings: 'That Devi, who exists in all beings as compassion, I salute Her again and again.'

BENEFIT OF BELIEF IN THE MOTHERHOOD OF GOD

Therefore the first step to obtain this value-based outcome is to become aware of our true nature, which according to Vedanta is divine and immortal. If the Divine Mother exists in all beings not only as mother and compassion, but also as beauty, peace, knowledge, forgiveness, contentment, and other such blessed values, how could we be sinners? The Hindu religion does not admit of any devil that coaxes us into sinful actions. We commit these acts because of our ignorance, of who we are, and how we are related to God and the rest of the objective nature.

Vedanta says that the Divine Mother is and has become all. All beings, humans and non-humans, plants and rivers, and so on, are Her children and Her own expressions. Therefore, they are all equal and interconnected with one another. That's why Sri Ramakrishna said, "I" and "mine" is Avidya Shakti or energy of ignorance, "Thou" and "Thine" is Vidya Shakti or energy of knowledge.' The former creates separateness of forms, colours, and genders, and drags us down to do evil deeds, while the latter lifts us spiritually. The knowledge-energy makes us see ourselves in one and all, and binds us together with the thread of love. It is the source of all that is good

and sublime. The ignorance-energy, on the other hand, confines one's love to one's own genetically limited family. There is nothing spiritually significant about it; it is found in animals also.

A mere intellectual knowledge of our divine nature is not enough; we must realize it by transcending the limitations of our sensate nature, the outside objective nature. We must use our discriminative faculty to overcome the ignorance-energy and propitiate the Divine Mother to remove from our hearts the veil of ignorance. Only then can we subdue these passions and purify our hearts. 'Seeing our maker face to face', as Mahatma Gandhi puts it, will no longer remain a dream and peace will become a reality.

This then is India's approach to God that behind this universe there is a pulse of the Mother-heart, the pulse of the energy of compassion, love, and protective attitude. It no way associates God with one or the other gender. It is such an approach to God that has anointed her culture of over five thousand years. Though many races have conquered India, she herself has never stepped out of her borders to enslave any other country. It is India, which has given rise to so many religions Buddhism, Jainism, and Sikhism—all living in harmony with the parent religion, Hinduism, and with Christianity and Islam that came from abroad. It is the Indian culture where saints like Sankaracharya, Tulsidas, Chaitanya, Guru Nanak, and more recently, Sri Ramakrishna, who were the living embodiments of love and harmony had flourished. It is India again from whose soil arose Mahatma Gandhi, the apostle of non-violence.

Last but certainly not least is the example of Holy Mother Sri Sarada Devi (1853-1920), the consort of Sri Ramakrishna, who articulated the concept of the Motherhood of God. Sri Sarada Devi remained a nun for her entire life of 67 years, half of those in widowhood. She had no children of her own, but there were hundreds of people, young and old, men and women, who called her mother, and received from her the love that would beat their own mothers. Her love didn't distinguish between high and low, saint and sinner, Hindu and Muslim, Indian and American. No dogmas and creeds stood in her way

in showering blessings and providing unconditional love to one and all. She even included the animals in her loving fold. She once said that she remained so long 'to demonstrate to the world the Motherhood of God'. She also said: 'I am the mother of the wicked as I am the mother of the virtuous. When you are in distress, just say to yourself, "I have a mother."' ■

About the Author

Umesh Gulati, Ph.D., Professor Emeritus

Shri Umesh Gulati, based in Durham, NC, is a Vedantist, and a devotee of Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda. He has regularly published articles in Vedanta Kesari from Chennai and Prabuddhabharata from Kolkata, and also in Vedanta magazine from England. Lately he also published articles in Marg magazine. After receiving Ph.D. in Economics from the University of Virginia in 1967, he joined East Carolina University in Greenville, NC the same year and retired in 1999.

References

1. Karen Armstrong. A History of God, Random House, New York.
2. Swami Brahmeshananda, The Motherhood of God, Sri Raxnakrishana Math, Mylapore, Chennai.
3. Gary P. Ferraro, The Cultural Dimension of international Business, Prentice Hall, New Jersey.
4. Swami Nikhilnanda, tr. The Gospel of Sri Rama-krishna, Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Center, New York.
5. Swami Ranganathananda. The Indian Vision of God as Mother, Advaita Ashram, Calcutta.

The Danavas in the Puranas (VaP II.7) are the sons of the Rishi Kashyapa, who there assumes the role of Tvashtar as the main father creator. Kashyapa is a great rishi connected to the Himalayas. He is the eighth or central Aditya (Sun God) that does not leave Mount Meru (Taittiriya Aranyaka I.7.20), the fabled world mountain. Kashyapa is associated with Kashmir (Kashyapa Mira or Kashyapa's Lake) and other Himalayan regions (the Vedic lands of Sharyanavat and Arjika, RV IX.113.1-2), which connects the Danavas to the northwest. The Caspian Sea may be named after him as well. The Proto-Europeans, therefore, are the sons of Tvashtar or Kashyapa and Danu, through their son Manu. They are both Manavas and Danavas, as also Aryas.

In the Rig Veda, Danu like Dasyu refers to inimical people and is generally a term of denigration (RV I.32.9; III.30.8; V.30.4; V.32.1, 4, 7; X.120.6). The Danavas or descendants of Danu are generally enemies of the Vedic people and their Gods. Therefore, just as the Deva-Asura or Arya-Dasyu split is reflected in the split between the Vedic Hindus and the Persians, one can propose that the Deva-Danava split reflects another division in the Vedic people, including that between the Proto-Indian Aryans and the Proto-European Aryans. In this process the term Danu was adopted by the Proto-Europeans and became denigrated by later Vedic people.

We should also remember that in the Puranas (VaP II.7), as in the Vedas the term Danavas refer to a broad group of peoples, many inimical, but others friendly, as well as various mythical demons. In the Rig Veda, the Danavas are called amanusha or unhuman (RV II.11.10) as opposed to human, Manusha. The Europeans had similar negative beings like the Greek Titans or Celtic Formorii who correspond more to the mythical side of the Danavas as powers of darkness, the underworld or the undersea region like the Vedic Asuras and Rakshasas. Such mythical Danavas can hardly be reduced to the Proto-European Aryans or to any single group of people.

The Celtic scholar Peter Ellis notes, "Irish epic contains many episodes of the struggle between the Children of Domnu, representing darkness and evil, and the Children of Danu, representing light and good. Moreover, the Children of Domnu are never completely overcome or eradicated from the world. Symbolically, they are the world. The conflict is between the 'waters

of heaven' and the 'world.'" The same thing could be said of the Vedic wars of Devas and Danavas or the Puranic/Brahmana wars of Devas and Asuras.

THE GOOD DANAVAS (SUDANAVAS)

The Maruts in the Puranas (VaP II.6.90-135) are called the sons of Diti, a wife of Kashyapa, who is sometimes equated with Danu. Her children are called the Daityas which term we have found also connected to the Persians, as the name of the river in their original homeland (Vendidad Fargard I.3). While meant to be enemies of Indra, the Maruts came to be his companions and were great Gods in their own right, often referring to the Vedic rishis and yogis. As wind Gods they had control of Prana and other siddhis (occult powers). They are also the sons of Rudra-Shiva called Rudras, much like the Shaivite Yogis of later times. They were great sages (RV VI.49.11), men (manava) with tongues of fire and eyes of the Sun (RV I.89.7). They were free to travel all over the world and were not obstructed by mountains, rivers or seas (RV V.54.9; V.55.9).

The Rig Veda contains many instances where Danu has a positive meaning indicating abundance or even standing for divine in general. Danucitra, meaning the richness of light, occurs a few times (RV I.174.7; V.59.8). The Maruts are called Jira-danu or plural Jira-danava or quick to give or perhaps fast Danus or fast Gods (RV V.54.9). This term Jiradanu occurs elsewhere as the gift of the Maruts in the last line of most of the hymns of Agastya (RV I.165-169, 171-178, 180-186, 189, 190). Mitra and Varuna are said to be Sriptra-danu or easy to give and their many gifts, danuni, are praised (RV VIII.25.5-6). The Ashvins are called lords of Danuna, Danunaspati (RV VIII.8.16). Soma is also called Danuda and Danupinva, giving Danu or overflowing with Danu (RV IX.97.23), connecting Danu with water or with rivers.

The Maruts are typically called Sudanavas, good to give or good (Su) Danus (RV I.85.10; I.172.1-3; II.34.8; V.41.16; V.52.5; V.53.6; VI.66.5; VIII.20.18, 23). Similarly, the Vishvedevas or universal gods are called Sudanavas (RV VIII.83.6, 8, 9), as are the Adityas (RV VIII.67.16), the Ashvins (RV I.117.10, 24) and Vishnu (RV VIII.24.12). The term also occurs in a hymn to Sarasavati (RV VII.96.4), where Sarasavati is called the

friend or companion of the Maruts (Marutsakha; RV 96.2). Most importantly, there is a Goddess called Sudanu Devi (RV V.41.18), which is probably another name for the mother of the Maruts. The Maruts in particular or the Gods in general would therefore be the sons of Sudanu or Sudanavas. This suggests that perhaps Danu, like Asura, was earlier a positive word and meant divine. There was not only a bad Danu but a good or Sudanu. In the Rig Veda the references to the Sudanavas are much more than those to Danava as an inimical term.

The Maruts are called Sumaya (RV I.88.1), having a good (Su) or divine power of Maya, which stands for magical power, or Mayina (RV V.58.2), possessed of Maya power. Danu is probably, in some respects, a synonym of Maya, a power of abundance but also of illusion. Like the root Ma, the root Da means “to divide” or “to measure”. Maya is the power of the Danavas (RV II.11.10). The Danavas, particularly Ahi-Vritra, are portrayed as serpents (RV V.32.8), particularly the serpent who dwells at the foot of the mountain holding back the heavenly waters, whom Indra must slay in order to release the waters. Maya itself is the serpent power.

The Maruts as wind gods are powers of lightning, which in Vedic as in most ancient thought was considered to be a serpent or a dragon. The Maruts are the good serpents, shining bright like serpents (RV I.171.2). The Maruts help Indra in slaying Vritra and are his main friends and companions. Indra is called Marutvan, or possessed of the Maruts. Their leader is Vishnu (RV V.87), who is called Evaya-Marut. With Rudra (Shiva) as their father and Prishni (Shakti) as their mother, they reflect all the Gods of later Hinduism. As Shiva’s sons they are connected with Skanda, Ganesha and Hanuman.

Perhaps these Sudanavas or good Danus are the Maruts, who in their travels guided and led many peoples including the Celts and other European followers of Danu. As the sons of Rudra, we note various Rudra like figures such as Cernunos among the Celts, who like Rudra is the lord of the animals and is portrayed in a yoga posture, as on the Gundestrop Cauldron. If the Maruts were responsible for spreading Vedic culture, as I have proposed, they could have called their children, the children of Danu, in a positive sense. We could also argue that the Sudanavas were the Maruts, Druids and other Rishi classes, while the peoples they ruled over,

particularly the unruly Kshatriyas or warrior classes could become Danavas in the negative sense when they refused to accept spiritual guidance.

We know from both Celtic and Vedic texts that the early Aryans, like other ancient people, fought each other in various local conflicts, particularly for supremacy in their particular regions. This led to various divisions and migrations through the centuries, which we cannot always take in a major way, just as the warring princes of India or Ireland remained part of the same culture and continued to intermarry with one another. Therefore, whatever early conflict might have existed between the Proto-European Aryans and those in the interior of India, was just part of various clashes between the different princely families that occurred within these same groups as well. It was forgotten over time.

The European Aryans had Gods like Zeus, Thor and Jupiter that serve as the counterparts of Indra as the God of heaven, the God of the rains, the thunderbolt and the lightning. Therefore, we cannot read the divide between the Rig Vedic Aryans and the Danavas as a rejection of the God Indra by the Proto-Europeans. In addition, the Proto-European Aryans continue to use the term Deva as divine as in Latin Deus and Greek Theos, unlike the Persians who make Asura mean divine and Deva mean demon. They also know Manu, which the Persians seem to have forgotten and only mention Yima (Yama). Unlike the Persians, who developed an aniconic (anti-image) and almost monotheistic tradition, the Proto-European Aryans maintained a pluralistic tradition, using images, and worshipping many Gods and Goddesses, like the Vedic. This suggests that their division from the Rigvedic people occurred long before that of the Persians or Iranians, and that they took a larger and older form of the Vedic religion with them.

MIGRATIONS AND CULTURAL DIFFUSION OUT OF INDIA OR CENTRAL ASIA

We have noted Danu or Danava as a term for an inimical people or even an anti-god, like Deva and Asura, probably reflects some split in the Aryan peoples. This could be the conflict the Purus, the main Rigvedic people located on the Sarasvati river near Delhi, and the Druhyus, who were located in the northwest by

Afganistan, who fought quite early in the Rigvedic period.

Certainly we can only equate the Proto-Europeans with the northwest of India or greater India that extends into Afghanistan and Central Asia. If they can be connected to any group among the five Vedic peoples it must be the Druhyus, though would extend by cultural diffusion to different peoples of Europe, Central and West Asia.

However, we do find Druhyu kingdoms continuing for some time in India and giving names to regions like Gandhara (Afghanistan) and Aratta (Panjab) connected more with Iranian or Scythian people. Yet, we do note a connection between the Scythians and the Celts, whose Druid priests connect themselves with the Scythians at an early period. The Scythians also maintained a trade from India to Europe that continued for many centuries. In this regard the Proto-Europeans could have been a derivation of Aryan India by migration, cultural diffusion, or what is more likely, a combination of both. Even Scythian related Iranian tribes like the Alans (also originally Aryan) moved along with the German Goths throughout western Europe to Spain and North Africa.

Though the Druhyus and Proto-Europeans may be connected, it is difficult to confirm, particularly as the Europeans were a very different ethnic type (Nordic and Alpine) than most of the Indians and Iranians, who were of the Mediterranean branch of the Caucasian race.

However, it is possible that European ethnic types were living in ancient Afghanistan or Central Asia, even Kashmir, where we do find some of these types even today. The evidence of the Tokharians suggests this. The Tokharians (Tusharas) were a people speaking an Indo-European language closer to the European (a kentum-based language), and also demonstrate Nordic or Alpine, blond and red-haired ethnic traits. They lived in the Tarim Basin of western China that dominated the region to the Muslim invasion up to the eighth century AD, by which time they had become Buddhists. They may be related to the European featured mummies found in that area dating back to 1500 BCE. They were also present in Western China around Langchou in the early centuries BCE. The Tokharian language is possibly related to the Celtic and Italic branches, just as their physical features resemble northern Europeans. The Tarim Basin region

was later regarded as the land of the Uttara Kurus and as a land of the gods. So such groups were not always censured as barbarians at the borders but were sometimes honored as highly advanced and spiritual.

The evidence does not show an Aryan invasion/migration into India in ancient times, certainly not after the Harappan era (c. 3000 BCE) and probably not before. No genetic or skeletal or other hard evidence has been found to prove this. Similarly, we do not find evidence of migration of interior Indic peoples West, the dark-skinned people that were prominent on the subcontinent to the northwest. But if the same ethnic types as the Europeans were present in Western China, Afghanistan or in northwest Iran, like the Fergana Valley (Sogdia), such a migration west would be possible, particularly given their familiarity with horses. In this case the commonality of Indo-European languages would not rest upon a common ethnicity with the interior Indo-Aryans but on a common ethnicity with peripheral Aryans on the northwest of India.

It is also possible that the European people derived their Aryan culture from the influence of Vedic peoples, probably mainly Druhyus but also Scythians (who might themselves be Druhyus), who migrated to Central Asia and brought their culture to larger groups of Europeans already living in Europe and Central Asia. The Europeans could have picked up an Aryan influence indirectly from the contact with various rishis, princes or merchants, without any significant genetic or familial linkage with Indic peoples. Or some combination may have existed. Such peoples with more Vedic cultures like the Celts could derive mainly from migration, while those others like the Germans might derive mainly from cultural diffusion. In any case, various means of Aryanization existed that can explain the spread of Vedic culture from the Himalayas to Europe, of which actual migration of people from the interior of India need not be the only or even primary factor.

We do note the names of rivers like the Don, Dneiper, Dneister, Donets and Danube to the north of the Black are largely cognate with Danu. This could reflect such a movement of peoples from West or Central Asia, including migrants originally from regions of greater India and Iran. At the end of the Ice Age, as Europe became warmer, it became a suitable land for agriculture.

This would have made it a desirable place of migration for people from the east and the south, which were flooded or became jungles.

EUROPEAN AND IRANIAN PEOPLES OF CENTRAL ASIA AND EUROPE: SCYTHIANS AND TURANIANS

The northern Iranian peoples, called Turanians or Scythians, dominated the steppes of Central Asia from Mongolia to Eastern Europe. By the early centuries BC they had set up kingdoms from the Danube in the West to the Altai Mountains in the East. They were the main enemies of the Persians. Unlike the Persians, their religions had more Devic elements and affinities to the Vedic with a greater emphasis on Devas, Sun worship, drinking of Soma and a greater variety of deities like the Vedic. We could call these Turanians or Scythians the main Proto-European Aryans. Some would identify them with the original Slavic peoples as well, who were likely always the largest and dominant Indo-European group in Europe.

Curiously in the early centuries AD we find the Scythians entering into north India and creating some kingdoms there, with both Hindu and Buddhist influence. It is possible that such contacts with India were transmitted to Central Asia and West, much as from previous Vedic eras.

It is probable that the Danavas, Scythians and Turanians were largely the same group of people with Vedic affinities and connections to Vedic culture through various kings, rishis, traders and movements of both people and cultures. Later the Turks came into Central Asia and displaced the Scythian peoples driving them south and west. Note that the Scythians names their rivers extending to the Danube with names like Danu, though they called the Volga, the Rasa, another famous river name. Indo-Scythian and related Kushana groups ruled Northwest India two thousand years ago when Scythian groups, including the Sarmatians, were powerful in Europe and the steppe region.

Western Indo-European scholarship is aware of these eastern Scythian and other possible European elements. Some like Parpola even see the Vedic peoples of the Rigveda as a migration of the Scythians into India. However, these Central Asian Vedic people were just one

branch of a greater Vedic people that included several branches within India itself.

Much of the search for a Proto-Indo-European language or PIE by western scyholars could be more correctly regarded as a search for the proto-European people. What has been reconstructed through it is more the homeland of the Danava-Druhyu branch of the Vedic people after their dispersal from India rather than all the Indo-European speakers. It is at best only a reconstruction of the western branch of the Vedic peoples and even that in a limited and distorted manner. The greater power behind the Indo-European family of languages was the powerful civilization of Vedic India.

Therefore, we need not stop short with reconstructing Scythian and Central Asian Aryan culture, we must take it into India itself, where other Vedic branches existed using many of the same cultural forms like Fire worship, Sun worship, the sacred plant or Soma cult, the cult of the sacred cow and horse, symbols like the sacred tree and swastika, worship of rivers as Goddesses. The philosophical, medical and astronomical knowledge that we find in European peoples like the Celts and the Greeks also mirrors that of India such as we find in the Upanishads, Ayurvedic medicine and Vedic astrology.

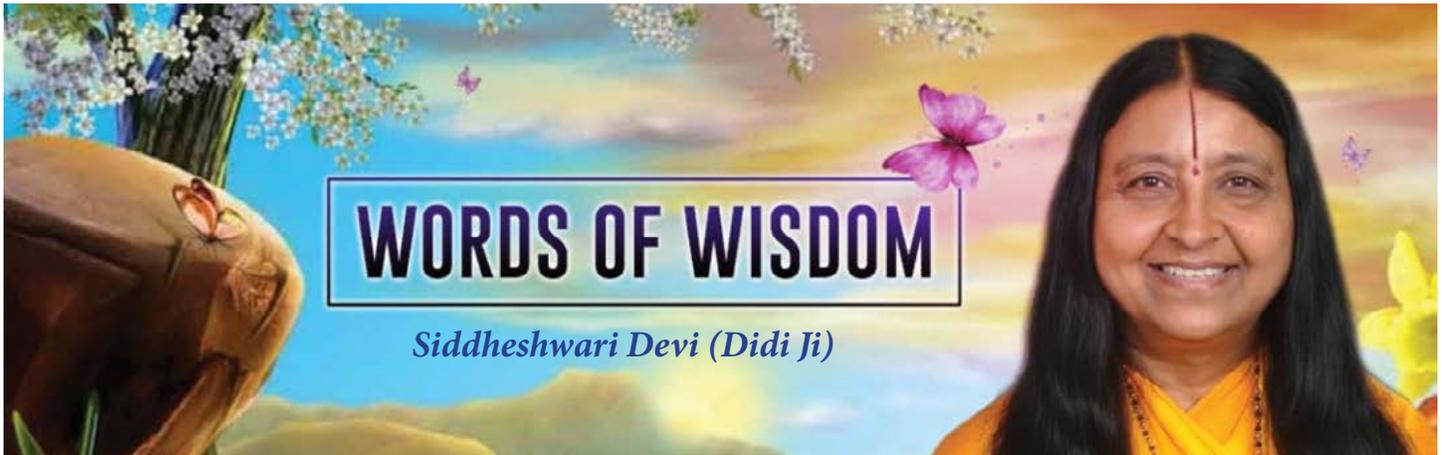
May these ancient Rishi Traditions Awaken and Unite Again! ■

About the Author

Dr. David Frawley (Pandit Vamadeva Shastri) D. Litt., author of several books, is a western born teacher or guru in the Vedic tradition. In India, Vamadeva is recognized as a Vedacharya (Vedic teacher), and includes in his scope of studies Ayurveda, Yoga, Vedanta and Vedic astrology, as well as the ancient Vedic teachings going back to the oldest Rigveda. Vamadeva is a recipient of the prestigious Padma Bhushan award, one of the highest civilian awards by the government of India, "for distinguished service of a higher order to the nation," honoring his work and writings as a Vedic teacher, which he received in March 2015.

Source: <https://www.vedanet.com/vedic-origins-of-the-europeans-the-children-of-danu/>

Create Your Sunshine



WORDS OF WISDOM

Siddheshwari Devi (Didi Ji)

Every life comes with joys as well as trials and tribulations. Every day is full of pleasure as well as pain. Every person has good and bad inside them. There is no such thing as a 'perfect life,' 'a perfect person' or a 'perfect day.' The onus is on you to actively seek something great about your life, your day and every person in your life.

Rather than looking at the shortcomings of your brother, your wife or your boss, try to see the good in them. Look at your challenges as opportunities and see your failures as pathway to success. Don't waste time regretting what could have been or should have been. Be fully present in the here-and-now. Everything in life is unfolding exactly as it should. Don't you see the hand of the Supreme Father in your life? Know that He is perfect and that His plan is always the best.

On a cloudy day, when everything seems dull and dreary and you find nothing to be happy about, take solace in knowing that the sun is just waiting for a chance to peak through. You have seen this scenario unfold in the past but you have forgotten. In the meantime, find something that fulfills you. Extend help to another person. Do what brings a smile to your face. Are coloring books only for children? Is kite flying only for special occasions? Isn't your backyard a great place for a picnic?

Don't wait for happiness to come your way. As a human, you have the most powerful tool that can give any shape you want to your day and your life. That tool is your mind. Use it to create your own sunshine.

Spiritual Points to Ponder

- You expect everyone you meet to agree with you, but not even one single person in your life will be pleased with you all the time.
- You are a traveler in the world; you are not here on a permanent basis.
- The mind is like a wooden log and anger is like a lit match.
- The funeral pyre burns the dead but worries burn the living.
- Develop the habit of finding your own faults.
- Keep the window of your heart open for the sunshine of God's grace to enter.
- Be in competition with yourself, striving to become better and better.
- Don't envy others. Admire them and be inspired by them.

- Don't be afraid of failing; you have learned through your failures.
- The body is getting weaker by the day while worldly desires are getting stronger by the moment.
- Childhood is the best time to start devotion.
- Concentrate on pleasing God; don't worry about pleasing the world.
- It was always between you and God; it was never about you and the world.
- Schedule your daily devotion time instead of planning to do it after finishing your work for the day.

Four kinds of people

We see many types of people living in the world, and every individual is a unique child of God. Yet, all the people of the world can be generally divided into four categories.

Firstly, there are those who are both materialistically well-off and spiritually inclined. You will not find too many in this category.

Secondly, there are those who are neither spiritually inclined nor do they possess any material wealth. There are very few in this category also.

Thirdly, there are those who possess great material wealth and are completely devoid of spirituality. It is generally seen that possession of abundant material wealth causes arrogance, making the wealthy one feel that there is no need for God in life.

The intoxication of wealth is so powerful that not even God can make the intoxicated one come to his senses. He can come to his senses when the cause of his pride, his material wealth, is taken away from him.

Fourthly, there are those who are deprived of material wealth but are spiritually inclined. This is quite natural, because when an individual has no worldly possessions to be proud of,

he generally turns towards God. But for an opulent individual to be interested in spiritual matters is a rare occurrence. However, there is an exception to every rule.

The exceptions are individuals who have already accumulated 95% spiritual power in their previous births, and have had to take birth in order to acquire the remaining 5%. It is only such fortunate souls who remain unattached to the world even while being in the possession of material wealth. Likewise, there are also those who remain indifferent to God even in the absence of material possessions. This is again unnatural, because the lack of material property generally turns a person to God, even if it is just to beg Him for material possessions.

Be Inspired by Nature

Nature is powerful. Nature is wise. Nature is an endless source of inspiration. Nature is a silent teacher. Observe Nature and gain inspiration.

- Be like the Chinook winds that bring instant heat to a cold place, warming up the weather instantly by anywhere from 25 to 50 degrees. As these winds bring heat to the region, bring warmth of friendship to a lonely person who is in desperate need of it. To the person who is experiencing the world to be a cold place, a friendly face is more valuable than you can imagine. A little warmth goes a long way, especially when it is least expected.
- Be like a Rainbow. Rainbows bring excitement; they eradicate sadness and fill the mind with a sense of wonder. No one can feel sad while looking at a rainbow. Be the kind of person who brings a sense of adventure, awe and beauty to the world.
- Be like the gentle Rainfall. Listening to sounds of falling rain brings peace to the mind. Those who find it difficult to sleep often fall into slumber when they listen to recorded sounds of rainfall even in the dry season. Be

like the rain that brings a smile to hard-working farmers and their families. Be like the rain that makes children squeal with delight. Be like the rain that makes ordinary people into poets and dreamers.

- Be like a Mountain. Like the strong and steady mountain, be strong in your faith and remain steady in all circumstances. Do not fall to pieces when being tested. Discover the strength within as a child of the most loving and merciful God who loves you more than you can ever imagine.

Measure your Spiritual Level

As a seeker, you may be wanting to know the level of your spirituality. If you ask yourself about how you are faring in spirituality, your mind will provide a favorable answer. It will tell you that all is well and that you are second to none.

Do not trust your mind.

Measure your spiritual level by asking yourself the following questions:

Do I see God in everyone?

While it is very easy to see vices in others, their

virtues are rarely visible to us. Always thinking good of others indicates that you are seeing, or at least trying to see God within everyone.

Do I make an attempt to control my desires?

A seeker on the spiritual path grasps the truth that desire for the world is insatiable and that nothing of this world will travel with him to the next life. Therefore, he learns to deny himself many of his material desires.

Do I need to be with people or gadgets all the time?

Solitude is a great companion of the individual wishing to pursue the higher truths of life. A seeker enjoys spending time alone with his mind.

Do I delight in speaking and hearing about God?

As the seeker makes progress on the devotional path, he loses interest in talking or hearing about mundane matters, whereas the topic of God becomes highly interesting.

Have I become kinder, gentler, and more compassionate?

As God enters more and more into the heart of the aspirant, his mind starts to reflect the divine qualities of God, such as gentleness, kindness, peace, and compassion. Use these guidelines to measure your spiritual growth. ■

Connect at: s_didi@radhamadhavsociety.org



VHPA - Executive Board (EB)

Name	Title	
Ajay Shah	President	shahajay@gmail.com
Amitabh Mittal	General Secretary	avmittal@vhp-america.org
Tejal Shah	Jt. General Secretary	tshahnj@hotmail.com
Renu Gupta	Vice President Support A Child	renurajvanshigupta@gmail.com
Sanjay Kaul	VP Hindu Diaspora Outreach	sanjaykaul@hotmail.com
Shyam Tiwari	VP Publications	srtiwari@hotmail.com
Vasav Mehta	National Treasurer	vasavmehta@gmail.com
Toral Mehta	Jt. General Secretary	trexmehta@gmail.com
Jai Bansal	VP Education	jaigb0@gmail.com
Rakhi Israni	Legal Counsel	rakhi@exceltest.com

VHPA - Extended EB with Special Invitees

Name	Title	
Umesh Shukla	VP Hindu Mandir Relations	umeshshukla123@gmail.com
Anit Gupta	Assistant Treasurer	anitgupta@gmail.com
Dhaval Joshipura	VP Membership	djosh58@gmail.com
Jayesh Mehta	Treasurer VHPA	jayesh17@hotmail.com
Sneha Mehta		snehajimehta@gmail.com
Sanjay Shah	Director of Financial Planning	shahsanjay@hotmail.com
Jayant Daftardar	Director, Seva / Fundraiser	daftardarj@yahoo.com
Makarand Abhyankar	Org. Sec. Organizational Growth (Chapter Relations)	makuabhyankar@gmail.com
Manju Tiwari	National Bal Vihar Network	msrtiwari@gmail.com
Utsav Chakrabarti	Media / PR / Advocacy	utsavc@gmail.com
Neelam Jaiswal	Hindu Women's Network	neelamjswl@gmail.com

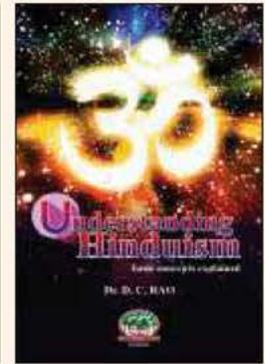
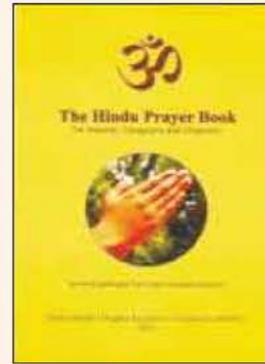
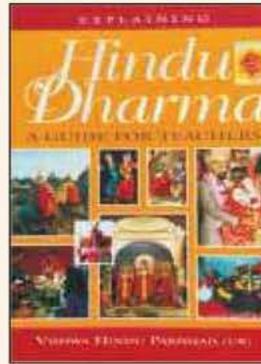
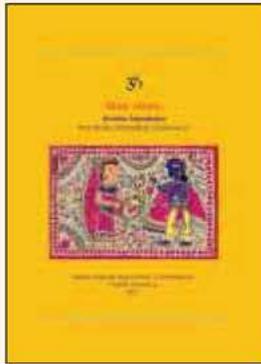
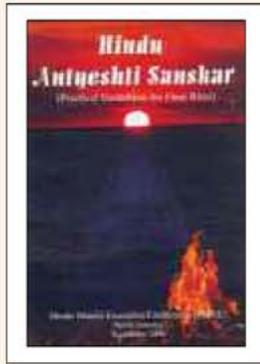
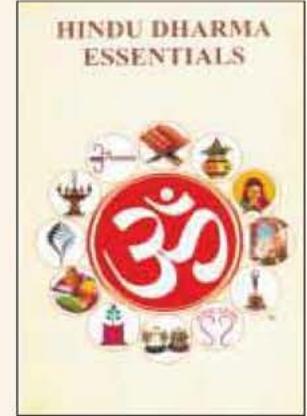
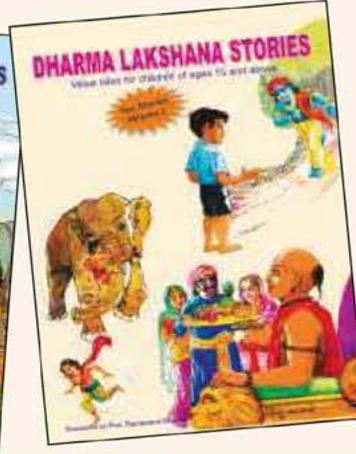
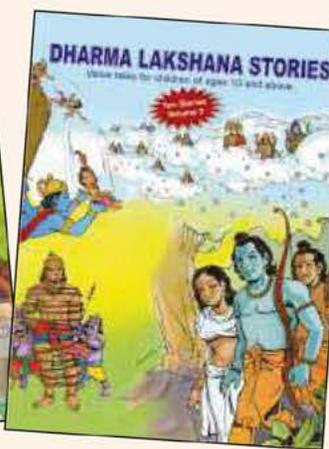
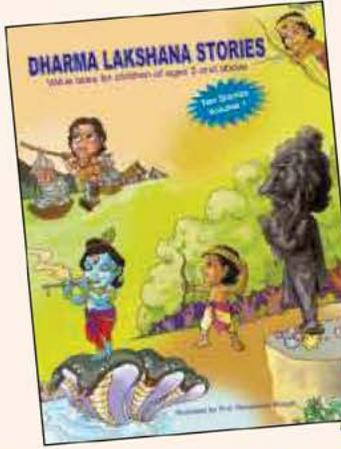
ॐ असतो मा सद् गमय । तमसो मा ज्योतिर्गमय । मृत्योर्मांसमृतम् गमय ।।

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

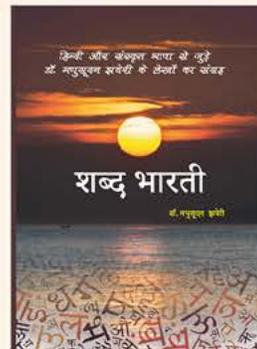
ॐ शांतिः शांतिः शांतिः

OUR PUBLICATIONS

BOOKS



Hindu Vishwa - a quarterly magazine



2022

C
A
L
E
N
D
A
R

2022

शक संवत् 1943-1944
विक्रम संवत् 2078-2079
सुभाष 5173-5174



For USA & Canada

In the Service of Hindu Community in USA since 1970

Available at:

World Hindu Council of America (VHPA)
National Office: 200 New Bond Street, Sugar Grove,
IL 60554-9171
Tel.: 732-744-0851
Email: office@vhp-america.org
Web: www.vhp-america.org



SUPPORT A CHILD (SAC)

Project of VHPA



A Way to Serve & Connect to Bharat \$250/Year Gift Will Provide
Education | Lodging | Medical Care | Boarding | Samskara to a Child

**Many are Waiting for Your Support
Internship Program for Students from USA**



(Printed in India)

Send Donation to

VHP of America (SAC), P.O.Box 1229, Mason, OH 45040
Email: request.SAC@gmail.com | Phone: 513-953-9580
Web: www.supportachildusa.org

BUILD THE LIFE OF UNDERPRIVILEGED CHILDREN OF BHARAT
An Educational Project of World Hindu Council of America (VHPA)