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HINDU VISHVA

Vishwa Dharma Digest

MAHESHBHAI MEHTA

An Inspiration for Life Goal



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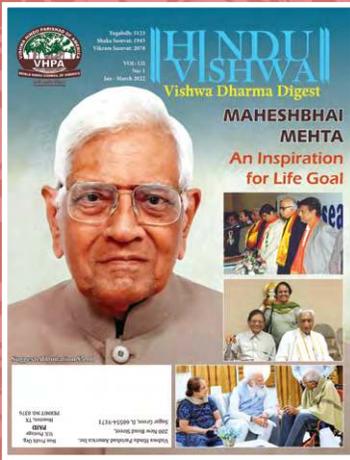
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निर्मानमोहा जितसङ्गदोषा
अध्यात्मनित्या विनिवृत्तकामाः ।
द्वन्द्वैर्विमुक्ताः सुखदुःखसंज्ञै
रिच्छन्त्यमूढाः पदमव्ययं तत् ॥

— श्रीमद्भगवद्गीता, 15.5

Those who are free from vanity and delusion, who have overcome the evil of attachment, who dwell constantly on the self and on God, who are free from the desire to enjoy the senses, and are beyond the dualities of pleasure and pain, such liberated personalities attain My eternal Abode.

nirmāna-mohā jita-saṅga-doṣhā
adhyātma-nityā vinivṛitta-kāmāḥ
dvandvair vimuktāḥ sukha-duḥkha-sanjñair
gachchhantya amūḍhāḥ padam avyayaṁ tat

Bhagvad Gita, 15.5

ABOUT THE HINDU VISHWA

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

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Maheshbhai Mehta's Work was Foundational



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 EDITORIAL

Dr. Mahesh Mehta IN HIS OWN WORDS

It is with deep admiration and a sense of loss that we remember Shri Mahesh Mehta. No one has been more influential in the VHPA journey and in the life of the Hindu community in the USA than Mahesh Bhai. This issue of Hindu Vishwa is dedicated to his memory and tribute to his untiring effort for the social, cultural, and organizational upliftment of the Hindu community and dharma in the USA and around the world. There are many personal anecdotes and amazing qualities of Mahesh Bhai that have been shared in this issue by people who were fortunate to have met and work with Mahesh Bhai in his life journey.

While his physical presence has gone from our midst, his words, and the examples he set will continue to inspire the generations. The best tribute would be to emulate if we could, part of what he exhorted us to do. In his book "Hindu Philosophy in Action" Chapter 6 he wrote about three things:

Faith (Shraddha): "We have to keep the ideal of Yogeshwar Krishna in our mind. He is constantly active yet he is detached from all the bonds. We have a message to be actively involved but do the work dispassionately. You have to have faith... that allows you to see that you cannot see with physical eyes only... The work is extraordinary. The challenge is great but we need indomitable faith and feelings in our hearts. We need the faith to continue, the faith to walk on the path, not turning back to look if someone follows or not."

Constancy (Satatya): "We are moving ahead with that message of Krunvanto Vishwam Arya. For doing that,

we will need another quality in us that is constancy, "Satatya". Any type of Sadhana requires constancy. We have to go on doing continuously. It is not a matter from one weekend to the next weekend. It is a matter of breathing every moment. Along with our breathing we are going to work. That spirit of constancy allows the work to grow. It is not just the speed; sometimes we may walk faster; sometimes you may walk slower, but we will walk all the same."

Skills (Kaushalya): "We may have faith and constancy but we may be without skills. We may be calling a spade a spade. We may be short tempered. We may like to talk with other people. We may say, "I am a gentleman. I do not care for others." We may have all these attitudes. These attitudes will come in our way of achieving the goal. We all will have to develop a skill, a sense in us to work with people and how to work with our own mind."

We mourn the loss of Maheshbhai and rededicate ourselves to his vision for a vibrant Hindu dharma.

निश्चित्वा यः प्रक्रमते नान्तर्वसति कर्मणः ।

अवन्ध्यकालो वक्ष्यात्मा स वै षण्डित उच्यते ॥

**niścītvā yah prakramate nāntarvasati karmaṇaḥ ।
avandhyakālo vaśyātmā sa vai ṣaṇḍita ucyaṭe ॥**

Source : Vidur Niti 1.29

Meaning: Whose endeavors are preceded by a firm commitment, who does not take long rests before the task is accomplished, who does not waste time and who has control over his/her mind is wise.



मंजु तिवारी

इक विभूति

विभूतिमय देह से 'विभूति' बन जाने की यात्रा कैसी रही होगी?
जन्मी होगी कब, कहाँ, कैसे, किस पलअनगिन से हैं अक्षर 'क' !

सोचती हूँ, भस्म विभूति बन लिपटा कब महेश मन?
यक्ष प्रश्न?
शायद ...

जब छोटे छोटे स्वार्थों का त्याग बन जाता है, सफलताओं का रहस्य,
जब चाह से परे सेवा बन जाती है, मन के समाधानों का पुंज।

जब सरलता, ढहा देती है आडम्बरों, अभिमानों के महल,
और सत्य सनातन बन जाता है अवलंबन।

जब जनहित, परहित बन जाता है लक्ष्य,
और जब परिस्नेह समर्पित हो जाता है राग रागिनी बन।
तब केवल तब ही

शैने: शैने: मुखरित, परिलक्षित, सुस्थापित हो जाता है,
सरल, शुद्ध, सात्विक भस्मभूषित महेश मन,
और प्रशस्त हो जाती है विभूतिमय देह की विभूति बन जाने की डगर।

विस्मित हूँ और विभोर भी.....
वह जो चला तो था एकाकी पर मुड़ कर देखा तो बरबस चल पड़े हैं...
ध्रुव दिशा में अनगिन विभूतिमय पग.....

विभूतिमय देह से 'विभूति' बन जाने की यात्रा कदाचित्त यूँ ही रही होगी।

समर्पित,
महेश भाई !

Smt. Manojbala (Manju) Tiwari is a member of VHPA Governing Council and serving as the director of National Balvihar Network. She is based in Atlanta and is a former Emory University faculty member, where she established Hindi program and taught Hindi for many years. She is the director of Startalk program for Balvihar Hindi School (VHPA) Atlanta.



सत्यमेव जयते

प्रधान मंत्री
Prime Minister

New Delhi

अग्रहायण 25, शक सम्वत्, 1943

16th December, 2021**Smt. Ragini Mehta Ji,**

I am deeply pained to learn about the passing away of Shri Mahesh Mehta Ji. My deepest condolences you in this hour of intense grief.

Mahesh Ji dedicated his life to the service of society and popularising India's timeless culture and traditions in America and other countries, by establishing several organisations that worked towards this cause. A powerful communicator, he had excellent command over the written and spoken word.

A research scientist, Mahesh Ji possessed an inquiring mind. His deep sense of dedication towards any work that he took up is inspiring for all.

During our interactions, his devotion and dedication to the nation always left behind a deep impression. His life and work will continue to motivate younger generations to strive in service of the nation.

The deep sense of loss for you cannot be expressed in words. Today, he is not physically present with you, but his ideals, values and innumerable memories will continue to guide you.

May the Almighty grant you and his admirers the strength to bear this irreparable loss. May the departed soul rest in peace.

Om Shanti!

(Narendra Modi)

Smt. Ragini Mehta
Ahmedabad
Gujarat

Condolence letter to Raginibahen, Prime Minister of Bharat

TRANSCRIPT OF PRIME MINISTER OF BHARAT'S VIDEO SHRADHCHANJALI



**Raginibahen and Maheshbhai with the Prime Minister Narendrabhai Modi on March 6, 2021.
Maheshbhai's nephew, Shailesh Mehta is standing**

Namaskar. I never thought that a time will come to remember Maheshbhai in this fashion. When Maheshbhai left all of us last month, it was natural for many people like me to feel down.

How many decades of a relations? Even today his face is in front of me. He met with a smiling face and a sense of oneness and tried to engage (for the cause) the person. In many ways, his personality was loved by all and universally accepted. Today when I am standing among all of you colleagues, I am also feeling the same emotions as you that one of our elder colleagues has gone. I am offering Shradhhanjali (tribute) to Maheshbhai and praying to Ishwar to grant him a place at His feet. Raginibahen also made an effort to live as a co-traveler, as a friend of Maheshbhai in the true sense by living Maheshbhai's thoughts; she was the strength of Maheshbhai.

Looking to Maheshbhai's career at the M.S. University, his talent, double doctorate degrees and being a membrane technology scientist, it would have been natural for Maheshbhai to think of his own benefit, he could have thought about luxurious life for his family, but Maheshbhai's Sanskar did not take him on that route. Instead, he concentrated on encouraging others to join with the nation and the society (Samaj), and he kept doing it for his whole life. He was totally immersed in making connection with the first generation immigrants in America and through them with the American born Indian generation and with creative ideas and several programs for children he worked on passing our thoughts, our traditions, and our culture to them.

We know that wherever RSS's Swayamsevaks went there they endeavored to establish some work based

on their Sanskar. In the earlier days, considerable work happened to be carried out in African countries but there the traditions were different, people were different, environment was different and even those who went there were different. Maheshhbhai made effort to create a distinct terminology because when Maheshhbhai went to America he knew that we would have to answer questions in the minds of the Western world. He worked to employ convincing language to reach out and he created good thinktanks in universities. The work he was doing, and the seed he planted for more than five decades -and he himself had nurtured those seeds- have become such a banyan tree that today even in Maheshhbhai's absence all of you sitting in front of me who grew, nurtured nourished enveloped by that seed of thought will take this work forward.

During emergency (imposed by Mrs. Indira Gandhi) the way Maheshhbhai had led a big movement to collect our people around the world, to unite them and to get support from every corner of the world in favor of democracy.

We already know that in Hindustan those who are Sangh families, their homes become kind of an office (Karyalaya of Sangh.) Maheshhbhai's home was also kind of an office only. When a person of our thinking went from Bharat to USA- When Atalji went, he would be at Maheshhbhai's home, when Ashok Singhal ji went, he would be there- everyone would stay there and he would make all necessary arrangements, would worry about them- in a way, his family had become a living office.

When crisis hit Anjleebahen's life and the way Maheshhbhai took care of the whole family – I was a witness in those days- such a big crisis had come in the family but while taking care of everyone Maheshhbhai did not lose patience. And he shaped Anjleebahen towards creative life and guided her to become a good, effective volunteer.

Anjleebahen also has left, Maheshhbhai also has left but all you colleagues are used to working in unfavorable circumstances. Today the situation is

favorable for our thought, the world is eager to know the power of Bharat. People want to know the past of Bharat and also want to be partner in the tomorrow of Bharat. The environment is conducive; in that we will miss Maheshhbhai's not being there, but the Sanskar that he has given, traditions that he has created, systems he has created, will continue to guide us; they will always be a guiding light.

Whether it was about oratory, or about writing, or about winning someone in argument- and I had seen that Maheshhbhai did not try to defeat someone. He used dialogue instead of arguments. And he made effort to win (but) his efforts were to convince the other person. And this was the reason that our group of young workers never felt the generation gap. I used to see that all young university students worked under the leadership of Maheshhbhai. This itself was uniqueness of Maheshhbhai. He used to go to the level of the other person and talk. Once in a while till the end of his life I used to talk to my good and close colleague. I used to keep calling. In the end when I went to Amdavad he came to airport though he was in a wheelchair. He had same joy and happiness on his face, and he was thinking every moment of the nation and about the society.

My prayer to Ishwar is that Maheshhbhai's life will continue to inspire immigrant Bharatiya society, people connected to Vishwa Hindu Parishad of America, all close colleagues of Maheshhbhai, his family members and will guide them in new direction.

With this spirit I respectfully offer tribute to, Maheshhbhai and I have full trust in all of you, Maheshhbhai's close colleagues that you will not leave any stone unturned in completing Maheshhbhai's dreams. My best wishes are with you. You have with you Maheshhbhai's spirit, Traditions that Maheshhbhai built are with you, Maheshhbhai's dreams are with you, and Maheshhbhai's resolutions are with you too, and you will not spare any efforts in bringing those resolutions to fruition, that also is my confidence.

Good wishes; Thank you very much. One more time I respectfully offer Anjali to Maheshhbhai.



Full three hour video of the online Shradhhanjali maybe viewed on YouTube at <https://youtu.be/Q0Y3aWqTnCQ>

अमित शाह



गृह मंत्री एवं सहकारिता मंत्री
भारत सरकार

प्रति,
स्व. महेशभाष जयंतिलाल महेताना स्नेहीजनो
१२, भोपल ४४४, सरदार पटेल रींग रोड, भोपल
अमदावाड-३८००५८
(Gujarat)

नमस्कार,

आपना स्वजनना अवसानना समाचार जाली भुज ज दुःख थयुं.

जुवनमांथी स्नेहीजननी अणधारी विदाय असह्य बनी रहेती होय छे. जुवनमां
आवी पडेल आ आकस्मिक प्रसंगे प्रभु आपत्रीने तेमज आपना परीवारने आ आघात
सहन करवानी शक्ति आपे तेमज स्वर्गस्थना आत्माने चिर शांति अर्पे ते ज अभ्यर्थना
साथे...

आपना दुःखनो सहभागी,

आपनो सांसद,

(अमित शाह)

नोंधः आपना विस्तारमां विकास कामोने लगता कोष्ठ प्रश्नो अथवा तो सूचन होय तो, आपना विस्तारना सांसद तरीके कार्यरत भारतीय
जनता पार्टी-संसदीयक्षेत्र कार्यालय, प, आठस्कवेर वील्डींग, सीम्स होस्पिटल चार रस्ता, सायन्स सीटी रोड, सोला, अमदावाड पर भोकली
आपवा विनंती छे.

(520)

धरमां रहे - सुरक्षित रहे.

बहार नीकणवानुं थाय त्यारे मास्क अवश्य पहेरो.

कार्यालय : गृह मंत्रालय, नॉर्थ ब्लॉक, नई दिल्ली-110001

दूरभाष : 23092462, 23094686, फैक्स : 23094221

ई-मेल : hm@nic.in

Condolence letter : Amit Shah, Home Minster (in Gujarati)

अमित शाह

गृह मंत्री एवं सहकारिता मंत्री
भारत सरकार

To,

The family of Sw. Maheshbhai Jayantilal Mehta
12, Bopal 444, Sardar Patel Ring Road, Bopal
Amdavad-380058
(Gujarat)

Namaskar,

I am very much pained to know about your dear one.

Unexpected departure of a loved one from life becomes unbearable. My prayer and request to give you and your family strength to bear this shock that has come suddenly in your life and grant eternal peace to the departed Aatma.

Sharing your grief

Your Member of Parliament

(signed)

(Amit Shah)

Note: If there are any questions or suggestions regarding developmental work in your area, as your M.P., (I) request you to send them to Bharatiya Janata party-Parliamentary Constituency Office, 5, I Square Building, CIMS Hospital Crossroads, Science City Road, Sola, Amdavad.

(520)

Stay home – Stay safe**Do wear mask when you go out**

कार्यालय: गृह मंत्रालय, नोर्थ ब्लॉक, नई दिल्ली – 110001

दूरभाष: 23092462, 23094686 फैक्स: 23094221

ई-मेल: hm@nic.in

*(Translated from Gujarati by Gaurang Vaishnav)***Condolence Letter Translated in English**

Apro/Jm/2021/12/16/rs

તા. ૧૬-૧૨-૨૦૨૧

સ્નેહી શ્રી હિરલબેન,

નમસ્કાર.

અમેરિકાની ધરતી પર હિન્દુત્વના પ્રચાર-પ્રસારના પ્રણેતા ડૉ. મહેશભાઈના અકાળે નિધનના સમાચારથી અત્યંત વ્યથા અનુભવું છું.

ભારતના પૂર્વ વડાપ્રધાન શ્રી અટલ બિહારી વાજપેયીજીના ચાહક અને શિશુવયથી જ હિન્દુત્વને વરેલા એવા સ્વ. ડૉ. મહેશભાઈએ માત્ર ભારત જ નહીં પરંતુ અમેરિકામાં ભારતીય હિન્દુ સંસ્કૃતિને ઉજાગર કરી હતી. સરકારની લોકશાહી વિરોધી નીતિઓ સામે અડગ રહી, ઉગ્ર દેખાવો યોજી વિવિધ ક્ષેત્રે પ્રદાન કર્યું. હિન્દુ વિચારધારાને મજબૂત બનાવવા તેઓ સંતો-મહંતોને સાથે રાખી તન, મન અને ધનથી યોગદાન આપતા રહ્યા. ભારતીય સંસ્કૃતિને વિદેશમાં ઓળખ આપવા અંગેની તેમની સૂઝબૂઝ અન્ય લોકો માટે પ્રેરણારૂપ હતી.

તેમની ચિરવિદાયથી ભારે આઘાત અનુભવું છું. સદગતના આત્માને પરમાત્મા તેમના સાનિધ્યમાં લઈ ચિર સ્થાન અર્પે તેવી પ્રાર્થના.

આપનો,

(ભૂપેન્દ્ર પટેલ)

To,
Shree Hiralben Mehta,
12, Bopal 444, Nr. Suncity,
S. P. Ring Road, Bopal-380058.
Mo.: 9925005837.

ભૂપેન્દ્ર પટેલ
મુખ્યમંત્રી, ગુજરાત રાજ્ય

Condolence letter : Bhupendrabhai Patel, Chief Minister of Gujarat (in Gujarati)

Aprp/Jm/2021/12/16/rs

16-12-2021

Dear Ms. Hiralben:

Namaskar.

I feel deeply grieved at the news of untimely death of Maheshbhai, the pioneer of messaging and propagation of Hindutva in the land of America.

One having high regards for former Prime Minister of Bharat, Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee and married to Hindutva from childhood, Sw. Dr. Maheshbhai had exposed Bharatiya Hindu culture not only in Bharat but also in America. (He) remained steadfast against anti-democratic policies of (Bharat government of Indira Gandhi), arranged spirited demonstrations and contributed to several fields of action. He carried along sants and Mahants and gave his all (Tan, Man, Dhan) to strengthen Hindu thought. His acumen of introducing Bharatiya culture in foreign was inspirational for other people.

I feel deep shock at his passing away. I pray to Parmatama to take the departed Aatma near Him and give it a permanent place close to Him.

Yours,

(Signed)

Bhupendra Patel

To,

Ms. Hiralben Mehta

12, Bopal 444, Nr. Suncity

S.P. Ring Road, Bopal-380058

Bhupendra Patel

Chief Minister, Gujarat

(Translated from Gujarati by Gaurang Vaishnav)

Condolence Letter Translated in English



दूरभाष ९१ ११ २६१६१३६६ २६११८६६२
फैक्स ९१ ११ २६१६५५२७
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विश्व हिन्दू परिषद् ॐ VISHVA HINDU PARISHAD

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संकट मोचन आश्रम, (हनुमान मंदिर) सैक्टर-६, रामकृष्ण पुरम्, नई दिल्ली-११००२२(भारत)
SANKAT MOCHAN ASHRAM, SECTOR-VI, RAMA KRISHNA PURAM, NEW DELHI-110022 (BHARAT)

DEEPEST CONDOLENCES

This is to inform the sad demise of senior Swayamsevak Dr Mahesh J. Mehta in a hospital in Ahmedabad (Gujarat) today (14th December, 2021) morning due to old age complications at 88/89. I had been to Ahmedabad on 09th December, 2021 to see him in hospital.

Dr Mehta had settled in the USA as a scientist. With the inspiration of Parampujya Guruji (M.S. Golwalkar – the then Sarasanghachalak), he came as a leading founder of Vishva Hindu Parishad of America (VHPA) on October 19, 1970. Bal Vihar programmes, Hindu Heritage Youth camps, Support-a-Child Programme, Hindu Students Council (HSC) were hugely popular. The first major conference was held in 1985 at Madison Square Garden, New York with participation by 4,500 people that set a trend in the Western world to organize similar programmes. The Global Vision 2000 Programmes were held in 1993 attended by 15,000 people. Dharma Samsad (Parliament) in the USA was held in 1998 followed by a 10-day Dharma Prasaar Yatra in 10 major cities with participation of 15,000 people in 1999. In the United Nations Millennium Peace Summit (y. 2000), 108 eminent Sant-Mahatmas and scholars from Bharat participated in spiritual discussions at the UNO followed by lecture tours across US and followed by Hindu Sangam programme at Staten Island, NY, where the then Prime Minister of Bharat Shri Atal Behari Vajpayee was also present.

Maheshbhai had 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 one of the organisers of the Madison Square Garden (NY) programme of Prime Minister of Bharat Shri Narendra Modi in the last week of September, 2014 where 20,000 strong Bharatiya diaspora participated. He served VHPA in capacities as General Secretary and President. His life was dedicated to laying the foundation of Hindu movement, Hindu identity in USA and also in positioning the Hindus there as a leading contributor in the growth and development of their esteemed adopted country. He also served as a Central Vice-President and a member of the Board of Trustees and Governing Council of Vishva Hindu Parishad. He was also one of the recipients of the Pravasi Bharatiya Samman from the President of the Republic of Bharat. In his Nidhan Maa Bhaarati has lost an achiever and devoted Pravasi son!

Vishva Hindu Parishad expresses its deepest condolences at this sad Nidhan and prays to Almighty to grant a pride of place to the Punyaatmaa in the Nitya Dhaam! "Na hi kalyaanakruta kaschit durgatim tat gachchhati!" "Jeevabhutah Sanaatanah" (G.15.7). Om Shantih Shantih Shantih!

In grief,

विज्ञानानन्द

Swami Vigyananand
Joint General Secretary
Vishva Hindu Parishad
(Dec. 14, 2021)

Deepest Condolences : Vishva Hindu Parishad, Bharat

Dr. Maheshbhai Mehta, A Leader Who Put SWAMI VIVEKANANDA'S VISION into Action in 21st Century America

By Ajay Shah, Newton, PA

The year was 1984. It was a historic year for Hindus in America. For the first time ever, close to 4500 Hindus, under the auspices of World Hindu Council of America (VHPA) had gathered for the Tenth World Conference at the Penta Hotel in New York. Beyond the exemplary speaker lineup which included Swami Chinmayananda and other prominent Hindu leaders, the conference signified the establishment of a new immigrant community that will, in decades to come, positively impact every aspect of their newly adopted homeland.

I was a student, studying in Syracuse, NY. I was informed about the conference by my friends at Akhil Bhartiya Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP), the largest Hindu student organization in Bharat. I called the organizers, registered, and signed up to be a participant and a volunteer at the event.

As speakers laid out the vision for Hindus in America, a youth conference held simultaneously provided Hindu youth an opportunity to network with their fellow “second generation” Hindu counterparts and share experiences of what it meant to be in a school with students who had perhaps never met a person with “brown skin” or someone whose parents came from the “land of snake charmers,” or “cow worshippers.” Remember, this was 1982! The parents wanted their children to remain Hindus, and the youth wanted to discover their Hindu identity. VHPA and this conference made both these goals possible.

I knew my vision to start this university student’s organization and build it from grounds up in a new country would only be possible if it had guidance and support from someone who had the Rastriya

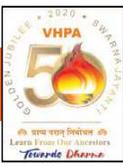
Swayamsevak Sangh background. There indeed was. That was Maheshbhai.

While this was my first exposure to VHPA, I soon realized that the VHPA had been doing Bal Vihars and summer family and youth camps since mid-1970s. In fact, Maheshbhai’s most enduring legacy is his pioneering of Balvihar and Family Summer Camps VHPA has organized since its inception. Today, the early participants in the VHPA annual summer camps are making positive difference in all aspects of American life. Recently, we found out that a presidential nominee to a high-level appointment was a participant in VHPA Family Camps and still adheres to Hindu ethos.

Maheshbhai came to the US in 1960s. He was a Sangh Swayamsevak from his childhood, and then, as an adult a Sangh Pracharak (fulltime volunteer) for a decade. He had also served as the President of ABVP in Gujarat. When Maheshbhai came to the US, he was blessed and guided by Pujaniya Guru Golwalkarji who asked him to start the VHPA. Maheshbhai had a clear vision for starting VHPA. In his book “Hindu Philosophy in Action: In Search of Universal Well Being,” Maheshbhai wrote:

“VHPA [...] lays emphasis on the idea of Samskara of individual. The lofty principles of Dharma are not meant for mere recitation purpose. [...]. The great values of Dharma attain practical significance in sustaining human relationships.”

In the 1984 conference, I saw Maheshbhai giving talks, intermingling with speakers and interacting with volunteers. There is an image embedded in my memory – during a break, I saw Maheshbhai in the hallway. I pulled him aside. I had gone to this conference with



an agenda. I recited all that I had written out a few days ago. I told Maheshbhai why VHPA should start an Indian / Hindu student organization in the US. I took 10 minutes from the person who was organizing and presiding over the conference. And what did he do? He did not brush me aside. He did not flaunt his role in VHPA, nor his past background as a Pracharak of Sangh or President of ABVP Gujarat. He patiently listened to me. He asked me to come to the next VHPA Governing Council meeting in Detroit, MI.

That was Maheshbhai. Whether it was speaking with a prominent dharma guru or a national leader, or a student he had never met before, Maheshbhai treated everyone equally, and without ego. The Maheshbhai I met in the conference was the same Maheshbhai I saw through his active years in VHPA and the last time I met him at his home before he went to India. There was never an ego, every interaction was genuine, there was patience, dedicated listening, words that inspired and acceptance of ideas that came from all directions.

His patient listening to this unknown student, inspiring him, supporting, and guiding him, led to the very first student movement outside India – the Hindu Students Council (HSC). Gokul Kunnath, who had similar vision for a student’s organization before we met and I started the activities of HSC, initially known as Hindu Students Federation in 1987, and after Kanchan Banerjee, an amazing organizer, joined, formally as HSC in 1990. HSC then became template for the formation of many Hindu student organizations around the world. Maheshbhai was instrumental in the global Hindu student movement.

In 1994, while talking to students at an HSC meeting, Maheshbhai asked the students to develop respect for our spiritual heritage and implored the students to:

- Explore, Experience, Express Hindutva
- Recognize and deal with anti-Hindu forces
- Align with friendly forces
- Build up a global network of university students inspired by the lofty ideals of Hindutva
- Learn to sacrifice and to serve
- Purify mind through the practice of yoga

Almost 30 years later, this message is as true today as the day it was delivered, and it is certain to resonate with the American Hindu youth for generations.

As a former student leader, advocacy came naturally to Maheshbhai. It must have been divine will that Maheshbhai came to the US in 1960s. In 1975, merely five years after VHPA was established, India faced a bout of autocracy by the then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi. In 1975, Emergency was imposed, and Ms. Gandhi suspended democracy. The movement to restore democracy became a Cause Célèbre for the Hindu community and Maheshbhai took a lead. Under his guidance, Indians For Democracy (IFD) and Friends of India Society International (FISI) channeled the energies of NRI to successfully help restore democracy in India. Long after the end of Emergency, the respect Maheshbhai garnered during those days was evident in the respect he earned from some of the most important political leaders of India, including Prime Ministers Shree Atal Bihari Vajpayee and Shree Narendra Modi.

In 1993, Maheshbhai envisioned seminal event for Hindus in America. The Global Vision 2000 Conference and the Global Youth Conference organized by VHPA commemorated the 100th anniversary of Swami Vivekananda’s speech to the Parliament of World Religions. If Swami Vivekananda introduced Hindu dharma to America, Global Vision 2000 Conference attended by over 10,000 and the Global Youth Conference attended by close to two thousand youth was, in the words of Ma. Shree Ashok Singhal, “kindling the latent pride has convinced me that from now on the Hindus abroad will not only preserve but also promote our culture even in the midst of the confluence of cultures that America is.” Ma. Ashokji further elaborated, “The Conference had a lasting impact not only on the Hindu world but on the western governments as well.”

I saw Maheshbhai travel across the country for over a year, impressing on the Hindu community the importance of the event, inspiring the volunteers to join the efforts and raising funds. Speakers and cultural performers were invited from all walks of life. The conference faced unprecedented political and financial

headwinds. It was Maheshbhai's astute leadership that overcame these challenges in the ensuing years, ready to take on the next set of challenges. Every century needs someone to reintroduce the message of Swami Vivekananda, in twentieth century America, it was Maheshbhai.

Perhaps it was the scientific research background that Maheshbhai had. After all, he was a well-recognized membrane technology researcher that led to accepting new ideas and innovation. In 1993, when I presented the idea of HinduNet, a family of very first Hindu internet sites, Maheshbhai enthusiastically supported it. HinduNet became the first and the largest Hindu website family in the world. Over 200,000 unique visitors visited HinduNet sites. The innovation did not stop there. Maheshbhai eagerly endorsed a unique model to seek outside funding to make HinduNet self-sustaining. When he sensed resistance, Maheshbhai spoke and allayed all concerns of the VHPA Governing Council.

In diverse areas such as serving the educational needs of remotest areas in Bharat or a formal Hindu higher education, Maheshbhai has left his imprint. Today, Ekal Vidyalaya and Hindu University of America are two former VHPA initiatives that are independently making their impact on the society. I recall the years of planning on both projects under Maheshbhai's leadership.

I approached Maheshbhai in 1997 to initiate the first ever formal Hindu movement against defamation, American Hindus Against Defamation (AHAD). Maheshbhai quickly endorsed the idea. Early AHAD campaigns routinely logged over one hundred thousand signatures and garnered apologies from

multinational companies like SONY. Today's protests activities against defamation of Hindu images, icons, culture etc. under varying names such as Hinduphobia, Hindudvesha, Hindumisa etc. have matured and become global. Maheshbhai's initial endorsement and support in nurturing this movement must not be forgotten.

Maheshbhai nurtured and guided leaders. He nurtured ideas. He provided limitless support. However, not once, in HSC, HinduNet or AHAD did Maheshbhai come to micromanage. He was always available to help but he trusted us to do the right thing or learn from our mistakes along the way and be our safety net if we ever needed him.

Today, many will reminisce how Maheshbhai enthused them, the incredible organization building skills he possessed or his intellectual depth. However, what I will remember the most is how he made personal connections. When Maheshbhai came to San Diego for work, despite a long day at work, he would find time to meet. He remembered all the details about my family. To all of us, Maheshbhai was not a leader but a respected elder member of our family.

I met Maheshbhai in Boston before he left for Bharat. While he was physically not too well, his intellect was sharp. I sought his blessings for the VHPA work. Of course, he gave his blessings, but he also said, and I paraphrase it, that organizations may or may not be there, but our dharma or philosophy and the impact of our work will always be there. Today, I add to that. Even a visionary leader like Maheshbhai may not be on this earth today, but his ideals, his inspiration, the movement he started will live on in perpetuity.



Ajay Shah, a Karyakarta of VHPA, is the President of VHPA. He was cofounder of Hindu Students Council (HSC), HinduNet and founder of American Hindus Against Defamation (AHAD) and HinduPACT. He hosts an online weekly show on contemporary American Hindu issues, HinduLounge. He has been inspired to work for Hindu causes by Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP)



In Fond Memory of SHRI MAHESH MEHTA

Prof. Dr. Ved Prakash Nanda, Denver, CO

Maheshbhai was larger than life, and now that he is gone, his memory and his legacy continue to inspire so many whose lives he touched. He had a vision: to create an indelible imprint of Hindu values and thoughts in this country. He had a plan: to create institutions that would effectively implement his vision. He recognized that the institutions would last and reach their potential only if there are capable and dedicated men and women to take ownership and selflessly contribute to further and strengthen the institutions and to stay steadfast, never losing sight of the goal. And he was a Karma Yogi who gave every breath of his life to ensure that adequate progress is made each day. Fortunately, he had a life partner who shared his vision and the value of his mission: Raginibahen. His sister-in-law, Anjleebahen, with him from early on, cheerfully assisted him, taking a leadership role under his guidance.

I was fortunate to be a participant observer. Several incidents come to mind, and several conversations – in their kitchen and living room in Massachusetts, in meetings and conferences, and in Manohar Shinde

Ji's house in California – are memorable. I will share a couple. Maheshbhai always led from the front, setting a high bar. The day he told me he was going to resign from his job I was, of course, curious. Why, I asked, because he was a brilliant scientist who was actively engaged in research. His response was that, because of his work at the office, he was not satisfied with the time he was able to devote to the Vishwa Hindu Parishad and he would like to give full time there.

After one meeting, he confided in me that he was concerned about the progress in creating awareness of and enhancing the appreciation of Hindu thought in the U.S., and that he would like to work in Bharat, as well. Subsequently, he did begin his abhiyan in Bharat. As I visited him while he was unwell, he shared with me his hope that the succeeding generation of Hindu Americans in this country will not just keep their identity intact but will deeply influence all aspects of life here.

I was sadly not in constant touch with Maheshbhai after he left for Bharat. And now that he is gone, I, along with so many others, deeply miss him.



Dr. Ved Prakash Nanda is Zonal Sanghchalak of Hindu Swayamsevak Sangh (HSS), for the America Zone which includes all countries in North and South America.

MAHESHBHAI

My Mentor, Guru and Guide

By Gaurang G. Vaishnav, Tampa, FL

Writing about Maheshbhai in the past tense is very difficult. After working with him shoulder to shoulder for almost 50 years, it is hard to accept that I will not see his beaming face and loving eyes again. This is the time to reflect on years gone by and assess Maheshbhai's life from different angles.

This is a personal account because I had the benefit to work very closely with Maheshbhai in Vishwa Hindu Parishad of America (VHPA), India Quality Group (IQG) and Global Indians for Bharat Vikas (GIBV.)

I met Maheshbhai quite accidentally when I took a bus from Jersey City, NJ to Hartford, CT to meet my friend Rameshbhai Patel (later, Joint General Secretary and Seva Vice President of VHPA) one April weekend in 1972. I had been in USA only for 17 months and was still struggling to find my footing. Maheshbhai was also visiting Rameshbhai same weekend as they knew each other from Bharat. Then I was a shy person and ill at ease in new company. Maheshbhai was talking on several subjects, and I was listening. Perhaps, after a long time I was listening to a powerful speaker, a



At the Vishwa Sangh Shibir-2000 : From Left, Maheshbhai, Anjeebaben, Arvind Sant, Gaurang Vaishnav, and Shyam Tiwari

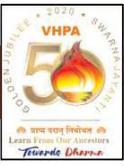
person who had full confidence in what he was talking about and yet he was not intimidating. There was no whiff of superiority though he knew more than all of us in that apartment combined. Eventually, talk turned to Jansangh (precursor of BJP), Congress and Gandhiji. I had difficulty accepting what Maheshbhai was talking about. My views were 180 degrees opposite of his assessment of those three entities and I told him so. Maheshbhai reasoned with me in generality; I was not convinced but he was like a powerful magnet, and I felt like iron filings that just get sucked in by a magnet. Then, Maheshbhai was a strapping 37-year-old young man in his prime and his well-built physique combined with his oratory had mesmerizing effect on his listeners. Had I left the same day by return bus, that would have been an end to my story with Maheshbhai and VHPA. But destiny had other plans. Maheshbhai offered me a ride back home since he lived in the town next to where I lived. It was a very warm and genuine offer, though the car was small, perhaps a Nova and they were already five people. I took the three-hour ride with them- we were all squeezed together and as I am fond of saying, I could not get off of that ride- not even today, after 50 years. We talked incessantly during the ride, and I developed instant respect for Maheshbhai though I did not agree with him on host of issues.

After that night, Maheshbhai would call me periodically for this or that meeting, or a celebration and I could not say no. At his home I met other stalwarts like Subhashbhai Mehta, Pranjivanbhai Patel and M. P. Srinivasan (three of the five founding members of VHPA), Dr. Madhusudan Jhaveri, etc. I was observing Maheshbhai's style of building family relations with every volunteer. That summer Maheshbhai came up with an idea of Volunteers Training Workshops and several were held over consecutive weekends. It was an amazing experience which helped me tremendously in understanding what VHPA was all about and how social work was done. I learnt a lot about our culture and true history. Even though, I was not convinced 100%, I was hooked.

With this preface, let me throw light on Maheshbhai's personality. There were several occasions over the years where one could judge Maheshbhai's character, conviction, commitment, sacrifice, ability and power of execution.

In April 1974, Maheshbhai's brother-in-law Ambarish Pandya who had been in USA for hardly two years, suddenly passed away, leaving behind a 24-year-old young wife Anjleebahen and two-and-a-half-year-old son. Not only that, upon hearing this news, Maheshbhai left his work in Brooklyn and was rushing to the hospital and in the rain, he had an accident with another car. Fortunately, he came out of it with a few scratches. It would have been a lot easier to send Anjleebahen back to Bharat to her in laws or parents. But Maheshbhai's long-term thinking and decision making came to the fore. He convinced everyone that it was in the interest of Anjleebahen and her son to stay in USA as with a small child her options would have been limited back home. Maheshbhai and his Dharma Patni Raginibahen took Anjleebahen and her son Haril under their wing, nurtured them and gave Anjleebahen self-confidence to make her own way. All readers of Hindu Vishwa know her from the last issue, which was a tribute to same Anjleebahen, who passed away in May 2021. Anjleebahen blossomed under Maheshbhai's guidance and supervision and became an invaluable asset to VHPA. She became international liaison for VHPA because of the extensive contacts she developed at all levels across the globe. This showed Maheshbhai's caring side and readiness to sacrifice for the family's wellbeing.

Maheshbhai's organizing ability and working under tremendous stress were put to a fire test during 1975-77 when Mrs. Indira Gandhi promulgated "internal emergency" in Bharat after a high court invalidated her election for malpractices and debarred her from contesting elections for a period of six years. To subvert the judgement and keep her power intact, she resorted to the bogus emergency, suspended fundamental rights of the citizens, jailed hundreds of thousands of political opponents and muzzled the free press.



All thinking people, across the world were incensed and this atrocity gave birth to a freedom fight from outside of Bharat. Followers of four diverse ideologies that were at a loggerhead in Bharat were compelled to seat together. The Socialists, the Leftists, the Old Congress (opposed to Indra Gandhi's Congress) and the Bharatiya Jan Sangh (later BP)- all were under the gun, their top leadership behind the bars. It was a matter of survival. Out of all the groups, the Jan Sangh group had a strong and dedicated cadre in the USA. After fierce deliberations, disagreements, cajoling, give and take and finally handshakes, an organization named **Indians For Democracy** (IFD) was born to fight the emergency under one banner. Maheshbhai became the driving force behind it and in time became its undisputed leader. During that 19-month period, Maheshbhai provided visionary leadership to a group that was riding the high and low of emotional waves. His leadership forged bonds with workers who had very different political outlooks. Looking at his untiring efforts, we were encouraged to work long hours daily after coming home from work. The way his home in Old Bridge, NJ became a shelter for opposition leaders who were able to escape from Bharat (Dr. Subramanian Swamy, Ram Jethmalani, N. G. Gore, Mrs. George Fernandes, Shri Makarand Desai, etc.) and way his basement became a publishing house for Satyavani, a newspaper that was smuggled into Bharat made it clear that not only Maheshbhai was a natural leader, but he was a fearless leader too. Since IFD worked in many states, Maheshbhai's name became a household one.

From this struggle that was won by the nationalist forces, came out two organizations of which Maheshbhai was a founding member. Friends of India Society, International (**FISI**) and Overseas Friends of BJP (**OFBJP**). Today, both are involved in engaging the Diaspora for betterment of Bharat. Right after the Emergency was over, Maheshbhai started an initiative, Deen Dayal Upadhyay Memorial Lectures to popularize Deen Dayal Ji's concept of Integral Humanism among thinkers and opinion makers.

As VHPA started getting traction, Maheshbhai used his own resources to buy typesetting machine, electric typewriter, drawing board, etc., so that Hindu Vishwa could be produced efficiently. This was a big jump from old cyclostyle machine. This was another proof that Maheshbhai did not hesitate to spend his own funds for furtherance of the organization.

Maheshbhai had innate ability to sense potential in a volunteer and then match his/her potential to appropriate activity or project. He had seen me writing a number of letters to the editors of newspapers and magazines arguing against emergency and promoting Indians For Democracy. So, suddenly, in 1976 he asked me to become editor of Hindu Vishwa. I had no experience of editing at all, but he encouraged me. That was the best thing to happen to me because over next fifteen and a half years I learned the art and science of editing and being editor gave me many opportunities to meet and interview quite a few prominent people. **But what I did is not important**, what is important is to recognize Maheshbhai's ability as a leader to identify people and mold them for their own betterment and benefit of the organization.

Maheshbhai put into practice the theory of four Ps of a successful leader. These are: Pin up, Pick up, Pull up and Push up. In short, an able leader Pins (finds) a potential person from many volunteers. Then he Picks him/her up, meaning the pinned up person is given specific task to perform. Once he becomes proficient and develops self-confidence, the leader will Pull him up, that is, he will be given independent assignments and given leadership role. The last P is most difficult for many leaders, which is Push Up. A leader who is magnanimous, has no axe to grind and who is not afraid of creating a leader equal to himself or even one who would surpass him, will Push up the chosen volunteer where there is no limit to growth. At this stage it will depend on that individual to explore uncharted territories. I have seen Maheshbhai doing this repeatedly and in the process, he has created topnotch leaders who have served VHPA well as well as have shone in allied organizations.

Maheshbhai was not only a visionary; he was willing to take risks to make the vision a reality. In early 1980's when VHPA had hardly any funds to speak of, he conceived the idea of a mega Hindu conference, first of its kind, in New York. Two years of intense planning and travels by a dozen volunteers, culminated in the first **World Hindu Conference in 1984** at the Madison Square Garden in New York, The Conference attracted 4500 delegates from the USA and several countries. The conference was so successful that later this model was followed for Hindu conferences in Europe and elsewhere.

1993 Was a big challenge for all of us but more so for Maheshbhai who by this time was the undisputed leader for many Hindu organizations. VHPA had been preparing to hold a mega conference, Global Vision 2000, in greater Washington, DC to celebrate centenary of Swami Vivekananda's mesmerizing talk at the Parliament of World Religions at Chicago in 1893. We had been working on it for two years when the news of demolition of Babri Structure in Ayodhya broke on 6th December 1992. We were only eight months away from the proposed one-million-dollar conference but now we were not sure if we would be able to withstand the onslaught from the government of Bharat which was inimical to Hindus and Ram Janmabhoomi movement and from all anti-Hindu forces and pseudo secular media. In a few weeks Maheshbhai called a meeting of VHPA's key team working on the conference planning and also invited leaders from allied organizations. Many participants expressed doubts and there were suggestions to cancel the event. Maheshbhai painstakingly explained why it would be suicidal for VHPA and the Hindu society to call it quits. He averred that Hindus would never be able to make a mark in USA, if they gave up at the first sign of attack. Maheshbhai's sincerity, clarity and conviction carried the day. Against great odds, VHPA with the support of several organizations carried out Global Vision 2000, a three-day magnificent affair that drew delegates from more than sixty countries and a galaxy of Who's Who of Hindu saints, nationalist leaders and top-rated artists

promoting values of shared knowledge and cooperation in the new millennium. The conference drew eight thousand Hindu participants and a parallel conference for college students drew two thousand delegates.

One thing that helped Maheshbhai achieve what he did was his genuine respect for spiritual and religious leaders. I know of many leaders who give perfunctory respect to these dignitaries because it is a requirement of their position. But Maheshbhai believed that these Dharma gurus kept the flame of Hindu Samskruti alive, and they deserved everyone's respect. It was this sense of indebtedness that shaped Maheshbhai's vision of Dharma Samsad, a gathering of Hindu religious leaders from the western world which was an immense success. **Dharma Prasar Yatra** and **International Dharma Prasar Yatra** followed in succession. Same trait helped Hindu Mandir Executives' Conference (HMAEC) to be successful.

In the year 2000, the United Nations hosted a **Millennium World Peace Summit of Religious and Spiritual Leaders**. Under the leadership of VHP (Bharat) a contingent of 108 saints with their associates came as delegates. As the leader of VHPA, Maheshbhai accepted the challenge to host all the saints and arrange their post summit programs. VHPA volunteers in New Jersey and New York carried the major burden to make this happen but the interface with all saints and VHP (Bharat) was facilitated by Maheshbhai.

All these events had significant implications for NRI Hindus across the globe. No doubt, that Maheshbhai was surrounded by capable and dedicated volunteers of VHPA, but these events showcased his vision, ability to think out of the box, change existing paradigm and **can do** attitude.

As VHPA moved forward, Maheshbhai was instrumental in providing leadership to create **Hindu University of America** (Orlando, FL), **Hindu Students Council** (HSC) for college campuses and **Ekal Vidyalaya** for the education of the tribal children



Dr. Mahesh Mehta and Raginibahen with Pravasi Bharatiya Samman Award

in Bharat. While HUA was started as an independent body, HSC and Ekal Vidyalaya remained as VHPA's projects for a considerable length of time before they became independent organizations.

In 1995, I had the privilege to travel with Maheshbhai and Anjleebahen first to Nairobi and then to Durban to attend first Hindu Conference after South Africa got rid of apartheid rule of minority Whites. In this mammoth conference where, Hindu leaders had come from various countries, and chief guest was Shri Nelson Mandela, I was amazed, though not surprised to see the respect Maheshbhai held in their eyes. I also witnessed another trait of Maheshbhai. I had seen Maheshbhai getting angry very rarely and never with the leadership from Bharat. One night we were all sitting with top leaders of VHP from Bharat and some contentious topic came up. Maheshbhai and I had discussed it before, and we felt that the steps envisaged by the leadership in Bharat would not be good for VHPA. At one stage, Maheshbhai told one of the leaders, "we are not children anymore that we would take your orders silently; you need to listen to us too." It was a new assertiveness for me. Though Maheshbhai borrowed heavily from VHP and RSS when he founded VHP of America, he used pragmatism and did not adopt methods that he thought would not work in American environment. He was a man of discipline,

and he did instill it in all of us, but he stayed away from regimentation.

I worked with Maheshbhai as the editor of Hindu Vishwa, General Secretary, and then as the Executive Vice president in VHPA for forty years and then in Global Indians for Bharat Vikas (GIBV) for nine years so we came to know each other as closely as possible. It was not always smooth sailing. I had written letters to Maheshbhai (there were no emails or cell phones then) questioning some of his decisions, differing with him on some projects or personalities, etc. But he was cordial and waited for me to come around and see his point, which I did most of the time. All the same there were couple of flash points which I regret to this day. I will just mention one. It was the night before the 1993 Global Vision Conference and core team of twenty people was closeted at the Omni Sheraton hotel's meeting room going over each aspect of the conference with a fine toothcomb. By that time, we knew that the registration and accommodation was going to be a disaster. It was first time we had outsourced registration and accommodation to a hired company. Along the way we had doubts and I had made a special visit from Connecticut to this person's New York office a couple of months before the conference and in one of the meetings I had told my colleagues that we were heading for chaos, and I asked Maheshbhai to fire the company and assured him that a few of us would be able to set things right over next two months. Maheshbhai had his own compulsions, and he did not agree. Now we were staring at that disaster and one more time I implored Maheshbhai to let go the guy, give three of us the authority to rework accommodations. I assured him that we would work through the night and would be able to salvage the situation to a great degree. I do not remember the exact conversation, but Maheshbhai angrily said something like, OK, you take over, I am stepping down (he was the chairperson of the conference.) I immediately realized the hurt I had caused him. Since we were really a family, all of us were in tears. I told Maheshbhai that if anyone had to step out, it would be me, not him because he was

the lifeblood of the organization. We did have serious problems next day, but we learnt a collective lesson. Do not entrust key elements of a program to unknown or untested individual/company.

Maheshbhai was not all dry and serious. He had wits and his sense of humor would show during informal talks. He was fond of Talat Mahmood's songs. At Raginibahen and Maheshbhai's 25th wedding anniversary in 1989, Maheshbhai rendered Talat's famous song from film Sujata, जलते हैं जिस के लिये, तेरी आंखों के दीये; "Jalate hain Jis Ke Liye Teri Aankho Ke Diye." I remember one Christmas weekend when we three close families from Hartford, CT (Ramesh Patel, Jyotish Parekh and I with our spouse) had gone to spend time with Maheshbhai and Raginibahen. Generally, when we got together our talk centered around VHPA and Hindu issues. That weekend Raginibahen had told us that there would be no such talk. So, we ended up watching an old comedy हम सब चोर हैं; "Hum Sab Chor Hai" (We are all thieves)! Of course, Maheshbhai was a bit bored! When he would be engrossed in discussions or some profound thoughts, Anjleebahen, his sister-in-law would call him out using his father and grandfather's names saying "Maheshchandra Jayantilal Madhavlal, Jamava Padharo (grace the dinner table.) We all used to have good laugh at Maheshbhai's expense. There was a special winter hat that Maheshbhai used to don lovingly. Anjleebahen used to call it Maheshbhai's Mukut (crown) and he also had accepted that term.

After retirement from the professional life, Maheshbhai reduced his active role in VHPA. He had served VHPA as its founding General Secretary for 20 years and then as a president for six years. Then he was the mentor, philosopher and guide as the Chairperson of VHPA's Advisory Board. One would have thought that now he would retire to a comfortable life. But then, that would not be Maheshbhai. He turned his attention to Bharat and its villages. He established an organization, **India Quality Group** (IQG) in USA which operated as Innovative Quality Group in Bharat. Objective of this organization was to bring fundamental change in

processes in place in Bharat by creating think tanks to deliberate and to articulate the vision of empowerment in areas of education, health, industry, politics, economics, environment, public systems, social services, and law. Today, that group has transformed into All India Rural Empowerment Program, AIREP. Though he had already crossed 70 years, he was able to attract the college going students and recent graduates to join in the effort to volunteer in the villages. After 13 years of consistent efforts aided ably by on the ground coordinators Ms. Hiral Mehta (Maheshbhai's grandniece and a college professor) and Ravin Vyas (a US returned entrepreneur), today AIREP works in 13 villages of Gujarat and has 200+ volunteer teachers most of whom are college students. Their motivation comes from "Give one day a week for the nation" concept.

In 2012-2013, when Bharat was going through a lot of political turmoil after a decade of unbridled corruption and a rudderless government, there was a talk about a new leadership under BJP government. Maheshbhai conferred with some of us and decided to start an organization to rally NRIs behind Shri Narendra Modi, whom he had known personally for a long time. This was not a political movement per se, because we had realized that unless there were a government in place with dedicated focus on the improvement in the life of the marginalized, no efforts like IQG/AIREP/GIBV would bear long term fruits. So, in mid-2013, under Maheshbhai's leadership **Global Indians for Bharat Vikas** (GIBV, www.gibv.org) was formed. GIBV met instant success enrolling more than eight hundred volunteers many of whom went to Bharat for the election campaign.

Once the elections were over, Maheshbhai turned his attention back to villages. GIBV's focus is now the national reconstruction by emphasizing Rural and slum empowerment and Citizen Awareness Campaign. with the expanded scope of bringing solar electricity, water purification, healthcare, smokeless cooking, job-oriented skills training, entrepreneurship training,

Have you ever been to the **Caves of the Wind** at the Niagara Falls? This is where you go down 150 feet towards the base of the fall negotiating wooden walkways and stand on the wooden platform, known as the Hurricane deck. With the deafening sound from the Bridal Veil Fall barely 20 ft. away, you are doused with the generous spray of the water from the fall. At once, you want to retreat to the safety of the elevator from where you came and yet, you stand paralyzed by the ferociousness of the mother nature and the sheer beauty of the moment. For those moments, you are lost to this world.

If I had to describe my wife Asha's and my experience of one-on-one sittings with Maheshbhai without any scheduled agenda on hand, I would compare it with, standing on that Hurricane Deck. In such meetings, at breakfast time, or after a meal we would sit glued to our chair as Maheshbhai would suddenly, extempore start talking about spirituality and metaphysics. His best came out- his spiritual thoughts came down cascading. He will talk about principles of science and then he would connect science and spirituality seamlessly. It all seemed so effortless, but it was possible only because of his vast reading and meditation. So many times, I had wished to record such instantaneous downpours of wisdom, though I have failed to do so because when he was speaking on such occasions, you did not feel like getting up for a moment to record or take a photograph. He had this innate ability to explain the most intriguing scientific theories- including Super String Theory - and juxtapose them with spiritual truths.

Maheshbhai 's health started deteriorating around 2011. He had bypass surgery, multiple strokes and related complications. When we were in Bharat for 2014 election, he had started using a cane for support. He used to call it his new ornament and was hopeful to get rid of it soon. Unfortunately, things did not get better and by 2017 he was wheelchair bound. From mid-June 2020 till mid October 2021 a group of about twenty volunteers of VHPA and Sangh Parivar organizations arranged periodic Zoom calls with Maheshbhai and

Raginibahen. Most of the time Maheshbhai would not speak much but he was delighted to see all his lifelong colleagues and listen to them. At times he would perk up and then his main concern would be how VHPA was doing and the need to keep focus on the development of Bharat. So much so that when he met Prime Minister Modiji at Amdavad airport in March, 21 he lamented his inability to work, to which Modiji replied- 'Maheshbhai you have done enough; now it is time for you to rest and take care of your health.'

Last time we talked with Maheshbhai was on October 17, 2021. After that, we had scheduled a Zoom call on November 19th, Maheshbhai's birthday but same morning he was moved to a hospital for some complications. He came home for a couple of days but next visit to the hospital was final. Some of us were fortunate to have his darshan during last week of his life by video. He could not communicate because of ventilator but would raise his hand to acknowledge us. A few of our colleagues were in Bharat and they were able to see him in person. Maheshbhai passed away on Geeta Jayanti and Mokshda Ekadashi, December 14, 2021.

Maheshbhai had good baritone voice when it came to singing. His favorite bhavgeet from Sangh depicted



Caves of the Wind, Niagara Falls

his life. It is, मैं मधु से अनभिज्ञ अभी तक, जीवनभर विषपान किया है- Mein Madhu Se Anbigna Abhi Tak, Jeevan Bhar Vishpaan Kiya Hai (I am yet unaware of the taste of honey because whole life I have drunk poison.) isn't that the story of a person who has given everything he had for the betterment of the society? Isn't that a story of a leader who has given up life's pleasures that we so much take for granted- such as outings and vacations with the family, taking in a movie, lazing around on a weekend, etc.? Isn't that the story of a leader who has withstood insults and criticisms from others for the larger good of the society? Isn't that a story of a leader who has suffered disappointments in silence?

I used to send Maheshbhai a letter on his birthday, November 19th. Once I wrote to him that in the 11th chapter of Shrimad Bhagwad Gita, after witnessing Bhagwan Krishna's Vishwaroop Darshan, Arjun said,

सखेति मत्वा प्रसभं यदुक्तं हे कृष्ण हे यादव हे सखेति ।

अजानता महिमानं तवेदं मया प्रमादात्प्रणयेन वापि ॥41॥

यच्चावहासार्थमसत्कृतोऽसि विहारशय्यासनभोजनेषु ।

एकोऽथवाप्यच्युत तत्समक्षं तत्क्षामये त्वामहमप्रमेयम् ॥42॥

(Thinking of You as my friend, I presumptuously addressed You as, "O Krishna," "O Yadav," "O my dear Friend." I was ignorant of Your majesty, showing negligence and undue affection. And if, jestfully, I treated You with disrespect, while playing, resting, sitting, eating, when alone, or before others—for all that I crave forgiveness.)

Similarly, I wrote to Maheshbhai, working together we have treated you as one of us and overstepped our boundary many a times not realizing your greatness. So, please forgive us.

For me, Maheshbhai was a mentor, Guru and Guide. I can say without any hesitation or Vyakti Puja (Person worship) that I am what I am today thanks to Maheshbhai. He took a raw young man and molded his life for serving a higher cause. I have learnt so much from Maheshbhai that I remain indebted to him forever. These fifty years have been an eventful journey in Maheshbhai's company.

Now that Maheshbhai has cast off his tired and overworked body, his Aatma is free to move on. There is the pain of physical separation, but Maheshbhai will live on through hundreds of dedicated Hindu Volunteers he has created and through organizations that he built, nurtured and guided. His death, in a way, has inspired all of us to work harder to fulfill his vision and dreams.

As much as this article is a tribute to Maheshbhai, it also is a tribute to his Sahdharmacharini Smt. Raginibahen Mehta without whose rock like support, unshakeable faith in the path Maheshbhai chose and her incalculable sacrifices in 57 years of married life, Maheshbhai would not have been able to achieve what he has. My pranams to the departed Aatma and to Raginibahen.

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Shri Gaurang Vaishnav has served as the editor of Hindu Vishwa, General Secretary and Executive Vice President of VHPA and is a member of Advisory Board. Currently he serves at the Executive Vice President of Global Indians for Bharat Vikas (GIBV.)

Maheshbhai Mehta, Frontline Leader

Saumitra Gokhale, Rockaway, NJ

My vinamra Shraddhanjali to Aadarneeya Dr. Maheshbhai, the pioneer and veteran of the Hindu movement in the United States. He was a constant guide and inspiration to numerous karyakartas across generations. In every meeting with him, I gained some knowledge, received an insight, and, of course, more motivation to work for the cause. Every time I met him, I felt the warmth and care that he exuded. We have truly lost a frontline leader and a father figure. His accomplishments were great and he has left a great legacy through all the organizations and initiatives. His memories, his selflessness, courage, and dedication will continue to inspire all of us for years to come.

The punyatma has left his body on Gita Jayanti/Mokshada Ekadashi. What a saarthak end to the life of a Karmayogi. May Sri Parmeshwar grant Sadgati to the departed Aatma. Om Shantih, Shantih, Shantih.



Shri Saumitra Gokhale is Vishwa Vibhag Sanyojak (International Coordinator) of RSS, based in USA. He has a Master's degree but has dedicated his life as a bachelor in the service of the Hindu society. He travels constantly within USA and across the globe to guide and motivate all Sangh organizations.

Tributes VHPA WITH MAHESHBAI

I first meet Maheshji in mid- 1969, when we both had just arrived from Bharath to US & since then he remained one of the most influential presence in my life; it is hard to express so many feelings in words; what Saumitra ji (Gokhale) has expressed captures very well what I have been silently feeling very deeply about Maheshji; I had opportunity to visit him in person in January 2020 at his home in Karnavati & just a brief video conversation with Raginibahen a day before he passed away ; I cherish multiple inspiring memories of him.

Dr. Manohar Shinde, Azusa, CA (Former VHPA Governing Council Member; Board of Trustee Member, Hindu University of America (HUA))

My vinamra Shraddhanjali to Mahesh bhai Mehta, pioneer of the Hindutva movement in USA. I had the fortune of meeting and interacting with him numerous times. He had a vision and worked for it all along. We pray for the Sadgati of the departed soul and strength to Raginiben who has been a great life partner in every phase of his life to bear this irreparable loss.

Ramesh & Kiran Bhutada, Sugar Land, TX (Former VHPA Governing Council Member)



Tribute to Shri Maheshbhai Mehta

By Dr. Shankar Tatwawadi, Nagpur, Bharat

During the last over fifty years Dr. Maheshbhai's name has figured very prominently among the Pravasi Bharatiyas in general and among those in US in particular.

Maheshbhai came to US as a professional chemist during late 1960's and soon embarked in organizing the Hindus under the banner of Vishwa Hindu Parishad of America (VHPA).

He was a devoted and dedicated RSS worker in Bharat and used his organizational skill in building up the Parishad from scratch upwards. He worked in the Parishad at various levels including the General Secretary and President and also initiated such other outfits as Balvihar, Hindu Students Council, etc., in the Parishad.

He was one of the main spirit and motivators among the senior VHP workers and inspired others by his own example to devote time and energy for the social

work. He soon became a known figure in the American public life and the international Hindu diaspora.

He also had a prominent role in fighting against the infamous emergency in Bharat during 1975/76.

Maheshbhai was a thinker, visionary and a powerful orator and had a soft heart behind his occasional and apparently hard outbursts.

He was a recipient of the Pravasi Bharatiya Award and was a known figure among the many Bharatiya dignitaries.

With his passing away the community has lost a stalwart. He lives behind a large number of followers, fellow workers and admirers and will be remembered for his devotion and dedication to the Hindu cause.

A loving husband to Raginiben, Maheshbhai was a fatherly figure to a large number of relatives.

Our sincere Pranams to the departed soul.



Dr. Shankar Tatwawadi Ji is a lifelong Pracharak of RSS. He served as Vishwa Vibhag Samyojak (Global Coordinator) of Hindu Swayamsevak Sangh (HSS) for several years and spent those years in UK and USA.

A Visionary Extraordinaire Moves On

By Shyam Tiwari

It was 1991-92 when Manju and I met Maheshbhai for the first time in Atlanta. He was an extraordinary person but was very well-grounded in realities of the time along with feasible expectations from the fellow workers. He chose to work at every level with everyone at the same level. He conducted several training sessions for the VHPA Atlanta Chapter karyakartas, while we were preparing for the 1993 Global Vision conference in parallel. It was during this preparation, our chapter organized a fund raising event and the first ever public program I hosted with him as the main speaker. This was just the beginning of experience of working with him directly, and there was no looking back since then. Working with him taught me personally about dealing with successes as well as failures. He was a guide, mentor, an elder brother and a friend with whom you could openly share thoughts and ideas without any reservations or risk of being judged. At times, he would act as a counselor as well as VHPA official to guide you at every step of the way. One could always count on him for the advice and resources as and when needed. Last time we visited him in his home in Boston before he left for Bharat.

Manju and I wanted to see him in November 2021 but I was advised to wait till he's back from the hospital! Shri Maheshbhai's departure for his onward journey has left a huge void with no visible substitute and may take a very long time to fill. While continuing our work towards the fulfillment of the goals he envisioned, I join everyone in praying for Moksha for his Atman. I also pray for the well-being of Raginiben, and rest of his global Hindu family to withstand his permanent physical absence going forward.



Shyam Tiwari is a member of VHPA's Executive Board and vice president for publications.

Tributes VHPA WITH MAHESHHBAI

अभ्युत्थानमधर्मस्य—

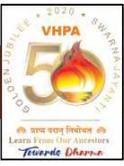
Pujya Maheshbhai's Life mission was indeed reflected in that पंक्ति from Bhagwad Gita.

He touched and uplifted hundreds of thousands of lives through dedication and an amazingly sharp analytical mind to bring Hindutva to America.

Immense gratitude to him and thankful to the Lord to bring Maheshbhai in our lives.

With many wonderful memories Maheshbhai created in whatever he thought, spoke and did totally in alignment of who he was- a totally selfless server - we render this prayer for his departed soul for a journey towards Mukti.

Dr. Kalind Bakshi, Chalfont, PA (Former VHPA Governing Council Member)



MAHESHBHAI MEHTA

An Inspiration for Life Goal

By Sheela (Vrushali) Kene, Irvine, CA

Today we see the Vishwa Hindu Parishad as a huge banyan tree having many branches in the Form of several initiatives taking roots to strengthen the organization. It has sustained for long 50 years because the seed planted by Maheshbhai was mature and free from defects. His ideas were well thought out and his motivation was free from self-promotion. He stood strong with his dedicated team and protected the young sapling whenever there was rough Weather. His wisdom and unshakable determination always ushered us through rough times. I feel truly fortunate for joining VHPA much early in my life in 1986 as a Balvihar parent in my Hometown Irvine in Orange County under mentorship of local coordinator Shobhnaji Vora. The seed of my desire to teach Hindu culture through stories to children was dormant for many years. It sprouted instantly when I read Maheshbhai's explanation "what is the need for Balvihar." The first VHPA camp I attended carved deep impression in my mind. I was extremely excited to find an organization standing on noble philosophy.

Thereafter, new projects like Hindu Unity Day, Youth Conference, annual Youth Camps, brought us face to face with the local Hindu community.

Major impact was felt by the very Idea of The Global Vision 2000. Maheshbhai came to Los Angeles To present his mighty project with the blueprint of his ambitious plan. That speech gave true Direction to my life. He had special power to convince many to follow him. His vision was clear, He had definite plan to follow. He himself had conviction of the destination where he wanted to reach. I had path to follow, i.e., "to take swami Vivekananda to every Hindu Home." I was

haunted with the Idea Day and night. First, I started study group in my home to bring awareness About swami ji and his clear universal message. I named our balivar as Vivekananda Balvihar. We started working on the dramatic presentation on his complete life. Maheshbhai presented us With the magic wand of Swami Vivekananda's Life message which gave us power to bring many minds together for Greater Cause in years to follow.

The Virat Hindu Gathering in Washington turned out to be big challenge right from its start to end. The Hindu psyche in those days was influenced by borrowed thoughts from Indian politics. As the final celebration came closer the whole event became obstacle race. Just finishing the Race to its last mile was mere success. Even though I was not big participant in Washington Gala, as a spectator I still feel the thrill and vibrations we all felt listening to every speaker and absorbing the cultural programs.

It is important to note that grand event was not the end of the great Idea but truly the Vision highlighted to follow for years to come. After that, many more programs landed in port of Los Angeles such as Dharma Prasaar Yaatra in 2000 And second Dharma Prasar Yaatra in 2002. Those programs physically brought five thousand Hindus together under one roof which gave sense of belonging. At every program Maheshbhai's presence brought electrifying energy among Pariwar (sister organizations) to work in cooperation for years to come. I remember today what Mahesh bhai once said to me: "When every Hindu will proudly call himself a Hindu VHPA will fold in its work and we all will retire" His will to unite Hindu minds was so strong that Maheshbhai will be born again and

again to guide the future generations of Hindus. Shri Ramakrishna used to say, "When you see a man doing great work, you may know that God's special

power is manifested through him." Mahesh Bhai demonstrated such a spiritual power throughout his life.



Smt. Sheela Kene is the president of Orange County, CA chapter of VHPA. She ran a very successful Balvihar for more than 25 years.

My Fond Memories of Maheshbhai Mehta

By **Dr. Umesh Shukla**, Belle Mead, NJ

I had the fortune of meeting Maheshbhai for the first time in 2006. I felt instantly connected with him. Anjleebahen was also with him and they stayed with us overnight that gave us the opportunity to get to know each other. Subsequently I met him several times either in Boston or in NJ as well at VHPA meetings in other states. Once we travelled together to Cincinnati to meet temple executives and encourage them to participate in HMEC. During that meeting he addressed the temple management eloquently and with clarity of thoughts as to what is our duty for the future generations of Hindus in America. Over the years he became a fatherly figure for me. My last face-to-face meeting with him and Raginibahen was at his residence in Ahmedabad in early 2020. This visit was made possible by Vimal Sodhani ji and Pappubahen with whom I was also travelling.

During the years of my association with him, I found him to be very caring for everyone. He always spoke his mind. He always stood for building a strong united team to build consensus even if in the short term some important work needed to be delayed. He was a great inspirer, teacher, advisor, guide and motivator to me. He was a true Karmayogi who was easily approachable at any time. He treated everyone with respect and was always willing to help anyone.

Raginibahen has been a wonderful selfless supporter of Maheshbhai throughout his life. She is a role model for everyone.

His departure from this mortal world is a great personal loss. I feel very blessed to have been guided by him. My Namam to the departed soul and prayers for a peaceful heavenly journey.



Dr. Umesh Shukla is a member of VHPA's Executive Board and vice president for Mandir Relations.

With Maheshbhai We Found a Home in VHPA

Dr. Veena & Sharad Gandhi, Voorhees, NJ

Our leader, our mentor, our polar star, our guide dear Maheshbhai has passed away to the new world in the Almighty's lap but his memory, his message of unity, his incessant work, his insight into uplifting Bharatmata and awakening of Hindu people to their past glory will always guide us.

After my medical residency, I had a desire to return to India and we were intensely looking an organization that was involved in Sewa for Bharatmata. We were invited to VHPA's yearly governing council meeting of 1981 in the evening as guests. Sharad and I heard a talk by Dr. Maheshbhai Mehta and we were very much impressed and felt that now we were blessed and we belong to this dedicated and visionary group. We were blessed to learn a lot ever since 1981.

Maheshbhai's vision, patience, and total dedication has inspired us all.

May this great soul of Bharatmata be loved by the almighty and find peace. May his soul still guide us indirectly. We will meet again someday in some form.

May his soul Rest in Peace and love. May Raginiben find strength to bear this loss.

Om shanti Shanti Shanti



Both **Veenabehn** and **Sharadbhai** are members of VHPA Governing Council for many years. Veenabehn as served as the vice president of youth activities and Sharadbhai has served as Regional Organizing Secretary.

Tributes VHPA WITH MAHESHBAI

On the day Mahatma Gandhi left the Deha (mortal body), someone asked Acharya Vinoba Bhav (Gandhiji's shishya) about his feelings. Often stable, Vinobaji had wet eyes and he said, "When Bapu was present in mortal form, I had to make an effort, take an appointment to see him. Now it has become easy, I close my eyes and Bapu is present right here." Today, I have the same feelings and I am sure many others do too.

Today is Shrimad Bhagvad Gita Jayanti and Mokshada Ekadashi. No better day than this for a Yogi, Bhakta and Dharmaveer Ma. Maheshbhai (like Arjun) to leave vartmaan deha.

Maheshbhai - You will always be with us in our Hridaya and we will continue the mission!

हरी ॐ तत सत ।

Sanjay Mehta, Pittsburgh, PA (Immediate past General Secretary, VHPA)

MAHESHBHAI : A Legendary Karmayogi

By Jitendra Kumar, Potomac, MD

Very rarely a person is unreplaceable and Maheshji was one of these rarities. For Hindus in the USA, he is and will remain unreplaceable. He is the only person I knew who, without any break, consistently and tirelessly worked for Hindus at least since 1969, when residing in California, I first talked to him.

We were both Sangh Swayamsevakas since our childhood and third year OTC trained (at that time Nandaji was another third year OTC trained in the USA), we became friends, in fact, like brothers. In 1969, I had started a Shakha in Berkely, the first one in the USA. Maheshji and I started discussing how to organize Hindus in the USA. He suggested that it would be better to start a chapter of VHP. In 1970, we had discussions with then Sangh Sar Karyavah Bala Saheb Deoras Ji about starting a VHP Chapter in the USA. He recommended naming the organization as Hindu or Bharatiya Swayam Sevak Sangh. Maheshji did not like these names as he believed that Bharatiya might be considered as a being loyal to India vis-à-vis the USA. Thus, some Hindus in the U.S. might have not been comfortable with the name BSS or HSS. Finally, Bala Sahebji agreed with the starting of a VHPA in the USA. With Maheshji's magnetic personality, a number of Hindus were attracted towards VHP and became VHPA's members. Many of these had no affiliation with VHP or RSS in India.

Maheshji had all the qualities needed to establish and grow an organization: he was a great organizer, thinker, very persuasive, pleasant and convincingly communicative. He was a great speaker, writer and had a clear concept of Hinduism and the need of fostering Hindu values among the Hindus who had migrated into the USA. Under his guidance, the formation for other Sangh affiliated activities started such as Indians for Democracy (IFD), Friends of India Society International (FISI), HSS, Hindu Students Council (HSC), Ekal Vidyalaya, and India Development and Relief Fund ("IDRF").

I remember an interesting incident. In 1970 or 1971, Akshay Kumar Jain, then the editor of Nava Bharat Times, a very popular daily newspaper in India, came to the USA. His visit was a part of an Indian delegation sponsored and funded by the U.S. government. When he was in New York, he had some dispute with an U.S. government official and he quit the delegation. At that

time India allowed Indian citizens only \$24 dollars foreign currency. He needed the money, at least \$100. At that time there were not many Indians in the USA. Although he disliked RSS, he knew Chaman Lalji and he contacted him and asked whether Chaman Lalji could arrange \$100 in New York which he promised to reimburse in Rupees on his return back to India, Chaman Lalji contacted me over the phone and I contacted Maheshji. Even though at that time, \$100 was a big amount, especially for new Indian immigrants, he immediately went to New York City and gave \$100 to Mr. Jain. Jain was astounded and stopped being against Sangh and VHP.

In June 1975, when Mrs. Gandhi declared Emergency in India, Maheshbhai called me and encouraged me to do something about it. Soon after that I got a call from Shri Kumar Poddar, a businessman based in Lansing, Michigan. We both talked about doing something in the USA in opposition to the murder of democracy in India. Then he called Anand Kumar, a student in New York, who later he became a Professor at JNU in Delhi. We decided to form an organization and named it Indians for Democracy. Later Gehaniji from Washington, Ravi Batra and Dr. Mukund Modi from New York joined IFD. Sometime in July or August, there was a VHP Executive Committee, I believe, in Connecticut. Maheshji was there. I briefed him and others about IFD. As it was a political activity, with Maheshji's consent, Gehaniji and I resigned from the VHPA's Executive Committee. Although Maheshji, being the VHPA's General Secretary did not join IFD officially, he, Subhash Mehta and Anjeeji actively participated in the IFD's activities of opposing the Emergency. When Dr. Swamy came to USA, Maheshji and I met him in Boston and decided to form a Friends of India Society International (FISI) chapter in the USA. In 1978, FISI's international conference was held in New York. Maheshji was the Convenor, Subhashji was the Chief Organizer and Senator Moynihan was the Chief Guest.

When a number of Sangh Karyakartas were arrested during Emergency, and their families were left without bread earners, Maheshji called me and we discussed the formation of an organization to collect money for their families. Gehaniji and I formed India Relief Fund (IRF). At that time, Dr. Vinod Prakash and

Dr. Arun Shourie were working as senior economists with the World Bank. They contacted us to work with us in opposing the Emergency. Vinodji became very active and he was made the President of the IRF. After Emergency, we decided to convert IRF to India Development Relief Fund (“IDRF”) which Vinodji is still heading in spite of losing his eyesight. As usual, Maheshbhai helped the IRF and IDRF to a great extent.

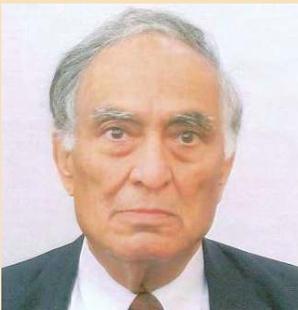
When BJP was separated from the Janata Party, Dr. Mukund Modi formed Overseas Friends of BJP (“OFBJP”). A few years after his death, there was an intense internal dispute in the BJP. In order to resolve the differences, Shri V.P. Goyal, BJP’s Treasurer and prabhari to supervise OFBJP, formed a committee under the leadership of Maheshji. The two other members were Dr. Manohar Shinde and me. Maheshji was firm and decisive in conducting the procedures of this Committee and finally the dispute was resolved.

In 1999, Ken Cherian, a Christian activist in the USA approached me about a trip to India and visiting together the Christian and Hindu organizations in Delhi, Trivandrum and Chennai. He also suggested a well-known Christian Babu Stephen to accompany us who had business in Washington, DC and Trivandrum. He was also running a college in Trivandrum. I requested Maheshji also to accompany us which he gladly agreed to do. First, we went to Delhi, then to Trivandrum and Chennai. In Delhi, we visited a couple of churches and Christian Schools. We were also fortunate to participate as guests in the BJP’s National Executive Committee Meeting. At that time, Atalji was the Prime Minister. In Trivandrum, we met the heads of three sects of Christians. We also met a long time Pracharak and Scholar Parmeshwaranji. In Trivandrum, we stayed at Babu’s house where he had a painting of Lord Krishna and Arjuna sitting on a Chariot. As we had some time, Maheshji and I went to Kanya Kumari for a day and visited Vivekanand Memorial Temple. I had helped Ek Nath Ranadeji in the planning of this Memorial.

First, in Kerala, we met the head of one Christian Sect, He was wearing Saffron color Kurta and Dhoti with long hair and a beard and looked like a Hindu Saint. He stated, “We believe in Sanatan Dharma like you do. The only difference is that we worship Jesus Christ and you worship Rama, Krishna, etc.” A number of Kerala Christians have two names, biblical names outside their homes and Hindu names in their homes. Most of them do not like foreign missionaries and do not take orders from Pope or any foreign authority. A number of them opt for cremation. At a very famous church In New Delhi, the Archbishop arranged a lunch at which we four from the USA, then the General Secretary of RSS, Sudarshanji, President of VHP, Ashok Singhalji, President of BJP Kushbhau Thakre, General Secretary of BJP Narendra Modi were also present. We had a very cordial and frank discussion. The news of the dialogue between RSS and Christian Churches appeared on the front page of the Asian Age, an Indian daily newspaper. Later we all visited Home Minister and Deputy Prime Minister Advaniji at his office.

Everyone knows the work done by Maheshji and Anjleeji. I should also mention about his brother Subhash Mehta and Raginiji. Subhashji was a quiet worker and worked with Maheshji in the VHPA. Above I mentioned his role in the 1978 FISIs International Conference in New York in which Subhashji was very active. Like Sita, Raginiji accompanied Maheshji in most of his activities. She never complained, tried to stop or distract Maheshji from any activity. Once she said smilingly, “Jitendraji, we have been married for decades and only one time we went to see a movie together.” What a sacrifice in this modern time!!

Not only, Maheshji inspired his family members, he inspired a large number of Hindus around the world and encouraged them to work for Hindus and the society. I personally feel fortunate that I had the honor of knowing and working with Maheshji and his family. My Pranam to a Great Soul.



Jitendra Kumar is a Past President, Friends of India Society and International (FISI). He was actively engaged in fighting the emergency rule of Mrs. Indira Gandhi. His passport was impounded by Mrs. Gandhi’s government. He lives in Potomac, MD

“MAHESHBHAI”

An Iconic Pioneer of Hindu Diaspora in US

By Prakash Waghmare, West Orange, NJ

Tuesday, December 14 was a very auspicious day in the annals of Hindu calendar. It happened to be, not only ‘Gita Jayanti’ but also ‘Mokshada Ekdashi’ – a unique day for divine souls to depart from their earthly existence to sublime with the heavenly divinity. Therefore, it came as no surprise that on such a day, a ‘Karma yogi’ who had inspired, guided and molded countless people in the services of Hindu society, bid his existential ‘farewell.’ At that very moment, a soulmate of a devoted wife, a dotting brother, a truly trusted friend to numerous people, a brilliant scientist, a comforting fatherly figure, a dedicated visionary for the Hindu diaspora, a ‘confidante’ to several political & social powerhouses, a highly regarded educationist, a scholarly writer, a mesmerizing orator, a founder of several prominent community-centric organizations.....also departed from us. Baffling as it may sound, they all bore the same exact name – Dr. Maheshbhai Mehta. The reality of this phenomenon was that they were all an embodiment of only one iconic person with multitude of accomplishments. He was one of a kind pioneering master of Hindu diaspora in U.S. and I was blessed to have him as my primary mentor, motivator and ‘muse’ (guiding genius) in whatever I did in socio-cultural-political arenas.

My wife, Neela and I got to know ‘who’ and ‘what’ Maheshbhai was, when we got involved in the planning and execution of “10th International Conference of Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP)” in New York City in 1983-84. His thoroughness in keeping track of every nitty-gritty of this mega event - attended by thousands of delegates from 80 different countries - was simply breathtaking. As former ‘Pracharak’ (PR-Canvassing volunteer) of RSS, he had amazing memory and was full of love, passion and care for others. He always made

his business to know every minute detail of a person he met. After the international conference, when he came across some of my published articles and publicity artwork in the ‘Media,’ he immediately roped me into taking over PR-Exposure-Media-affairs responsibility for VHPA, He fully understood the enormous power of the media and the positive impact it could have if embraced as an ally rather than as an adversary. Taking him as my role model for ‘networking,’ soon I was able to successfully establish strong rapport and cozy relations with the Indian media houses in U.S. He had tremendous confidence in my ability to spread ‘a word’ about an event or a project. He was my biggest cheerleader. With his encouragement, I authored numerous articles and designed publicity material for various historic events and campaigns. This included ‘Hindu Unity Year,’ ‘Dharma Prasaar Yatra,’ ‘Dharma Samsad,’ ‘Global Vision 2000 Conference,’ to name just a few. In whatever Maheshbhai accomplished in his life, his wife ‘Raginibahen’ has played an important role as a confidential counselor in all his engagements. When ‘Hindu Swayamsevak Sangh,’ ‘Ekal Vidyalaya Foundation-USA’ and ‘Overseas Friends of BJP’ or ‘Hindu Students Council’ (University campus-based organization) evolved out of VHPA in 80’s and 90’s, Maheshbhai ushered my presence in their inner circles so that their activities could get mass exposure. I arranged and coordinated press-conferences, interviews whenever dignitaries from India visited U.S. and penned numerous articles on various topics. He always made sure that I had special access, wherever and wherever necessary, to carry out my tasks. This gave me ample opportunities to get close to numerous awe-inspiring personalities from social-religious-political fields. Because of him, I also came in contact with handful of global titans from the business world. For ‘Dharma



Dr. Ila Sukhadia, Mr. & Mrs. Arvind Sant and Mr. & Mrs. Prakash Waghmare with Maheshbhai and Raginibahen

Prasaar Yaatra' in U.S., Dr B.K. Modi (Modi Group of Companies), who was the external President of VHPA at the time, had engaged a very prominent New York Public Relation firm, 'Ruder Finn' for nationwide publicity as well as to coach him and Maheshbhai to be media-savvy and TV-friendly speakers. Maheshbhai not only made sure that I was third component of this 'Team,' but also, asked the popular American TV-anchorwoman to prepare me on the finer points of a 'campaign.' During August 28-31, 2000, a "Millennium World Peace Summit of Religious & Spiritual Leaders" was to take place in New York City at the behest of "United Nations Organization." At this unprecedented conference, an India delegation comprising, 108 representatives of various religions & spiritual organizations from India were also a major participant block. Maheshbhai and Dr B. K. Modi, noting the global significance of this august assembly appointed me as the 'spokesperson' for public relations and media related work to maximize the exposure. For quite a few years, I engaged in all the Parivar organizations. When 'one-teacher-school' project of VHPA was floated as "Ekal Vidyalaya Foundation," an independent, autonomous tax-exempt foundation in U.S., Maheshbhai suggested that I devote more time to it. For my work at Ekal Vidyalaya, he complimented me many a times, for all-

out publicity campaigns in the 'print & TV' media and for reaching out to various Indian conventions, events & celebrations. From the beginning he was of the opinion that grassroots education was the key to India's overall progress and development.

He treated everyone fairly and with dignity, irrespective of person's social, economic or educational status. He was so highly regarded wherever he went that people respected whenever he freely spoke his mind. When the "2nd World Hindu Congress (WHC) in Chicago was being hosted and only 5 months were left, Maheshbhai called me one fine morning. The team that the main organizers had trusted for almost a year for publicity-exposure had dropped 'the ball' at the eleventh hour and this global event was going nowhere in attracting the Hindu diaspora. Maheshbhai sensed a debacle, to put it mildly. He asked me to just drop everything I was doing and get involved with a specific strategy to succeed for the next 5 months. I assured him to do my best. To make the long story short, with the collective efforts of various teams that we had assembled, all the slots, including the ones for the donations were completely sold out, a month in advance. It gave me great comfort to know that Maheshbhai had lot more trust in my skills than probably I had in myself.

He loved my writing style and we had discussions on various topics. I wanted to write his brief biography in Q-A format about his active years in U.S. and we had couple of 'sittings' too over the phone. But alas, with his recurring health problems, we could not complete even 20% of it. Besides my media work for various organizations, I used to write short stories in 'Marathi' from time to time. A couple of them have been a part of two books also. As Maheshbhai was quite familiar with the Marathi language, once I sent him a two-page short story – 'Rhunanubandh' (a bond of gratitude).

A week later, he called me when I was in the office and said, "Pl excuse me for this call but I had to talk to you this very moment'...'Prakash, you made me literary cry with this moving story. It is so full of emotions on various levels and what is most touching is that this is a true story. My secretary could not understand why I was crying. I narrated your story the best way I could to her and now she is also in tears." This heartfelt appreciation of anything and everything is what has made Maheshbhai immortal in our hearts.



Shri Prakash Waghmare is a former Member of the Governing Council of VHPA. For many years he has served as media coordinator for VHPA as well as Ekal Vidyalaya Foundation. He has many articles to his credit.

Tributes VHPA WITH MAHESHBHAI

Yes. I miss him so much. I have lost two fathers in 2021.

My father Pujya Shree Kantilal Doshi in November. And my VHPA father Pujya Shree Maheshbhai in December. Can't express my feelings. Just miss them.

For Dinesh and I In USA Param Pujya Shri Maheshbhai- Divine Soul lighted a lamp from his inner vision via VHPA organization. The Light through him has touched to all of us. We all are experiencing that Jyot and warmth.

Bhavgeet: Jyot se jyot jagao Sadguru, jyot se jyot jagao. Soham Naad jagao Sadguru, Jyot se jyot jagao.

Nayana Modh, Syosset, NY (Former VHPA Governing Council Member)

The light has left us to guide us from above. Om Shanti.

Jaya Asthana, Framingham, MA (VHPA Bal Vihar and Camp Coordinator)

Ohm Shanti, Ohm Shanti, Shanti Ohm.

Harish Dhruv, South Pasadena, CA (Former VHPA Governing Council Member)

What a Great Life!

Dr. Mihir Meghani, Fremont, CA (Former VHPA Governing Council Member),
Founder Hindu American Federation (HAF)

A TRIBUTE TO My Dear Friend and Philanthropist

By Dr. Vinod Prakash

A sadness comes over me as I remember and pay my tributes to Dr. Maheshbhai Mehta, a wonderful person, friend, and committed philanthropist. Heavy is my heart today as the memories of Maheshbhai bring back the time when our association began 46 years ago in 1975 as the Emergency was imposed in India by Prime Minister Indira Gandhi. The State of Emergency resulted in mass arrests of her political opponents and a virtual cessation of democracy. Many overseas Indians were outraged by this assault on democracy and emergency impacted the lives of many Indians in the United States. I believe that the Emergency was a blessing in disguise, as it ignited patriotism among the NRIs, who had come to the United States primarily to enhance their careers. The Indian-Americans joined hands and started various activities to respond to this undemocratic act that were generally peaceful and drew some media attention, but they had little impact on politics in India.

It was during the Emergency and under the visionary leadership of Maheshbhai, a group of Indian-American activists including myself started India Relief Fund (IRF) as a public charity in the United States. The initial objective of IRF was to provide financial help and support to the families of political prisoners arrested during the emergency. Once the emergency was revoked in 1977, Maheshbhai was gracious enough to let me take on a leadership position as President of IRF as a volunteer, while continuing with

my work at the World Bank. So, with his guidance and blessings, instead of closing IRF down, we shifted our focus to disaster relief and rehabilitation for devastated communities in India.

Maheshbhai and I remained in regular contact as we continued to fundraise in support of victims of Morbi Dam collapse Gujarat in 1979, and then in 1984 for the gas leak at the Union Carbide plant in Bhopal. As a World Bank development Economist, I was naturally concerned with the challenges and opportunities offered in long term to people of India, thereby India Development and Relief Fund (IDRF) was established in 1988. My work experience helped me to support projects in India by empowering marginalized people through education and skill development, healthcare services, women empowerment, good governance, eco-friendly infrastructure grounded in sustainable development along with disaster relief and rehabilitation.

Maheshbhai took great interest in keeping himself informed about the progress of IDRF over the decades. More than 33 years later IDRF is still going strong and empowering the marginalized, as we continue to follow Maheshbhai's legacy and principles of giving back to our motherland irrespective of religion, caste, or creed. The seed of selfless commitment to serve the needy sown by Maheshbhai in 1975 is bearing fruits as IDRF has provided more than \$46 million for welfare programs benefitting millions of underprivileged in India. Maheshbhai's cherished ideas and actions can never be forgotten by us or the generations to come.



Dr. Vinod Prakash is a Founder and President of India Development and Relief Fund (IDRF). He lives in North Bethesda, MD

Dr. Maheshbhai Mehta- A Leader Who Could Think Ahead

Krishna Reddy Anugula, Belle Mead, NJ

I have known Dr. Maheshbhai Mehta for more than ten years. He was a pioneer, a visionary, and a champion of human rights. He was the leader who could think ahead and act. He founded Hindu organizations and, also encouraged others to start organizations decades ago to preserve Hindu culture in the US.

He led organizations for many decades to counter false propaganda against Hindus and Indians in general. We are seeing the fruits of his vision and action today. Millions of Hindus in the US are indebted to him.

He was the OFBJP national coordinator for many years. I was impressed by his clear, concise, and focused message. His advice was invaluable, and his problem-solving abilities were unparalleled.

A few years ago, we had a Karyakarta meeting. One of our young karyakartas asked him about balancing life's competing demands, such as work, family, and serving Bharat Mata. He provided fantastic advice on how to prioritize and in what order to do so. That message



**Maheshbhai at of BJP inaguration with
Shri L. K. Advaniji**

is still reverberating in me, and I will remember the message forever. I followed his guidance and always advised young karyakartas who asked my advice. Dr. Maheshbhai will always be with us. Om Shanti.



Shri Krishna Reddy is a past president of Overseas Friends of BJP (OFBJP.)

Tributes VHPA WITH MAHESHBHAI

Om Shanti, Om Sadgati.

Nimisha Patel, Aurora, IL (VHPA Governing Council Member)

Dr. Shri Mahesh Mehta - An Able Leader, an Outstanding Personality, a Warm Family Member

By Meenal Pandya, Wellesley, MA

How does one describe a person like Maheshbhai? As a founding member of Vishwa Hindu Parishad of America? Or as an accomplished scientist who held a position as Director of Research and Development of Koch Membrane Systems? Or as an excellent orator and great communicator? Or as an original thinker and a charismatic leader of Hindus around the world? Or as a warm, sensitive and an intelligent human being? Anyone, who was lucky enough to meet him during his eighty-six years of life, would agree that he was all of these – and some more.

I am blessed to call Shri Maheshbhai as my close family member, a mentor, a role model, a guardian, an advisor and an educator. For last 45 years, I have learned a lot from him - about Hinduism, about India, and about life. His uncanny talent to connect science with spirituality, and country with culture always brought deeper meaning to these lofty topics. It was always a pleasure to chat with him on any of the topics and to receive his guidance. Since the day I arrived in America in 1976, he had been a great influence on me and my family.

Almost five decades ago, when the number of Indians in America were very low, when most Indians' immediate concerns revolved around money, career, and education, when the idea of settling down in this foreign land was not in most people's hearts yet, when topics such as family, children, and culture were too remote to address, only a person like Maheshbhai could envision the future needs of Indians in America and establish the roots of Vishwa Hindu Parishad of America. And that too, while working hard on his own doctorate degree in Polymer Chemistry at Stevens Institute of Technology (Hoboken, NJ.)



**Maheshbhai with other recipients of
Pravasi Bharatiya Samman**

Over his lifetime, Maheshbhai has travelled extensively spreading his vision about India and Hinduism. Impressive as this may be, this is only a partial introduction of Maheshbhai. For he is also a published author with over twenty publications in the field of Physical/ Polymer science and a book "Hinduism in Action."

And there is even more to Maheshbhai. Despite his many accomplishments, when it came to dealing with people, he always treated everybody – from a high-level politician to an average person – with same dignity, warmth and respect. He enjoyed everything he did.

One of his strongest messages was to "do things that bring you joy."

"Never do anything that does not bring joy to you" was the mantra he taught me. That joy was reflected in everything he did all his life. As a family member, he was a warm and yet strict disciplinarian. He was a lifelong learner. I remember him learning Bharatnatyam hand mudras from my daughter when she was learning the dance. He started to learn Spanish language after he retired. He was very adventurous at heart and always

curious to try new things. He was a fearless leader and a visionary.
His life has left a big impression on me and my family.

He will be missed dearly and remembered fondly. There will never be any family event when he will not be missed. May his soul find eternal peace. Om Shanti.



Smt. Meenal Pandya was education coordinator at VHPA youth camps in its early days. She is the author of several books about India's culture and festivals. Her latest book "Indian Americans of Massachusetts" has documented Indian immigrants' journey into America – focusing on Massachusetts – and how Indians have become a major cultural and economic influence in both the countries – India and America. Meenal is a sister-in-law to Shri Maheshbhai.

Tributes VHPA WITH MAHESHBHAI

I met Maheshbhai last Sunday in the hospital. He raised his hand in solidarity when I told him that the seed you sowed has become a big tree.

He was a great motivator and lead us from front. His spirit will guide us for a long time.
Ohm Shanti.

Dhaval Joshipura, Houston, TX (VHPA Vice President, Membership)

अब ऐसे समय पर क्या कहें

आदरनीय महेशजी आत्मा को सदगति प्राप्त हो।

उनका हमारे जीवन में आना और जाना विधाता की बड़ी देन रही।

उनके और अंजली जी के साथ जीवन का जो अंश बिताया वह सदा हार्दिक और स्वर्णिम रहेगा।

Dr. Choudhary Patel (Choudhary Balwant Singh Patel), Torrance, CA (Former VHPA Vice President)

I received with sadness the news of the passing of Maheshbhai. In this empire (some adoringly call it Zamindari) of Mahamaya, she sends her personal representatives from time to time to make things right here on earth. Maheshbhai was Her personal representative and he played his part with us. Alas he was called back to take care of other catastrophes. We bid him goodbye with a heavy heart and count our blessings for all the valuable time we had with Maheshbhai.

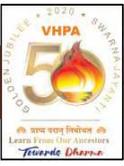
OM Shanti.

**Sushim Mukerji, Newark, DE (Former VHPA Governing Council Member,
Founder: Support A Child project)**

Pray to Lord Krishna to Bless his Soul Eternally.

He was a selfless devoted leader for Hindu causes!

Dr. Bharat Barai, Merrillville, IN (Former President, Chicago Chapter, VHPA; Respected Hindu leader and activist in Greater Chicago area)



A Dedicated Leader Who Completely Changed My Outlook

By Dr. Hemendra Acharya, Mission Viejo, CA

We are all saddened by the passing away of Dr. Maheshbhai Mehta, the founder of Vishwa Hindu Parishad of America (VHPA). He was a visionary who devoted his life to unite Hindus living in America under one umbrella in order to protect and further Hindu Way of Life here. He had this vision in early 1970s at a time when most Hindus were trying to settle in America and develop their professional career and the idea of Hindus uniting in America was farthest from their mind. Maheshbhai, with several close associates, founded Vishwa Hindu Parishad of America (VHPA) at a time when most people had not even imagined the need for a national Hindu organization.

I first met Maheshbhai at a dinner party in Boston in 1979. As is usual in Indian parties, the discussion soon turned to Indian politics. I argued with Maheshbhai defending the imposition of Emergency by Indira Gandhi. Despite these differences, we soon became friends. Our families also became very close. Maheshbhai asked me to run the Boston Chapter of VHPA.

As an immigrant community Indians were concerned about being in touch with their identity and educating their children about Indian History and Hindu religion and culture. While most Indian immigrants were satisfied with a local India Association and a rare Sunday school, Maheshbhai developed the idea of summer camp where Hindu children can get to know other Hindu children, learn about Hindu festivals and culture while having fun in a relaxed summer camp atmosphere. VHPA summer camps became instant hit with lot of parents as well as children and brought many people into VHPA who might otherwise have shied away from any Hindu organization.

I was always impressed not only by his knowledge of Hindu Philosophy and history, but also by his dedication to the cause of Hindu Unity. He was kind enough to give me an opportunity to work on various VHP projects, such as Conferences, including organizing the Northeast Regional Hindu conference in New England in 1987. He encouraged me to write articles projecting a positive image of India and nominated me to be Editor of Hindu Vishwa. I always looked forward to listening his speeches at either VHPA Boston Chapter meetings or at national and international conferences.

I have always been impressed by his vision in developing different organizations to increase the awareness among Hindus in America as well as programs under which well off Indian Americans can help the poor in India. Since late 1950s, most universities with sizable Indian student body had India Associations which primarily arranged screening of movies and Diwali celebrations. Maheshbhai realized that the second-generation Hindu students at American universities would need an organization that will help them stay in touch with their roots and educate them about the religion and culture in order to buttress their identity and he therefore started the Hindu Students Council with chapters at various universities. This provided the backing of a national organization to individual university chapters.

By mid 1980s most metropolitan areas had a few Hindu temples to cater to the religious needs of Hindus. Maheshbhai thought of the need to create a network for these temples so that their interests and resources can be shared by all and created the Hindu Mandir Executives Conference (HMEC) to achieve this goal.

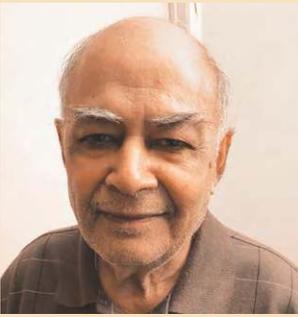
America has always been a land of immigrants and has been a magnet for scientists and professionals since 1930s. Changes in immigration laws in 1965 allowed highly educated Indians to migrate to America, where because of their scientific education they quickly achieved economic success. Maheshbhai and VHPA utilized the desire of Indian Americans to help their countrymen by creating organizations such as Support a Child, Ekal Vidyalaya Foundation, Seva, etc. He also brought many Hindu Americans together by organizing national and regional conferences under the banner of VHPA.

He was a visionary and dedicated leader who completely changed my outlook about Hindu history and philosophy. Through Maheshbhai, we had the

good fortune of meeting many Indian political and religious leaders at their home in Boston.

Whereas most people concern themselves with their family and friends, Maheshbhai was always concerned about the society and devoted all his time to these causes. In a sense, Maheshbhai was a social entrepreneur, who saw the need before others did so, but with the objective of improving the society and not for his personal gain. His work in America for over fifty years brought thousands of Hindus across three generations together.

We will all miss Maheshbhai's warm personality, friendliness as well as his vision and dedication to the cause of Hindus all over the world.



Dr. Hemendra Acharya has served on VHPA's Governing Council for a number of years. He is former editor of Hindu Vishwa. He is an accomplished writer.

Tributes VHPA WITH MAHESHBAI

It is very shocking and painful news and great loss to us as VHPA team as Maheshbhai being founder of VHPA. I had good talks in Ahmedabad and in USA with him. I will remember him as a noble leader and a good guide. Let us pray almighty God to give his Soul Shashwat Shanti and rest it in His Heart, and strength to his family to bear pain of this great loss to them.

Keshavlal Patel, La Palma, CA (Los Angeles VHPA Team) President, Los Angeles Chapter, VHPA

वासासि जीर्णानि यथा विहाय नवानि गृह्णाति नरोऽपराणि ।
 तथा शरीराणि विहाय जीर्णा न्यन्यानि संयाति नवानि देही ॥ 22 ॥
 नैनं छिन्दन्ति शस्त्राणि नैनं दहति पावकः ।
 न चैनं क्लेदयन्त्यापो न शोषयति मारुतः ॥ 23 ॥

Humble request to the Shri Prabhu to give Sadgati to dear departed soul of Mahesh Ji.
 Om Shanti.!

Amitabh Mittal, Bartlett, IL (General Secretary, VHPA)

श्री हटकेश्वरो विजयते  www.nonanj.org

NAGARS OF NORTH AMERICA



I am proud that Mu. Maheshbhai was Key-Note Speaker at our National Convention held in 2002 at Somerset, NJ. I will always cherish those moments. He gracefully delivered very powerful and inspirational message to the community to stand-up and unite as true, intellectual Hindus reminding society of our culture and heritage. Thereafter whenever I met, his fatherly smile and interaction have always kept me motivated towards community service. He was very active in organizing Modiji's first visit as PM to Madison Square Garden.

No doubt his perfectionist and detail oriented approach as a scientist have made VHPA one of the strongest organizations in the USA. Mu. Maheshbhai's dedication and vision have put us on sound footing today.

Nagars of North America and entire Nagar Community pay respectful tribute to this noble Hatkesh personality and also pray ALMIGHTY to keep our generations inspired by Maheshbhai's ideals and vision.

Himanshu Desai
President



Himanshu Desai is a Member, VHPA Governing Council, Morrisville, NC.

Remembering Dr. Mahesh Mehta

Dr. Nand Kishore Sharma, Salem, NH

I first met Dr. Mahesh Mehta in late 1969/early 1970 in New York thanks to my friend Shri Brij Bhushan Garg who introduced me to him and a few other people. This was a few months after I had finished my Ph.D. work at Cornell University and had joined AT&T Bell Laboratories in North Andover, Massachusetts. Shri Garg had also started his job at the same location shortly after me. At that time, I had no clear ideas about my life goals and direction. Shri Garg and I had gone to New York city to participate in a 2-day meeting with the people who had been planning to start an organization oriented towards welfare and progress of Hindus already settled in North America or expected to come to U.S. or Canada as students or professionals in the future. The meeting was chaired by Maheshbhai.

I was so impressed with Maheshbhai's vision, his knowledge of Hindu Dharma, his clarity of thoughts and expression and his well-thought-out plans that I instantly decided to be aligned with the upcoming organization which was to be named Vishwa Hindu Parishad of America (VHPA). I also found that almost all of the participants in the event appeared to be highly dedicated to this cause. After this event, my interactions with Maheshbhai and other members of the group continued to increase. I started participating in different programs that were conceived and initiated by Maheshbhai in consultations with other members.

Since U.S. immigration laws were relaxed in mid-sixties, this was the time when students (mostly, for graduate studies) and professionals from India started to come to U.S. in large numbers. As the needs of the Hindu population continued to change with passing years, new programs were added by VHPA to satisfy these needs. Programs such as regional and international Hindu conferences, Hindu Vishwa magazine and newsletters (for promoting awareness of Hindu

issues), youth programs such as Bal Vihars, annual youth camps and youth conferences were started. To cater to the needs of the growing Hindu students in U.S. colleges and universities, Hindu Students Council (HSC) was added. Many other programs such as Hindu American Women's Network, Hindu American Vanprasthi Network, American Hindus Against Defamation (AHAD), Hindu Mandir Executives' Conference and others were conceived and started as the U.S. Hindu population continue to age. The credit for most of them belongs to Maheshbhai's continued vision and tireless efforts over more than five decades.

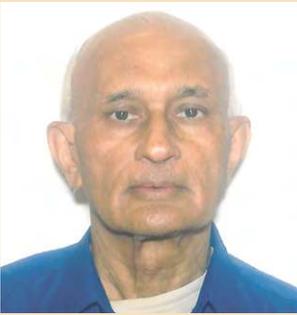
There were many other qualities that endeared him to thousands of people. His creativity, his simplicity, his unique ability to effectively interact with people at all levels, his lack of ego or desire for personal benefits, always striving for best results for Hindu society are among them. His interactions and behavior with his coworkers were guided by the Hindu principle of "Atmavat Sarva Bhuteshu." He often sought feedback on his written ideas about new programs and action plans from his team members and other relevant people. His own original ideas were often the best and yet he would modify them appropriately, if necessary to get better results. If suggestions were not proper, he would take pains to explain the reasons to the suggester so that the latter would not feel hurt or disregarded. A personal example of this behavior was my suggestion to him in mid-eighties to form a smaller group of 8-10 key coordinators of different programs/activities to make decisions on routine and less important, short-term issues and discuss only the most important issues with long-term implications during the annual Governing Council meeting that involved about fifty members. This would reduce the unnecessary and unfruitful discussions and improve our work efficiency. After

some thought he agreed and implemented it. This small group was named “Executive Board” and it has continued since then.

After the Global Hindu Conference in New York in late 1984, Maheshbhai asked me to undertake the responsibilities of the VHPA National President. I expressed my hesitation in accepting such a big role among people who knew more and had more experience than me. However, he convinced me that I would learn the role quickly and he would help me in the process. Indeed, I learned a lot from him on how to conduct myself, what, when and how to handle issues and what not to do. He also allowed me to be myself while providing proper guidance. I served in

that role for the next four years but all the credit for VHPA achievements during that period also belongs to Maheshbhai. He was my Guru (the one who shows how to remove darkness and propels you towards light). He was also a sincere and caring friend to me. I feel truly blessed that he was a significant part of my life. Such people come to the world only once in a great while.

Like many of my VHPA colleagues, I am truly grieved by Maheshbhai’s passing away. He leaves a void that is nearly impossible to fill. May God grant him peace and sadgati and give Raginiben and other family members strength and courage to bear his loss. Om Shanti, Shanti, Shantih!!!



Dr. Nand Kishore Sharma has been with VHPA since its inception. He has served as the President of VHPA.

Tributes VHPA WITH MAHESHHBAI

Namaste All,

At this moment, I join all my fellow brothers and sisters whose lives have been touched by the saintly figure known to us all as Maheshbhai. The light of my life has vanished. Sadness looms large as we digest this news. But unlike an asteroid hitting us from outer space abruptly, we knew this would happen for the past two weeks when physicians gave up their hope. Yet today is an unforgettable day because Maheshbhai has formally bid goodbye to us all. That certainly leaves a huge void in our lives. As we mourn the death of a Mahatma who inspired us, let us renew our pledge to serve the Hindu cause with greater vigor. Om Shanti.

“May all be happy. May all be free from disease. May all see what is auspicious. May all be free from misery.”
-Rig Veda

Gokul Kunnath, Norcross, GA (Former VHPA Governing Council Member, President, United States Hindu Alliance- USHA)

Om shanti, Om shanti, Om shanti

Sanjay Shah, Bloomingdale, IL (Director, Financial Planning)

Maheshbhai Mehta :

AN ENCYCLOPEDIA OF HINDUISM

Prof. Dr. Nihal Agar, Sydney, Australia

During a visit to a friend in Philadelphia in 1982, I read a magazine at his residence called "Hindu Vishwa" published by VHP of America. Thus, I was introduced to VHP Bharat and Mahesh Mehta in the USA. On my return to Australia, I subscribed to this magazine and also distributed it among my Indian academic colleagues at the University of New England in Armidale. We were so inspired that first we formed VHP New England in 1984 but later with some more friends from Sydney we founded VHP Australia in 1989. In the following 30 years I met Maheshbhai, Anjleebahen and Raginibahen in Boston, Ahmedabad and Sydney. On one occasion Maheshbhai took our family to Girnar, Junagarh and Somnath temple. The following account is based on my recollections of Maheshbhai stretching over three decades.

It was always a great joy to meet Mahesh ji and listen to his experiences in all fields; as a scientist, RSS Pracharak in Bharat, his migration to the USA, and as a host to such great persons as Ma. Atal Behari Vajpayee, Ashok Singhal and Narendra Modi. He was an encyclopedia of Hinduism in general and RSS / VHP in particular. His depth of knowledge and ability to explain subtle

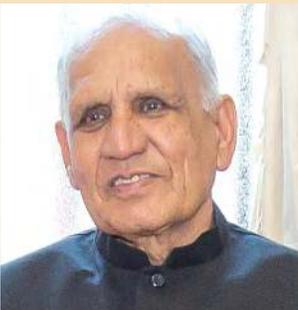
topics in religion, politics and socioeconomic issues were exceptional. He was a great mentor, leader, orator, organizer and motivator. In fact, he was a blend of Karma yogi and Jnana yogi.

The following list of his achievements provides a testimony to Maheshbhaiji's exceptional service to Hinduism in the USA as well as internationally. He was a founding member of HSS USA, VHP of America, Friends of India Society International, Hindu University of America, Hindu Students Council, Ekal Vidyalaya Foundation and Global Indians for Bharat Vikas. He was also instrumental in organizing the Hindu Mandir Executives' Conference, First International Hindu Conference, Global Vision 2000 Conference and Dharma Samsad (Parliament).

Whatever little service in Australia have I done through VHP, Ekal, Hindu Council and HSS, it was all due to Maheshbhai's blessings, inspiration and guidance.

He was my mentor and a brother. I shall miss him as will the whole Hindu community in many nations.

I pray for his peace.



Dr. Nihal Agar is the founding President, VHP Australia and Ekal Australia and Former Chairman, Hindu Council of Australia.

Maheshbhai Mehta **SHRADDHANJALI**

By **Drs. Prabhakar & Savita Joshi, Libertyville, IL**

Highly respected Dr. Mahesh Mehta known as Maheshbhai is gone. This is very disheartening news. Like thousands of others, we are sad and will immensely miss him. In consonance with the Sanskrit sloka ‘Vasansi Jeernani Yathaa Vihaya...’ we have to accept the fact. We offer our heartfelt condolences.

Maheshbhai was the founder of VHPA, he was the soul of VHPA, and he was the mover and shaker of Hindu community everywhere. Maheshbhai was a Pracharak in his early life; and everyone looked at him very high regards due to that background.

When Maheshbhai founded VHPA in 1970, he nominated Savita as one of the members of the first Governing Council (GC), and he included Prabhakarbhai in the following GCs. During the GC meetings we learned a lot from Maheshbhai’s contacts and exemplary leadership.

At one telephone call, Maheshbhai was always available wherever people wanted him. People are engaged in watching TV series, attending galas, or just enjoying weekends doing nothing. Maheshbhai sacrificed such enjoyments and was always out on weekends for purely Hindu work, visiting Hindu communities even at long distances. It is left to one’s imagination how much money and energy Maheshbhai must have spent on travel. That was a tremendous sacrifice by him and his family. Wasn’t it?

Maheshbhai was a superb speaker. Whenever he gave

a lecture, he drove his uplifting ideas very well right to the hearts of the listeners. Audience was always inspired and everyone was driven to action after Maheshbhai talked.

Maheshbhai gave talks in almost every major city in America. We were fortunate to attend many such lectures. We still remember Maheshbhai’s forceful speeches. Academically Maheshbhai was highly qualified. In addition to his office duties and public service, he took the challenge of conducting Bhagwad Geeta classes. That needed much extra academic effort. We were amazed at his proficiency in running the classes.

Maheshbhai was a leading scientist, was a founder, and was a superb leader. However, he did not have a shred of ego. Meeting with Maheshbhai or being in his company was nothing but pleasure.

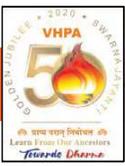
Throughout so many decades Maheshbhai led VHPA and Hindu community superbly well.

We loved Maheshbhai, very much; everyone liked Maheshbhai, and everyone anxiously listened whenever Maheshbhai spoke in a conference in person.

SMT. Raginibahen ji, the loving wife of Maheshbhai, played a great role in all the success that Maheshbhai achieved. We visited their residence a few times, and we are saying this from our own experience. She was always calm, quiet, peaceful and helpful in every way that she could. We are with her in this difficult time. We wish and are sure that Maheshbhai’s Aatma will rest in peace.



Dr. Prabhakar Joshi and **Dr. Savita Joshi** have served on VHPA’s Governing council. They were instrumental in establishing VHPA in the southeast region.



by the eternal value of Dharma, and the lofty ideals of Vasudhaiva Kutumbkam: Meaning the entire cosmos is one family.

A great Organizer and a Superb Mentor

Maheshbhai had many great qualities to run a religious-cultural organization like VHPA. He was a great organizer, a superb mentor, a visionary, and an admired leader. He was a unique communicator. He had great capacity to patiently listen to others, understand the feelings and intensions of the people, and then gradually divert them towards Dharma. That made people comfortable to work with him. These skills made him a superb mentor. He was instrumental in inspiring countless persons- old and young- for the Hindu cause and selfless work for Sanatan Dharma. VHPA started out with a few volunteers, but gradually grew into a big national organization in USA. I consider myself fortunate to be part of VHAP from the start and working with Maheshbhai and many other dedicated and committed volunteers. In couple of decades, VHPA had over thirty chapters spread in major metropolitan areas of USA, mainly where Indian immigrant populations was dense.

Some epoch-making programs in Hindu movement

Under the guidance of Maheshbhai, VHPA took up many programs to cater the needs of Hindus in America. Bal Vihars, Hindu Youth Camps, Hindu Youth Conferences, Dharma Samsads, Religious conferences, tour of religious and spiritual leaders, are some to list.

One of the first big events was a **Hindu Conference** in Madison square garden in New York, in 1984. Over five thousand Hindus for the first time gathered in USA. Representatives from many countries of Europe and Asia had participated. This was a first big event of Hindus in USA and inspired many Hindus around the world outside India to take similar initiatives. Many countries in Europe later on organized similar events. It raised the confidence in VHPA volunteers to dream and organize big programs in the western world.

Another big event was in 1993. As part of the centenary celebration of Swami Vivekanand's advent in America, VHPA celebrated **Global Hindu Conference** in Washington DC in Capitol Center (the place does not exist anymore). Over 10,000 Hindus from over sixty-five countries participated in the event. Renowned speakers from USA, India and Europe addressed the conference on multiple subjects affecting Hindus, and about Hindu values. The Babri structure demolition in December 1992 had happened only a few months before the program. The subsequent communal riots in India had also affected Indian diaspora around the world. The government of India also created hurdles for this big Hindu program. Nevertheless, the program was accomplished amongst the most adverse conditions. VHPA volunteers had good training in working and achieving the goal in most adverse conditions.

In 2000, a **Millennium Peace summit of Religious and Spiritual Leaders at United Nations Organization (UNO)** was facilitated by VHPA. 108 Dharma gurus and spiritual leaders from Bharat were invited to participate in this all-religions international conference. This was one of the biggest participations of Hindu religious leaders at UNO. Hosting 108 Dharma gurus in a prestigious World of Astoria hotel near UNO was a major undertaking that VHPA had accomplished successfully. This program raised the confidence of Hindus in Bharat and around the world, to assert for major and rightful participation at international forums.

Many Organizations founded

To accomplish the VHPA vision to build a dynamic vibrant Hindu Society in America, Maheshbhai had founded or was an inspiration in starting many organizations.

○ Vishwa Hindu Parishad of America (VHPA)

VHPA has been functioning for over 50 years serving the needs of Hindus in America in Prachar (Hindu awareness), Seva (Service and Relief work during calamities), Samskar (imbibe Hindu values), Sampark (Networking and outreach).
www.Vhp-america.org

○ Indians for Democracy

An organization established during Indian emergency in 1975 that created a climate in USA against emergency and reestablishment of Democracy in India. Many experts have acknowledged that this movement had contributed to revocation of emergency.

○ Hindu Student Council (HSC)

Along with the goal of networking Hindu students across American Universities, this organization provided opportunities to learn about Hindu heritage and culture. www.hindustudentcouncil.org

○ Ekal Vidyalaya Foundation of America

This organization raised funds for one teacher school (Ekal Vidyalaya) operated in remote vanvasi areas of Bharat. It aimed at holistic development of villages through empowerment with basic education, digital literacy, and skill development. It had surpassed the goal of running 100,000 rural village schools before the deadline of 2022. www.ekal.org

○ Overseas Friends of BJP (OFBJP)

OFBJP was formed to channelize enthusiasm and energy of the section of Indian Diaspora sympathetic to Bharatiya Janta Party (BJP). It also works towards projecting positive and correct image of India and its people in USA. www.ofbjp.org

○ Hindu University of America

Hindu University was established to provide students with unique academic environment to explore the knowledge system rooted in Vedic thoughts. www.hua.org

○ Global Indians for Bharat Vikas (GIBV)

GIBV aimed at networking volunteers from around the world for organic development of villages in Bharat in education, energy, skills, entrepreneurship, health and environment. www.gibv.org

A True Instrument (निमित्त) for the Divine work

Working with Maheshbhai for over 45 years in VHPA, we had the fortune of meeting many siddha Sadgurus and Swamis. One of the most revered amongst the VHPA workers was Swami Tilak. In one of the talks to the governing council of VHPA, He had stated, “You Indian immigrants might think that you have come here in USA to earn dollars. However, the divine has some different plan. As in spring the pollens rise up in wind, fly away in faraway places, and germinate into big trees, the Indian immigrants will uplift the Hindu values and Sanatan Dharma in the western world.”

Many institutions started under the leadership of Maheshbhai over four decades, indeed have revived and uplifted the Hindu values and Sanatan Dharma in the western world. Maheshbhai was a chosen leader by the Divine to facilitate this divine work. And for that Maheshbhai was blessed with all great qualities in one person – leadership, organizational acumen, oratory, mentorship, communication skills, and humility. The Indian diaspora will remember for a long time the lifelong work that Maheshbhai did for Hindu values, Sanatan Dharma, and Bharat. And the Divine must also be showering blessings on this soul for an excellent part he played during this birth.



Shri Jyotish Parekh, one of the senior most volunteers of VHPA. He served as a national treasurer and then as the President of VHPA.

Tributes VHPA WITH MAHESHHBAI

Maheshbhai was a great Soul, very knowledgeable energetic, passionate about Hindu causes. Founder of VHPA, we will all miss him a lot. Let us take a pledge to follow his exemplary life!

Brahm Rattan Aggarwal, Orlando, FL (Former VHPA Vice President)

Aww. Such a great loss to the Hindu and Bharatiya diaspora. Prayers to Lord Brahman to give eternal peace to the departed soul. Condolences.

Nainan Desai, Lutz, FL (Joining VHPA Governing Council this year; Ex-president, trustee Hindu Temple of Florida, Tampa)

It is very sad to hear the passing of Sh. Mahesh Bhai. 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 untiring efforts to serve the Hindu society. My deep heartfelt condolences to Raginibahen.

Om Shanti.

Dr. Yash Pal Lakra, Fort Myers, FL (Former President of VHPA)

प्रकृतिम स्वामवष्टभ्य विसृजामि पुनः पुनः ।

भूतग्राममिमं कृत्स्नमवशम प्रकृतेर्वशात !

श्रद्धेय महेश भाई का वैकुण्ठ गमन हम सब के लिए तथा संगठन के लिए अपूरणीय क्षति है !

ईश्वर महेश भाई की आत्मा को परम शांति एवं हम सब और परिवार जनों को इस महा दुःख को सहन करने की शक्ति प्रदान करें! ॐ शांति :

Gyanprakash Upadhyaya, Dacula, GA (VHPA Governing Council Member)

pranams to all. remembering my interactions with Mahesh ji from childhood through my twenties. always a treat! Shraddhanjali program has been wonderful!

Balu Sastry, CA

Sorry to hear about the loss of Shri Maheshbhai Mehta. Though I do not know him personally, from what I read from your email seems like a mammoth contribution for the Hindu awakening and service of Dharma. May his divine soul attain everlasting peace. Prayers and condolences.

Darshan & Hiral Dave, Bengaluru, Bharat

Very sad news. Our heartfelt condolences. May God give strength to his family to bear this loss. Om Shanti.

Veena (Mrs. B. K.) Modi, New Delhi, Modi Industries

यु. एस. का हिंदू संगठन शिल्पी

(August 11, 2015)

Dr. Madhusudan Jhaveri, Lakeville, MA

(एक)

डांग के वनवासी क्षेत्र में, बडोदे से, एक विश्व-विद्यालयीन छात्र पहुंचा; वनवासी बंधुओं के साथ रहकर, सह-जीवन का अनुभव लेने। युवा, एक कुटुम्ब में भेजा गया था। ऐसे अनेक युवा संघ द्वारा भेजे जाते थे। पहुँचने पर, परिचय, और कुटुम्ब की वृद्धा माँ से, कुशल-क्षेम बातचीत चल रही थी। बेटा काम पर गया था; और बहू अंदर काम कर रही थी; शायद रसोई। जब काफी समय बीता पर बहू बाहर नहीं आई। परिचय की औपचारिकता भी थी, और समरसता की परिपाटी भी, तो युवा ने बहू से मिलाने का अनुरोध किया। तब माताजी अंदर गई और बहू बाहर आई पर उसे आने में अनपेक्षित देर हुई।

पाठकों, सच्चाई उपन्यासों की अपेक्षा अनोखी होती है। अगली पंक्ति पढ़ने के लिए कुछ धैर्य धारण कर लीजिए।

जब बहू बाहर आई, युवा को एक करुण धक्का-सा लगा। हृदय की धडकन पल भर रुक-सी गयी। एक निःश्वास निकल गया। बहू ने जो साडी पहनी थी, वो माताजी ने पहनी हुयी साडी से मेल खाती थी; नहीं, वही साडी थी। उसे साडी कहना भी गलत है। एक झिरझिरा कपड़ा मात्र था। कभी वह वस्त्र साडी रहा होगा। आज झिरझिरा कपड़ा बन गया था। अब माता जी अंदर थी और बहू बाहर। ऐसी दारुण कंगालियत में जीने वाले, इस हृदय विदारक भारत को, क्या आप नकार देंगे? या आँख हटा लेंगे, मन से ही झिडक कर निकाल देंगे? यह सच्चाई है। विवेकानन्द जी कहते हैं; *जब तक करोड़ों भारतवासी भूखे नंगे और अज्ञान में डूबे हैं, मैं प्रत्येक भारतवासी को कृतघ्न मानता हूँ, जो उनके त्याग की नींव पर शिक्षित होकर उन्हीं के हितों की अनदेखी करते हैं।* ऐसी आँखो देखी दारुण कंगालियत स्वयं एक प्रबल प्रेरणा होती है। इस निजी अनुभव को सुनाने वाले सहृदय, कर्मठ व्यक्तित्व ने ही, सिंह-राशी का योगदान देकर कर यु.एस.ए. में अनेक हिन्दू संगठन प्रत्यक्ष या अप्रत्यक्ष रूप से पनपाये है।

कौन है यह व्यक्ति? नाम देने में मुझे भी साहस नहीं, जब इस व्यक्ति ने सदैव पीछे रहकर ही काम किया है। मुझे भी बड़ी दुविधा ही है। पर जानने के लिए आगे पढ़ें।

(दो) संगठन का रहस्य

संगठन का रहस्य बड़ा सीधा है। पहले अपने अहंकार को शूली पर टांग दो, और फिर पूरी शक्ति और सामर्थ्य लगाकर कुआँ खोदो।

जिस व्यक्ति को निकट से जाना है, उस व्यक्ति पर लिखना कठिन होता है। पर जिस व्यक्ति ने अपने मान सम्मान की चिन्ता छोड़कर, स्वयं को पीछे रखकर, संगठन खड़ा किया। उसके जीवन के कुछ पहलुओं पर लिखना चाहता हूँ, जो मेरी दृष्टि में विशेष हैं, जिनसे मैं प्रभावित था; शायद इसी कारण स्मृति में भी ये पहलू जगह बनाए हुए हैं।

व्यक्ति की स्मृति में, वही उभर आता है, जो उसकी दृष्टि में महत्वपूर्ण होता है। जिन सिद्धान्तों को इस व्यक्ति ने व्यवहार में, उजागर किया, उन्हें जानने पर विशेषतः कार्यकर्ताओं की अगली पीढ़ी अवश्य लाभान्वित होगी। शायद इसीलिए वैसा अनुरोध मुझे किया गया है।

(तीन) कार्यकर्ता के पद कर्तव्यों के पद हैं।

हमारे पद, त्याग और सेवा के हैं; अधिकार के नहीं। जो भी आज, पद पर हैं, इस सत्य को समझ ले। पश्चिम का अहंकार-पोषक, रुग्ण मानसिक सम्पर्क, कार्यकर्ता को, ऊपर उठाने में सक्षम नहीं है। यहाँ सस्ती महत्वाकांक्षाएँ, और प्रसिद्धि का बोलबाला है; छिछली स्पर्धा है। देखा-देखी कार्यकर्ता भी इस मोहजाल में फँस सकता है। इस से अपने कार्यकर्ता को बचके रहना होगा।

चहूँ-ओर महत्वाकांक्षा की, और स्वयं को 'प्रमोट' करने की होड है। आदर्श के सामने, ऐसी सस्ती प्रसिद्धि हलकी होती है। ऐसे पथ पर लुढ़कते-लुढ़कते, कार्यकर्ता बुराई में फिसल जाता हैं। और अंत में अपने आप से घृणा करने लगता है। कार्य से जुड़े थे, कुछ अच्छाई सीखने, निश्चयस की ओर बढ़ने, पर हाथ आती है विफलता।

अमरिका में, ऐसे अनेक सस्ते नेता हैं, जो समाचार में नाम या छवि देखने की, प्रसिद्धि की लालसा से काम करते हैं। गहराई से सोचने पर ध्यान में आता है, कि कैसे नाम या छवि का भी विशेष अर्थ नहीं। समाचार में, छवि देखकर मानना कि सभी मेरी छवि देख रहे होंगे, यह वास्तविकता भी नहीं है। छवि कुटुम्ब के बाहर सामान्यतः विशेष कोई देखता नहीं। देखता भी है, तो, पल दो पल। ऐसी क्षुद्र प्रसिद्धि पर जीवन दाँव पर लगाना मूर्खों का काम है।

स्मरण है, कि, मेहता जी ने एक बार कहा था, कि, *कल यदि समाचार पत्र बंद हो जाए, तो, क्या हम जीना बंद कर देंगे?* इतनी छिछरी प्रेरणा सुदृढ़ संगठन खड़ा नहीं कर सकती।

(चार) इतिहास

हमें इतिहास पता है,

*अनगिनत, अज्ञात, वीरो नें, चढाई, आहुतियाँ-
आज उनकी, समाधि पर, दीप भी जलता नहीं।
अरे ! समाधि भी तो, है नहीं।

उन्हीं अज्ञात, वीरो ने, आ कर मुझसे, यूँ कहा,
कि छिछोरी, अखबारी, प्रसिद्धि के, चाहनेवाले,
न सस्ते, नाम पर, नीलाम कर, तू अपने जीवन को
पद्म-श्री, पद्म-विभूषण, रत्न-भारत, उन्हें मुबारक।
बस, हम माँ, भारती के, चरणों पड़े, सुमन बनना, चाहते थे।

अहंकार गाडो, माँ के पुत्रों, राष्ट्र सनातन ऊपर उटाओ,
और कंधे से, कंधा जोडो, इतिहास का पन्ना, पलटाओ।
बिना हिचक, कहता हूँ, कि, कार्यकर्ता सेवक हैं; कॉर्पोरेशन का अधिकारी
नहीं। यदि सेवा की मानसिकता होगी, तो हम सफल होंगे।
ऐसा आदर्श जिसने व्यवहार से दशरथा, उस पर लिखने लेखनी उटाई है।

(पाँच) तीन कार्यकर्ता शिकागो गए।

बात पुरानी है: तीन कार्यकर्ता शिकागो गए। परिषद की शाखा प्रारंभ कराने।
तीनों ने प्रस्तुति की। एक श्रोता ने पूछा; आप तीनों तो गुजराती हो, और हिन्दू
संगठन का प्रस्ताव क्यों? वास्तविकता यह थी, कि, तीनों गुजरातियों को तब
ध्यान में आया, कि, वे वास्तव में गुजरात से हैं। गुजरात से आये अवश्य थे, पर
उन्होंने हिन्दुत्व की पहचान ही व्यवहार में घोली थी। उत्तर था, हम पहले हिन्दू
हैं। उनके मानस में हिंदुत्व से नीचे अन्य पहचान थी ही नहीं।

हिन्दुत्व का विशुद्ध संस्कार देश में संचारित कराने, सर्वाधिक प्रवास करनेवाला
व्यक्ति इस आलेख का नायक है। कितने सप्ताहांत मैंने उनके घर दूरभाष जोडा
और जाना कि परिषद के काम से डॉ. महेश मेहता बहारगॉव गए हैं। कभी
गाडी या, विमान से, प्रायः अपना टिकट खर्च कर, किसी दूरस्थ नगर में
परिषद के काम के लिए गए हैं।

मुझे कविता की पंक्तियाँ स्मरण हो रही है।

*छन्द ऐसा है हमारा, हरख चहुंकोर रैलाए।

रगडकर गौँट का चन्दन महक चहुँ ओर फैलाए।*

गौँटका चन्दन रगडकर महक फैलानेवाला सर्वाधिक प्रवास करने वाला,
संगठक डॉ. महेश मेहता है।

(छः) प्रेरणा

कार्यकर्ता 3 प्रकारों से, प्रेरित होता है।

(क) विकिरण से (Radiation): जैसे सूर्य गरमी फेंक कर बिखेरता है।
ऐसी प्रेरणा भाषणों जैसे साधन से बिखेरी जाती है।

(ख) संवाहन से (Convection): जैसे पात्र में पानी गरम होता है, तो
प्रत्येक बिंदू बारी-बारी से, पात्र के तल तक जाकर, गरम होकर ऊपर

उठता है। इस प्रक्रिया को संवाहन कहा जाता है। शिविरों से, युवा ऐसी
प्रेरणा ले कर जाता हैं।

(ग) संचारण से (Conduction): जब धातु का चम्मच अंगार पर धरा
जाए, तो दूसरा छोर भी गरम होता है। यह गरमी चम्मच के अणुओं में
संचार करती हुयी एक छोर से दूसरे छोर तक सारे चम्मच को गरम
करती है। इसे गरमी का संचरण कहा जा सकता हैं।

तीनों प्रकारों से कार्यकर्ता प्रेरित होता है। हर संस्था में भी तीनों प्रकार होते हैं।
मेरी दृष्टि में 3रा प्रकार श्रेष्ठतम है। पर नेतृत्व में प्रेरणा का अंगार होना चाहिए।
नेता की ऊर्जा, उत्साह और त्याग, प्रत्यक्ष कार्यकर्ता को भी ऊर्जा देता है। यह
स्पर्श प्रत्यक्ष संपर्क के बिना संभव नहीं।

भारत में शाखा के दैनंदिन सम्पर्क द्वारा यही गहरा संस्कार तीनों विधाओं
से, किया जाता है। यहाँ दैनंदिन शाखा की सुविधा ना होने के कारण प्रत्यक्ष
सम्पर्क के लिए महेश जी अनेक बार प्रवास करते थे। वें तीनों प्रकार से प्रेरणा
देते रहे हैं।

और अनुभव भी है, कि, बहुत सारी स्वयंसेवी संस्थाओं के नेतृत्व में श्रेय
चुराने की ही विकृति होती है। जिसके कारण नया कार्यकर्ता उत्साह से काम
नहीं करता। ऐसी संस्थाओं में कार्यकर्ता उदात्त ध्येय से प्रेरित होता नहीं है;
तो उनका छिछला नेतृत्व उसका कारण है। उनका कार्यकर्ता टिकता नहीं है।
और पदधारक ही काम करता है। परिषद में पद का विशेष महत्व नहीं है।
यहाँ कार्यकर्ता ध्येय समर्पित है। जो भी महेशजी के सम्पर्क में आया, विशुद्ध
व्यवहार देखकर ही प्रभावित हो गया।

(सात) साक्षात संस्कार

ऐसा संस्कार आचार, विचार, और व्यवहार से होता है; जिसका जीवन एक
खुली पुस्तक होगा, उसी के लिए यह संभव होगा। जिस व्यक्ति के विषय में
लिख रहा हूँ, उसका जीवन ऐसी खुली पुस्तक है। ऐसी खुली पुस्तक, जो
सांझ सबेरे, सातो दिन, वर्षानुवर्ष एक ही लक्ष्यसे प्रेरित है, न उसे कोई पद्मश्री
दी जा सकती है, न ऐसा सम्मान उसके लिए अर्थ रखता है।

आर्थिक समृद्धि में जकडे गए मिलियॉनरों-बिलियॉनरों को भी देखा है। समृद्धि
के ऐसे गुलाम मस्ती के जीवन से प्रायः अनभिज्ञ होते देखें हैं; कुछ अपवाद
अवश्य होंगे।

(आठ) कृतज्ञता

इस लेखक को अपनी कृतज्ञता भी व्यक्त करनी है। यह लेखक का अधिकार
है, और कर्तव्य भी। इसीलिए यह लेख अर्थ रखता है। साथ-साथ नयी पीढ़ी
के युवा कार्यकर्ता को ऐसे आलेख से कुछ दिशादर्शन अवश्य होगा। इसीलिए
मुझे लिखने का अनुरोध भी किया गया है।

मुझे अंग्रेजी में लिखने के लिए बार बार कहा जाता है। और यह भी उन लोगों
द्वारा जो सनातन धर्म की सेवा में निष्ठा पूर्वक समर्पित हैं। अब 'धर्म रक्षति
रक्षितः।' का न उच्चारण बच्चे कर सकते हैं, न अर्थ जान सकते हैं।

Dr. Mahesh Mehta

A BORN LEADER AND A PATRIOT

By **Rahul Chandra Sharma, Jaipur, Bharat**

Dr. Mahesh Mehta (Maheshbhai), its founder and former President in Karnavati (Amdavad), India on December 14, 2021. He was eighty-six years old. He founded Vishwa Hindu Parishad of America, OFBJP and was instrumental in establishing Hindu Swayamsevak Sangh, Hindu University of America, Hindu Students Council (HSC), Ekal Vidyalaya Foundation, Hindu Mandir Executives' Conference (HMEC) India Quality Group, and Global Indians for Bharat Vikas (GIBV) among many others. He was an RSS Pracharak and close mentor of the Honorable PM of India Narendra Modi.

Under his leadership, anti-Hindu forces in the USA were effectively countered and their nefarious projects to defame Hindus, Hinduism were neutralized. I first met him in Atlanta, GA in 2008 at VHPA's governing council meeting and talked with him in detail about Hindu causes. He attentively listened and expressed interest in my enthusiasm to volunteer for Hindu programs; later I served as a Co-editor of Hindu Vishwa online magazine, founded the VHPA North Houston chapter, and also served in its National Governing Council. Maheshbhai was the key motivating factor for Global Indians for Bharat Vikas (GIBV). His sight infused energy and confidence among Hindu volunteers. During tens of my interactions with Dr. Mahesh Mehta, I was impressed by his acumen, knowledge, and organizational skills. A gentleman with politeness, humbleness, he treated his volunteers with respect and protected them. He was successful in countering Indo-American communists, Radical Islamists organizations, and Pseudo – secularists who propagated Anti Hindu ideologies in the US with an aim to stop the rise of Hinduism in the American landscape.

Dr. Mahesh Mehta was a born leader and patriot, he developed and trained many first and second-generation Hindu Americans as leaders, activists, and socio-political leaders. He protected Hinduism in the US with his engaging speeches, write-ups, and a team of socio-political leaders who had total trust in him. In, the US, the Hindu movement is divided into four categories – Spiritual, religious, social, and political. While spiritual and religious organizations have flourished, there was a dearth of social and political Hindu organizations in the early '90s, especially pro-Hindu organizations that can effectively protect the spiritual and religious institutions, Hinduism, and mother India from the ideological onslaught of Anti-Hindu forces in the US, funded and supported by a section of radicalized Muslims, far-right Christian and Communists – unfortunately the majority of founders, ideological mentors, and funders of such Anti-Hindu, Anti India are first-generation Indians – who for their vested financial, political and vengeful interests, work against Hindus and mother India.

The overall nexus of Anti-Hindu forces in the US is significant and such Anti-Hindu and Anti-India organizations in the US are hell-bent to influence US Govt. to make laws and policies against India and its Dharmic Patriot social-political organizations like RSS, BJP, and its sister organizations in the US. ISI – Pakistan's Intelligence agency has a direct collaboration with many such organizations and has been successful in influencing and luring many second-generation Hindu leaders in the US to oppose, defame their brotherly Hindu organizations in the US. Due to Maheshbhai observations and interventions, many second-generation vulnerable Hindu Americans were saved from falling into the shadowy Anti-Hindu traps.



L-R: Sh. Nitin Anand, Sh. Abhaya Asthana, Rahul C. Sharma, Dr. Mahesh Mehta, Sh. Shyam Tiwari

While Hindu spiritual and religious organizations have no know-how to deal with such dreaded Anti-Hindu forces, they rely on Hindu social and political organizations in the US to protect them. Due to such bad publicity about Hinduism, racial crimes against Hindu Americans were on the rise and many have died due to fatal shootouts, physical assaults by a few misguided local American's who become victims of Anti-Hindu content published in news and attack Hindu worship sites, priests, and Hindu students, business owners, etc. with a justified mindset. Earlier, when any Hindu leader used to visit the US, these miscreants started negative propaganda, due to which many Hindu temples, universities canceled events. Anti-Hindu defamatory documentaries like 'Sita Sings the Blues,' 'Dr. Wendy Doniger's book' were openly published. There was no space for Hindu organizations in US political setup. Hindu temples were not united, no news media channel, portal, or newspaper was used to cover Hindu events. Hindu sacred symbol 'Swastika' was made a symbol of hate. There have been multiple attempts to start Anti Hindu riots in the US. However, such acts were effectively neutralized by Hindu social organizations in the US and major credit goes to Dr. Mahesh Mehta who founded and co-founded a battery of Hindu organizations, trained and mentored tens of senior-level Hindu leaders, activists and established a great network of these organizations to work together for the empowerment of Hinduism in America.

In 2014, he established GIBV – Global Indians for Bharat Vikas, led by Gaurang Vaishnav, a senior Hindu American leader and an intellectual of a high standard. GIBV was instrumental in mobilizing Hindu Americans and Hindus living in many other parts of the World to collectively work with one single point agenda – ensuring Narendra

Modi's victory in the 2014 General elections in India, many programs like editorials, millions of phone calls to India, press releases, Chai pe Charcha and other standard political programs were launched at a global level, I was Southeast US convener of GIBV. Now Hindu Human rights have more say in the US Govt. , Senators, Congressmen are more interested to entertain Hindu voices raised by religious, social leaders, and India – the motherland of worldwide Hindus is safer than was the situation during Congress party governance. Hindus in India, America, and elsewhere now feel prouder of their traditions, heritage, and religion. Earlier, the Hindu word in the US was taken with caution, as it may have invoked the wrath of first generation Anti Hindu Indians. Such was the fear that even Indian Media in the US used to outrightly reject press releases of Hindu organizations (the key reason why I founded World Hindu News). Now, being Hindu is a matter of pride and incorrect content in cyberspace is gradually getting replaced with the right information. Post 9/11, Americans have awakened and now, they very well understand that Hindus of America are one of their best well wishes, friends and are educated peaceful, and rich cultured community.

Yoga, Hindu curriculum is fast becoming an integral part of US universities. Hindu festivals holidays are being approved by many states. One can see Hindu conferences, seminars, and events in US cities. Hindu books are getting published. Conversion among Hindu Americans has is at a minimum, for example in 2010, when hundreds of Bhutan Hindu refugees arrived in the US, many were



L-R : Rahul ji W/Gaurang Vaishnav ji (Executive President- VHPA) and Dr. Mahesh Bhai Mehta ji (Patriarch of American Hindu Movement) @ Vishwa Hindu Parishad Governing Council Meet – Atlanta, Georgia, US 2008

converted, and all would have been converted if VHPA wasn't there. I worked with the VHPA Atlanta team under the guidance of Mrs. Sneha Mehta, a senior Hindu leader. Hindu temples are being united under Hindu Mandir Executives' Conference (HMEC) – A VHPA project. Hindu University of America is offering degrees and courses in Hinduism, Hindu Swayam Sevak Sangh (HSS) is involved in tens of big social service projects, Hindu Students Council (HSC) is helping Hindu students in US universities to work for Hindu empowerment, United States Hindu Alliance (USHA) is working towards Hindu advocacy in the US, HINDUPACT is powering up Hindu issues with US Govt., Overseas Friends of BJP (OFBJP) is safeguarding BJP's interests in US polity and many

other organizations are now successfully established, all of the above are either founded or co-founded by Dr. Mahesh Mehta.

Hindu temples are flourishing in the US and nowadays, anti-Hindu crimes are at bay. Such changes don't occur in days, months, or years – it takes decades of hard work, passion, and continuous community involvement of leaders like Dr. Mahesh Mehta, who dedicated his life to the Hindu cause and is an inspiration for thousands of Hindus. Individuals whom he mentored are now leaders of Hindu American organizations in the US, India, Europe, Asia, Middle East. We are proud of you Maheshbhai, we will miss you forever, your work will inspire generations of Hindus to volunteer for the Hindu cause.

Rahul Chandra Sharma is the President and Editor-in-Chief of World Hindu News (www.worldhindunews.com), and Vishwa Hindu Samachar digital news portals. He is also the director of the Pakistan Hindu Refugee Relief Program and has been associated with Indian and US Hindu organizations since 2005 in various organizational capacities.

My Interactions with Dr. Mahesh Mehta

By Dr. Yelloji-Rao Mirajkar, Piscataway, NJ

While my first experience of any Hindu work in the USA is from one of the greatest expo of that time “Cultural Festival of India - 1992”, held in Middlesex County College, Edison, New Jersey, my coming into contact with Shri Maheshji began only from the year 1996, whom I used to address as Maheshji. I knew very little about his contributions then. But as the time passed, unraveling of the hard work of organizing Hindus under the platform Vishwa Hindu Parishad of America took place. I further learned through frequent interactions with him about his inspiring personality, influencing and motivating others, and conducting with passion he was able to grow the organization even at those very difficult times in the USA.

Imagine the days with no smartphones or mobile phones or even emails. All and any communications were through either snail mail or through landlines while the population of Hindus is sparsely spread around the US! In spite of the challenges, he always presented himself with a smile on his face, providing options for any situation and helping you to figure out a possible solution for overcoming the situation. His respect to coworkers and the younger generation is immensely inspiring and motivating. He was like an elder brother to me and so is the case with so many of coworkers and he provided a fatherly figure with affection to even more.

Long lasting memories are many but here I would like to share two sets of conversions remembering his interactions with Param Pujaneeya Shri Guruji, second Sarsanghchalak, Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh, Bharat. He was only 10 years old and had accompanied a Swayamsevak who had arrived at Sangh Shiksha Varg and met Shri Guruji there. He was offered mango juice by Shri Guruji and looked into the eyes and Maheshji just went into some kind of unexplainable experience.

The result of that interaction is that he was drawn like an iron filing to the magnetic personality of Shri Guruji.

In 1973, when Maheshji visited Bharat along with Smt. Ragini ji, they made an unannounced visit at night to RSS Karyalaya for meeting Shri Guruji. He was welcomed as if everyone in Karyalaya knew about his coming, which caught him by surprise. Later he learnt that Shri Guruji somehow knew about his coming with Ragini ji and in spite being very sick, had instructed Karyakarta in Karyalaya to bring the visitors directly to him. He was offered tea and that was the last cup of tea that Shri Guruji had before his Sadgati that night. He had captured those memories in the book My last cup of chai. What was inspiring to me is that while he was narrating these incidents (one of a kind of memories), the radiance in his face and glow he had positively influenced me. How could I forget them?

Later days, I have had innumerable interactions with him about the Hindu Work in the USA and around the world. He used to use the word GLOCAL emphasizing the impact and importance of Local-to-Global and Global-to-Local. A few notable ones among them are whether it was the Hindu Sangam on the occasion of Shri Guruji Janma Shatabdi in 2006, or reception to Honorable Shri Narendra Modi, Prime Minister of India, during his visit as head of the state in 2014, or 125th year of address by Sri Swami Vivekananda in Parliament of Religions in 2018. My interactions with him further exposed the great characteristics of Maheshji's and his towering personality.

My last meeting with him was at his home in Boston in 2018, along with Mananeeya Ved Nandaji, during when he was recovering from the stroke and was still bound to wheelchair. Even at that time he was talking more about the Hindu Sanghathan work in the USA.

While I was trying to find out his well-being, he was changing the subject and taking us to the work of Hindu Organizations in the USA and how they have to work together.

I will miss him for sure. He has showered me with

blessings every time I have met. But from his passing away now, I will seek inspiration from my several interactions with him and seek guidance from the memories of narrations, options and solutions that he had provided in the past.



Dr. Yelloji-Rao Mirajkar is former sarkaryavah (General Secretary) of Hindu Swayamsevak Sangh (HSS.) Currently, he serves on the board of Hindu University of America (HUA.)

Tributes VHPA WITH MAHESHBAI

Truly a sad day. We have lost our Guru and Margdarshak. He was the reason we joined VHPA. He will be missed.

Our prayers to Parmatama for his Sadgati. We pray to Ishwar to give Raginibahen, Hiralbahen and the rest of the family strength to bear this great loss.

Om Shanti, Shanti, Shanti.

Sneha & Vasav Mehta, Atlanta, GA (VHPA Executive Board Member, National Treasurer, VHPA)

It is a sad day for all of us who have known Mahesh bhai, worked with him and learnt from him. May Almighty grant him Moksha. My entire family joins me in conveying our heartfelt condolences to Raginibahen and the entire VHPA family.

Sanjay Kaul, Waltham, MA (Vice President, Hindu Diaspora Outreach, VHPA)

वीएचपीए परिवार के लिए एक बहुत बड़ी क्षति। भगवान उनकी आत्मा को शांति दें।

हरिओम शांति!

अश्विनी और प्रतिभा मिश्रा

Dr. Ashwini & Pratibha Mishra, Shrewsbury, MA (Life Member, VHPA, Boston Chapter Office bearer)

Our hearts are broken. Our prayers are his family and also VHP family. He will always be our guiding star from the HEAVEN.

OM SHANTI!

Dr. Ram Sewak & Pushpa Goswami, Bloomfield Hills, MI (Former VHPA Governing Council Member and former Detroit Chapter President)

Maheshbhai Mehta - The Garland Maker

By Brij Bhushan Garg, Salem, NH

Maheshbhai Mehta was a garland maker. A garland maker puts together beautiful flowers in a string. Similarly, Maheshbhai found wonderful, competent people such as Ramesh Patel, Jyotish Parekh, Madhu Jhaveri, Ram Prakash Agrawal, Ramesh Shah, Ajay Shah, Jayesh Mehta, Virendra Parikh, Yashpal Lakra and others too numerous to list here and connected them together like a garland to work for social causes.

Maheshbhai had mastered the technique of (social) "open architecture". You never felt like a cog in his grand plan, on the contrary, he helped in making your contribution relevant to the whole. Hindu philosophy which sees God's spark in every individual celebrates

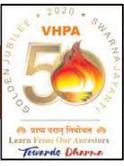
the contribution made by all. Maheshbhai lived this philosophy in practice. When you went to him with a new idea or concern, he would listen attentively, grasp the idea and try to connect you with the resources for implementing it.

Non-covetousness (Aparigraha) was another quality of Maheshbhai. He worked hard as a founding member of many successful institutions such as Hindu Students Council, Friends of India Society etc.,

yet he did not demand a life-time position on their boards. Instead, he handed the leadership of the institutions to others so that they may flourish, and the individuals may grow as leaders.



Maheshbhai, Raginibahen, Ashok Ji- photo by Brij Garg



The hospitality of Maheshbhai and his family is legendary. In early years when they lived in an apartment on third floor in Jersey City, the dining "table" consisted of a large plastic sheet which was spread on the floor around which typically 12 to 15 people gathered for meals on weekends. Most of these folks came to discuss social projects. Later, as his and Raginiben (his wife)'s careers advanced and they moved to a house in Needham, Massachusetts, they had two dining tables which were often not big enough to seat all the visitors they had. The visitors made themselves comfortable on the carpeted floor or the family room chairs and the swing for eating. Food items were kept on the large kitchen counter which were lovingly getting replenished by Raginiben and Anjleebhabhi (his sister-in-law) who were Annapoornas and congeniality incarnate. If someone had come from a long distance and it was getting late, they were offered a spot for sleeping overnight. Many great relationships were cemented and understandings reached during these informal

meals. Maheshbhai was not just one individual working to fulfill his ideals but all his adult family members: Raginiben, Anjleebhabhi, Subhash Mehta, Shubhdaben, Atul Pandya and Meenal Pandya lent their support with their head, heart and pocketbook. His nephew, Haril Pandya, who has grown to be a fine young man, had a childhood with record numbers of uncles and aunties who came from far off places during weekends.

Dedication and sacrifice were another hallmark of Maheshbhai and his family. They had a comfortable house in Needham, Massachusetts but soon they made many additions to it to have a large meeting room with an altar of Goddess Saraswati, a full-fledged office, complete with a typesetting machine and copying machine and computers which were expertly managed by Anjleebhabhi. All this was done by Maheshbhai and Raginiben on their own at nobody else's behest. Their accomplishments in teaching seva by example are truly priceless. My wife Bala joins me in expressing our fond respects to Maheshbhai and his family.

Shri Brij Bhushan Garg has been an active member of VHPA's governing council since mid-seventies. H heads VHPA's Children's and Youth Books Project.

Tributes VHPA WITH MAHESHBAI

Big loss for us, no word to say this time. I feel like I lost my dad

He was my mentor, my Pathdarshak, he is the one who bring me to VHPA, BJP and GIBV. Today we all become Anath.

I will pray Shri Krishna to marge his soul with His. I am sure Maheshbhai will live in our thought and work towards Hinduism.

ॐ शांति शांति शांति

**Nirav Patel, Hanover Park, IL (VHPA Governing Council Member,
Global Indians for Bharat Vikas-GIBV Regional Director)**

I met him when he visited Trinidad last year. Mahesh Ji visited Trinidad for a VHP conference some time back. I was impressed with his humility and passion for dharma.

Panditani Dr. Indrani Rampersad, Trinidad

विनम्र श्रद्धांजलि- अंत एक युग का !!

Abhishek Singh, Northborough, MA (VHPA Governing Council Member)

Maheshbhai as I knew Him

Dhirubhai Shah, Cumming, GA

My association with Maheshbhai goes back to more than 25 years and I vividly remember meeting him during the International Conference organized by World Association for Vedic Studies (WAVES) at Dartmouth University, MA. I immediately realized that he was not only a scientist and intellectual of highest caliber but also well read with deep knowledge of world geopolitics and deeply embedded in the Sanatan Dharmic traditions of helping poor and downtrodden people in the world, particularly Bharat's disadvantaged villagers and farmers.

Maheshbhai was a true Karma Yogi who dedicated his entire life towards defining and strengthening Hindu Dharmic traditions, heritage and parampara in America. Knowing fully well that the Hindu community in America is a very small minority and its voice is not being heard in the mainstream American politics, academia, and news media, he started VHPA with the help of young Hindu activists. Besides, he was also responsible for organizing several other institutions like Ekal Vidyalaya- one teacher schools for educating tribal communities in India, Global Indians for Bharat Vikas (GIBV), Global Indian Business Council (GIBC), and India



Development Fund (IDF). All these institutions and organizations have helped Hindu American diaspora to be recognized as a model community in their adopted land.

Maheshbhai was a spellbinding orator and extempore speaker on many subjects including Hinduism, Bharat's heritage and ancient history and the world geopolitics. He was a great visionary and an ardent believer in selfless service to poor in India without any ego and rewards. He dedicated his entire life to serve Bharat in every possible manner by using his talents, experience, and dedication. In his passing away, Bharat has lost a great visionary and leader of excellence who gave his entire life to serve people with humility, honesty, and sincerity.



Dhirendra (Dhirubhai) Shah is an activist and community leader. He has been involved with World Association for Vedic Studies (WAVES) from its inception and serves as its treasurer. He is an active member of Global Indians for Bharat Vikas (GIBV) and Global Indian Business Council (GIBC.)

A Yugpurush in Every Sense of the Word

By **Girish Chokshi, Cromwell, CT**

I met Maheshbhai, Raginiben and Anjleebe for the first time in summer of 1975. I had arrived in the US in January. I lived in the same general area in Hartford as did Gaurangbhai and Ashaben. Mrs. Gandhi had recently imposed the Emergency in India and we would get together often to talk about it. It was during one such lazy Sunday afternoon in late July when I ventured in Gaurangbhai's apartment that I saw these new people. Gaurangbhai introduced them to me. They had come to plan for the VHP programs as well as discuss what we could do to oppose peacefully the Emergency declaration. When I listened to Maheshbhai articulate why we needed to promote our culture and values in this country (fighting the Emergency appeared secondary), I immediately realized that I was listening to someone who was not only a kind, compassionate and a learned person but a visionary (Durendeshi). Rarely had I listened to someone whose words and thoughts resonated with me like his did. Like they say, the rest is history.

During the next several decades, our work continued. Maheshbhai, Raginiben and Anjleebe became a part and parcel of our extended family. During those early days of the VHP, there were quite a few Indians (Hindus) in this country who entertained a preconceived notion that the work we were doing was anti Muslim.

They had no idea what we were actually doing. I had seen some of them periodically debate Maheshbhai regarding our work. Maheshbhai would never get angry or engage in harsh rhetoric. He always treated each person with respect and dignity and would tell them that what we were doing was to simply educate the Hindus living in this country about our culture, rituals and value system so they can explain what Hinduism meant to the host community and at the same time impart these traits along to the next generation and



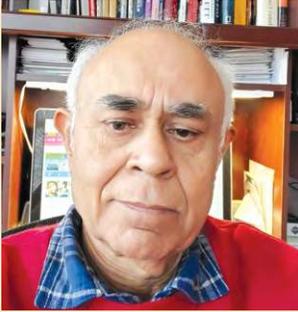
1989 Hindu Unity Year_004

generation after that. As he would often say – “We have tough time convincing our own Hindu brothers and sisters that we have a great heritage and we should be proud of it. Our energies are spent on this task. Not that we would ever do it but when are we going to find time to engage in anti-Muslim activities?” At the end of the dialogue, I would notice that the person on the other side would simply nod in agreement with what he was saying not to mention the enhanced respect he (Maheshbhai) would have earned from him.

Vidya and I were privileged to host them in our house when we had Mahayagna marking the culmination of more than one hundred Hindu Unity Year programs across USA, in Connecticut in summer of 1989. During our forty-five plus years of association, he was always happy to see us. Even though he was an extremely busy person (job, family, VHP work, hosting multitude of foreign dignitaries in their home and arranging for their travel in the US etc.), he never missed reaching out to the people in their time of the need. He visited associates, friends and acquaintances in hospitals and

their homes when he learned that they were not well. A few years ago, when my older brother Ranchhodbhai left his body for his eternal journey, Maheshbhai called me to reminisce about the time he had spent with him.

He himself was not doing that well at that time but Maheshbhai being Maheshbhai, he reached out to me. Maheshbhai was a Yugpurush in every sense of the word. We will miss him. Om Shanti.



Shri Girish Chokshi, CPA is the former member of VHPA's governing council and gave volunteer service as internal auditor.

Tributes VHPA WITH MAHESHBAI

Very sorry to hear this. He was truly a great man and a pillar of VHPA. This is great loss to our Hindu cause, VHPA and all of us. It is so sad that Anjleebahen and he passed away just a few months apart. May God bless his soul and take good care of it.

Dr. Naresh Chand, Warren, NJ (Former VHPA Governing Council Member)

With heavy heart I pray to the almighty lord Krishna
To grant peace to the departed soul & strength to
His family (Vasudhaiva Kutumbkam) and his near & dear
Ones to bear this irreplaceable loss.....
Om shanti.....om shanti

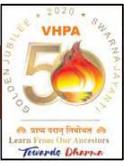
Jai Dayal, Edison, NJ (Former VHPA Governing Council Member)

Very sad day for VHPA. The pioneer and founder of VHPA, who has nurtured and guided all of us in the right direction has finally left the physical world and merged with almighty. His love and passion for VHPA will never be forgotten. We pray for peace and tranquility for his departed soul. Om Shanti.

Jayesh & Uma Mehta, Voorhees, NJ (Former National Treasurer, VHPA)

Why cannot such people live forever?
Maheshbhai will be missed.

Raju Patel. Jersey City, NJ (President, Jersey City Indian Merchants' Association, Hindu Leader)



Shri Maheshbhai, The Father of Hindu Movement in the USA

By **Girish Gandhi, Boynton Beach, FL**

Maheshbhai Mehta pioneered and established Vishwa Hindu Parishad of America (VHPA) in 1970. His vision was to preserve, promote and propagate Hindu values among the second generations Hindu Indians in America and the Americans. These values are based on the three pillars as envisioned by Shri Maheshbhai: sampark (network of contacts of like-minded people), seva (social services, servicing the society at large) and Samskār (Hindu values).

He was a true leader with leadership qualities who communicated his vision, mission and goals with clarity to all members of the organization. He was a person with ability to build a team by developing personal relationship with each member and Governing body of the organization. He led by example and established strong, trusting relationships to ensure success within the team and for the organization as a whole. Under his leadership many organizations took birth to represent Hindu culture and values such as Ekal Vidyalaya, Hindu Mandir Executives Conference (HMAEC), Hindu University of America (HUA), India Quality Group (IQG), Global Indians for Bharat Vikas (GIBV) and Hindu Students Council (HSC), just to name a few. Under his leadership VHPA has supported thousands of children for formal education from grade 1-11 under Support a child (SAC) project, thousands of children getting preliminary education under the umbrella of Ekal Vidyalaya (a project initiated by VHPA) and offered seva both here in America and in Bharat helping thousands of poor/needy people regardless of their age, ethnicity, race or religion. He was able to develop and a build 1st generation of Hindu leaders in many Hindu organizations and transitioned to build

2nd and 3rd generation Hindu American leaders to represent Hindu values and culture because he was able to effectively communicate with younger generation leaders with his listening ability and his willingness to accept new ideas to nurture the organization.

His ability to plan and build a team to execute successfully numerous major conferences such as the International Hindu conference at the Madison Square Garden, New York in 1984, Global Vision 2000 conference in 1993 celebrating centenary of Swami Vivekananda's address at the Parliament of World Religions held in Chicago at the Capital Center arena in Washington D.C. and the Millennium World Peace Summit at the United Nations in the year 2000 exemplified his leadership quality and his ability to build relationship with his team and volunteers.

I am one of the fortunate persons who met Shri Maheshbhai 65 years ago when I was 12 years old and attended his Shakha in Khadia/Sarangpur (place in the city of Karnavati today, known as Ahmedabad, Gujarat). I had lost contact with Shri Maheshbhai till I met him in Boston in 1982 where I attended VHPA chapter meeting at his home in Needham, MA.

My immediate family members and my extended family in Bharat have had many interactions with Shri Maheshbhai and we all treasure the time that we spent together. As a matter of fact, whenever he visited us my wife Bakula always was very eager to hear Maheshbhai's thoughts on various current matters. He spoke with clarity and that made it easier to understand the subject matter. He would communicate with any age group effectively on subjects that interest them and people would listen to him intently. He was really a

mesmerizing orator and well versed on many subjects whether it is science, Hindu values & culture, Dharma or political.

Maheshbhai was very caring person not only for the volunteers of the organization but for all family members. Every time you talked to him over the phone or in person, he would invariably ask about well-being of family members.

I remember when Gaurangbhai was performing the Antim Kriya for my Pujya Pitashree. I was visibly shaken and quite sad. Maheshbhai came to me and gave me a big hug and whispered in my ears, “that when my father passed away, I was in a far village being a Pracharak of RSS and there was no communication available and I did not get the message that my father had passed away until after five days.” He understood me being sad and shaken but his comment gave me some strength and I appreciated him sharing a compassionate message with me.

I would close my comments with two appropriate shlokas from Bhagwad Gita that summarize Shri Maheshbhai who inspired me and many people around the world who were associated and interacted with him over the years.

**yadyadaacharati shreshthastattadevetaro janaha |
sa yatpramaanam kurute lokastadanuvartate ||**

यद्यदाचरति श्रेष्ठस्ततदेवेतरो जनः।

स यत्प्रमाणं कुरुते लोकस्तदनुवर्तते ॥

This shloka states that whatever the great person does, the commoners follow. Whatever standards they set in their lives; the commoners will try to emulate them.

Thus, Gita states, one should always perform their

duties like the great ones who have set the best examples in society.

I am sure we all have such kind of personalities and figures in our mind that we would like to follow them in our lives, in our actions, and in our thoughts. To me this great personality is no other than Shri Maheshbhai Mehta and as a common person I will try to pursue the standards that he set.

Both my wife Bakula and I along with our family members will dearly miss his presence. His inspiration, guidance and his witty nature will be missed sorely; however, his legacy and mission continue and we will put every effort to fulfill his dream to create Hindu centers in North, South, East and West in the USA. He is no longer with us in the physical form but his blessings are with us and we pray that Ishwar grant his soul “sad gati”.

His soul will live forever like it is mentioned in the Bhagwad Gita:

**nainam chindanti śastrāṇi nainam dahati pāvakaḥ
na cainam kledayantyāpo na śoṣayati mārutaḥ**

नैनं छिद्रन्ति शस्त्राणि नैनं दहति पावकः ।

न चैनं क्लेदयन्त्यापो न शोषयति मारुत ॥

The pain of losing Shri Maheshbhai is unbearable. But death is an inevitable truth that will come to all of us and loved ones sooner or later. Death is painful because even the soul does not want to leave the body. This shloka of Bhagwad Gita explains that soul cannot be injured through weapons, fire, water, or wind. It neither dies nor is born, it is ever-present in the universe. So, Shri Maheshbhai must be present somewhere else in the world in some other form.

Hari AUM. Hari Aum Tat sat Jai Guru Datt.



Shri Girish Gandhi is a member of VHPA's Advisory Board and a former vice president of Seva. He serves as secretary of Global Indians for Bharat Vikas (GIBV), a rural empowerment NGO, founded by Maheshbhai.

Maheshbhai Mehta's Work was Foundational

Abhinav Dwivedi, Orlando, FL

I am Deeply saddened to learn about passing away of shri Mahesh bhai.

Pls convey my condolences to all, particularly Raginibahen.

A great soul and son of Bharat has joined the millions of shining stars, who are the lamps of Bharat Mata!

Hundreds and thousands feel that a loving family member has gone from their lives.

He was a visionary, original thinker, excellent planner and organizer, inspiration to thousands,

always smiling even under pressures of major undertaking.

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 future and the current state of Hindu samaj.

His work in the USA has been foundational; and now it has grown into a tree of many branches.

I consider myself fortunate and blessed that I came in contact with a person like Maheshbhai.

May the Divine Mother keep his soul in Her lap.

Pranam to the departed great soul.

OM Shanti!



Maheshbhai with Ashok Singhalji



Shri Abhinav Dwivedi is former VHPA Governing Council Member. He also served as vice president of Hindu University of America for a number of years.

Dr. Mahesh Mehta and Overseas Friends of BJP-USA A Mentor, Guide, Friend, and Coordinator

Dr. Adapa V. Prasad

Overseas Friends of BJP-USA pays heartfelt tributes to Mananeeya Dr. Mahesh Mehta ji endearingly known as Ma. Mahesh ji. He is well known for his work in fostering many Hindu organizations, and facilitating and initiating discussions pertained to Hindu philosophy, ideology, and other socio-cultural topics. He mentored so many individuals, groups, and organizations. He was an institution by himself and I am one of the fortunate peoples to work with him closely. I take this opportunity to briefly discuss about his contribution to the purpose and growth of the Overseas Friends of BJP (OFBJP) in USA.

OFBJP existence in USA could be categorized as Pre and Post Mahesh ji. I came into direct touch with Mahesh ji during 2005 regarding OFBJP organizational matters. I was General Secretary at that time and organizational disputes had been simmering. Mahesh ji was entrusted with resolving organizational issues by elder's council and late Ma. Kidaranth Sahani ji who was the Global coordinator of OFBJP. Slowly but steadily Mahesh ji and I could work together, understand each other as I was instructed with drafting a new constitution for OFBJP.

By early 2008, I accepted him as my mentor, guide, and a friend. We used to have innumerable discussions



Maheswhhbai at OFBJP function



Maheshbhai and Adapa Prasad with Gujarat C.M Modiji

on Hindu philosophy including his favorite topic “Atman” vs “Atma” apart from mundane organizational matters. When he was appointed as the US coordinator of OFBJP in 2008 by Ma. Kidarnath ji and Ma. Rajnath Singh ji, then President of BJP, immediately after the organizational general election he gave a new direction and purpose to the organization. Late Shri Suresh Jani was elected as President and I was elected as the Vice President and President Elect.

He encouraged and guided us to reach out to the lawmakers, thinktanks, conduct webinars and seminars, run a monthly newsletter, write articles in newspapers, and draft reports on topics of interest. I vividly remember that in 2010, during OFBJP national Convention in Washing DC area, he guided us to conduct several seminars and, the delegates headed by Dr. Dinesh Agrawal, Past President of OFBJP made a presentation and a resolution, “Mission 2014-BJP 272+”.

He asked me to author a report on strategies and make recommendations for BJP for 2014 general election. As I assumed responsibilities as the President in

2010, Mahesh ji took me to Gandhinagar in 2011 to meet Ma. Narendra Modi ji, then Chief Minister of Gujarat and presented the report. I am proud to say that OFBJP report title, “Mission 2014-BJP 272+” was adopted by BJP as its election mission statement. I specially thank Dr. Dinesh Agrawal ji and Ma. Mahesh ji.

Mahesh ji was a visionary and a karma yogi. I saw youngsters working for him on his projects in Gujarat and elsewhere. He nurtured so many youngsters including my own daughter. We became family friends and visited each other’s home for few times. He was a fatherly figure to me, and I feel sad that I cannot see him again. However, I am fortunate to know and work with such a great person and the times I spent with him will remain forever in my heart. He will guide me in my work towards society, causes of India, and in supporting US-India strategic initiatives and friendship.



Dr. Adapa Prasad is the president of Overseas Friends of BJP (OFBJP), USA.

Dr. Mahesh Mehta

One Who Inspired and Motivated

By Dr. Anju Preet, Falls Church, VA

As I try to pen down the memories of times spent with Mahesh Bhai, I just get overwhelmed by the love he showered on me and on all those who came across him. He was a paras patthar (The Philosopher's Stone); whoever came in his touch turned gold. I met him in Tampa at a time when Indians across the entire world were united and committed to support Narendra Bhai, our current PM Shei Narendra Modi, and have him at the helm of the country. During the little time I spent with him he transformed me to the core. Everybody who knew him knew his love for Bharat. He would motivate youth and urged all to do their best whatever little it might be for Bharat Mata our Janani Janma Bhoomi. When I visited him in Boston, before he moved to Bharat, even though he was in a wheelchair, he was as enthusiastic as ever to share his life experiences with me. He showed me his temple and the basement where the nation building meetings and discussions would happen. He gave me his most precious thing in the world, his time and love. Whenever I think of him, his smiling and ever inspiring face shines out. He is always with me in spirit, and he will live on in my heart every day of my life. May he come back to serve Bharat Mata as he always wished and guide us again to serve. I am happy to share my picture with him and Raginibahen, his better half who not only always stood with him and supported him but also showered her love just like Mahesh Bhai on his disciples, I was never an exception.



**Maheshbhai and Raginibahen with
Dr. Anju Preet of GIBV**



Dr. Anju Preet is a research scientist and serves on the Executive Board of Global Indians for Bharat Vikas (GIBV), a Rural Empowerment NGO founded by Dr. Mahesh Mehta.

MAHESHBHAI MEHTA - THE HINDU LEADER

By Arvind Patel, Taveras, FL

Maheshbhai was a unique leader who dedicated his life for Hindu cause. My wife Ranu and I have been serving Hindu community since March 1969 and came in contact with Maheshbhai in the year 1972 at a cultural gathering in New Jersey. In the year 1969, when Ranu came to the USA, she decided to preserve and promote Hindu culture especially among youths and families arriving from India due to the relaxed USA immigration laws.

We organized and coordinated many Hindu projects in NJ and the tristate area where Maheshbhai was invited as a main speaker along with Hindu saints. In those days when Hindu Temples were practically non-existent, we used to conduct programs at rented school and college halls, community centers, Church halls, Gymnasiums and even Church School facilities during weekends. All sects of the Hindu society took part together and Maheshbhai was always informed and whenever possible he did attend.

Maheshbhai often visited our home and discussed ongoing VHPA programs. He took part as a speaker at several Youth Conferences in NJ at Caldwell Collage,

Parsippany High school, Passaic High school and also at Youth Camps in NJ during 1980s and 1990s.

We were impressed with his interest in listening to new ideas patiently and thinking about practical approach at proper time. He spent time in turning ideas into reality by designing functional aspects of them. During his visits and at meetings with him we proposed among others: formation of Vanprasthi programs, Dharma Prasar Yaatra, Hindu Languages and Hindu Dharma Education at Temples during weekends, etc. Ekal Vidyalaya idea was also discussed at one of such meetings. He encouraged hundreds of youngsters to serve and work to sustain and promote Hindu Dharma. Thanks to Maheshbhai's inspiration, many young campers are now enthusiastically carrying the torch of Hindu Dharma forward.

NJ and NY are the entry points for visiting dignitaries from India. So, it is natural that the established institutions and mandirs there attracted their presence. Thus, Hindu Mandir, Garfield, NJ, Sanatan Mandir, Parsippany, Swaminarayan mandirs, Jain Temples, etc. held many programs in the presence of visiting saints and other dignitaries. We invited Maheshbhai to many such programs and he was kind enough to attend as many of them as possible (since he lived far away in Boston.) Maheshbhai attended our mandir's Hindu Cultural School functions to bless and advise 240 students. A number of those students have become Hindu leaders in their own right and serving mandirs and the Hindu society.

Maheshbhai's sphere of influence was not only limited to the USA. He often visited India and communicated with Hindu saints and leaders. The list includes Swami Chinmayanandji, Shri Shri Ravi Shankar, Pramukh Swamiji, Shri Narendrabhai Modi and many others. He coordinated with tribal and rural area leaders in India. He was honored with "Pravasi Bhartiya Samman" by the President of India in 2017.



**Maheshbhai at Shantiniketan,
FL With GC members from left- Arvind Patel,
Gaurang Vaishnav, Raginibahen and
Girish Gandhi, June 2017**

Maheshbhai had great support from many other Hindu leaders and organizations in the USA including Sanskruti Parivar USA, Jain Society USA, Shri Swaminarayan Sansthas, and Hindu Swayam Sevak Sangh USA. The major illuminating strength of Maheshbhai was advice he received from many Hindu Saints including Swami Chinmayanandji, Swami Dayanand Saraswati ji, Sadhwi Ritambhara Ji, Shri Shri Ravishankar, and others.

Now during our "Sanyasa Ashram" living at Shantiniketan in Florida with seven prominent VHPA

leaders and families, we continue activities to promote our Dharma. We can imagine Maheshbhai smiling up from the heaven and looking at hundreds of the past and present dedicated wonderful Hindu leaders in the USA! Very many present and past volunteers' names are listed in 50 years of annual reports of VHPA. Hats off to all of them.

God had given Maheshbhai an opportunity and heart to listen to others and as a Hindu Torchbearer. He has left long lasting impact on Hindu society in the USA.



Shri Arvind Patel has been on VHPA's Governing Council for many years. He has actively contributed to youth conferences, youth camps, Hindu Mandir Executives' Conferences and served as the Director of HAVAN, Hindu American Vanprasthi Network project. He leads active seniors living in Bharatiya Senior Citizens' residential community Shantiniketan in Central Florida.

Tributes VHPA WITH MAHESHBAI

Extremely shocking news!

Dr. Vijay Chauthaiwale, New Delhi (Vice President, BJP)

Mahesh bhai was indeed a role model for many of us. Smart successful in his career here, but always a staunch Hindu. We will surely miss him.

Dr. Basant Tariyal, Indian Land, SC (VHPA Governing Council Member, former Vice President)

It is a very sad day. We all lost a visionary leader and a mentor. May Ishwara rest his soul in peace. Om Shanti.

Pappu & Vimal Sodhani, Somerset, NJ (Associated with VHPA from its inception; Former Vice President)

Gaurangbhai:

Very sad to hear this. My condolences to you and his family. I understand the profound loss you must be feeling. I had the good fortune of meeting him once and I agree that indeed he was indeed a very inspiring personality. Om Shantih Shantih Shantihi.

Sonali Dave, Dallas, TX (Executive Board Member, Global Indians for Bharat Vikas- GIBV)

Tributes VHPA WITH MAHESHHBAI

It saddened me today, I have no words to express my sorrow. He was a father figure to me.
Remember all the positive talks he gave in lowest phase of my life.
On my saying I have no one here in this country in this hour of extreme difficult phase. He said we are all with you. Never feel lonely.
His long conversations kept me going.
His contributions are too many for us to remember.
With tears...

Seema Gupta, New Delhi (Former ZEE TV and Rajya Sabha TV Executive)

It is so sad to find the news of Mahesh bhai's departed Aatma.
We have wonderful memories since the introduction by a Swayamsevak from Bharat who sent a book with me for him in 1973.
I met him at Madison Square Garden in 1984 at the 10th Hindu conference. I called him uncle, since my father knew him while he was teaching at MS University of Vadodara.
Then he came to Houston as a keynote speaker for youth camp in 1986. I still remember how he explained need for Hindu Camps. That has inspired some of us to continue the effort for 35+ years and going forward for Many years to come.
We pray to param krupalu Parmatama for param shanti to departed soul of Maheshbhai.
We also pray for enough strength to Raginibahen and family, friends through this tough time of a great loss.
Om Shanti!

Sharad Amin, Richmond, TX (Former Southwest Region Organizing Secretary, VHPA)

Dear Gaurang,
Sorry to hear the sad news. Still remember him from early '70 s interaction during VHP camps. He was a visionary and great leader.
Huge loss for Hindu community. My prayers for his soul's eternal peace.
My condolences to his family.
Oum Shanti.

K.D. Patel, Mechanicsburg, PA (VHPA Supporter)

Sorry to hear about the death of Maheshbhai. Condolences to his family.

Dr. T. Naidoo, Durban, South Africa (Professor, Emeritus, Research Scholar on Hindu Dharma)

DR. MAHESH MEHTA

A Karyakarta, a Leader and a Visionary

Arvind and Pratibha Sant, Tavares, FL

I came in contact with Maheshbhai in 1955 when we both were Swayamsevaks of RSS.

Looking back, I see a person with the qualities of a Karyakarta, leader and a visionary, who lived his life accordingly.

Maheshbhai as a Karyakarta

As a Karyakarta, of RSS, Maheshbhai had very clear understanding of RSS' ideology, its method of working and its vision of uniting Hindus in Bharat, also known as Hindu Sanghathan.

He was very active and held many responsibilities in RSS. He was a full time Pracharak of RSS and dedicated several years of his life for the Hindu Sanghathan. He was in real sense a KARYAKARTA.

He worked as a professor at M.S. University, Vadodara and was well regarded. He held position as the president of Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP), the university student wing of RSS. He was a dynamic

leader who inspired several workers in ABVP and molded them for leadership role.

He came to USA, for second doctorate degree. After finishing the study, he went back to Bharat.

During that time, he had discussion about the future activities of Hindus in USA with Param Pujaniya Shri Guruji Golwalkar, second Sar Sanghchalak of RSS. As per his advice and guidance, he came back to USA and started Vishwa Hindu Parishad of America (VHPA) in 1970 with the goal of uniting Hindus in America.

Maheshbhai as a Leader

In a true sense Maheshbhai was A leader.

He had decided to spend his remaining life for VHPA. He was almost a full time Karyakarta. He spent some time to carry out his family responsibilities, but rest of the time was spent working for this noble cause. He spent most weekends traveling throughout



USA. During those travels, he met with old friends, developed new contacts, made them friends and inspired them to take interest in the work of VHPA. He would patiently explain VHPA's goals and importance of uniting Hindus. Maheshbhai conducted several training sessions. As a result of all these efforts, he created several hundred karyakartas throughout USA. Many of them are still active in different organizations.

Maheshbhai as a Visionary

Maheshbhai founded or was instrumental in establishing several organizations to achieve the goal of Hindu Unity. A few of them are: Hindu students council (HSC), Hindu University of America (HUA), India Relief Fund (IRF, which later became IDRF, India Development and Relief Fund), Ekal Vidyalaya, Friends of India Society International (FISI), and many more. He was the driving force behind all these organizations. All these organizations are independent today and flourishing.

Maheshbhai was a guide and mentor for all Sangh family organizations working in USA.

He also worked as vice president of VHP Bharat, guiding VHPs in several countries outside of Bharat.

One of the important achievements of Maheshbhai was that he had trained and educated late Sushri Anjleeben to take responsibility as a full time Karyakarta of VHPA.

Lastly, I will say that whatever Maheshbhai achieved during his lifetime for such a noble cause, equal credit goes to his wife Sushri Raginiben. She supported Maheshbhai silently and smilingly with no complaints. Our namaskar to Raginiben.

I am so privileged that, I got several opportunities to work under Maheshbhai's leadership.

In RSS we take Pratignya (oath) that we will work for Hindu Sanghathan till the end of our life. Maheshbhai has fulfilled his oath.

Our Shat Shat pranam to Vandaneeya Maheshji.



Shri Arvind Sant is one of the five founding members of Vishwa Hindu Parishad of America and has worked on several projects of VHPA over the course of 50 years.

Tributes VHPA WITH MAHESHBAI

Harih om!

When I think of Maheshbhai, so many sweet memories come up in my mind. Jitendra and I met him in 1984 during planning of first international Hindu conference in Madison square garden NY. Since then, we had a pleasure of meeting Maheshbhai and Raginibahen on several occasions. He had a great vision for welfare of all the Hindus around the globe and had wisdom of connecting them to VHPA platform. He was a great orator. His dedication and devotion inspired many to join him in this noble cause. On a personal note, he was very loving and caring who always put others before himself. Let us pray almighty Bhagwan to grant his soul permanent peace.

Dr. Ila Sukhadia, Staten Island, NY (President, Staten Island Chapter, VHPA)

A Tribute from the Hearts to Dr. Maheshbhai Mehta

Dr. Mona and Viswanath Khaitan, Wellesley, MA

An appropriate question to ask is what set Maheshbhai apart from other men of intellect and vision? Practically, all people have some vision of what they would like to see accomplished in their lifetime. So why does a simple unassuming son of Bharat succeed while other viewpoints evaporate at some point. With few economic resources, how does a man build a big organization like Vishwa Hindu Parishad of America of national and international impact? How does he manage to rally so many people to this cause? How does he convince the Hindu diaspora of intellectual giants who find it even difficult to agree on anything trivial like the color of a wall? Did he use force and a stick to find common ground? How come young people flocked to him instead of running for the normal entertainment giving up their precious weekends? And the most important question is why were people willing to do what he asked without the slightest hesitation?

So, this enigma was Maheshbhai. With God's blessing, with Ragibahen at his side, he accomplished what seems larger than life. When he spoke whether personally or in groups, he had an impact. His voice was soft but had the ability to convince. There was an invisible force that rallied people around his ideas. It was difficult to ruffle him. On one occasion, I had invited him to speak to what was expected to be a large group on the topic of Dharma. Unfortunately, the turnout was very low with only five people in attendance including me. That had

not the slightest impact on Maheshbhai. He proceeded to carry on the full presentation as if the venue was full. In contrast, a so-called Mahatma we had invited refused to give a presentation at an early morning 7 o'clock convention gathering in Detroit because of thin attendance.

Our scriptures provide the answer of where the power of speech comes from. Of the four vanis (sound), para vani is Unmanifest sound, pashyanti is where the sound becomes manifest with name and form combined, madhyama vani is where name and form have become separated in the form of thoughts, unspoken, and confined to the realms of the mind, and of course vaikhari vani is the everyday spoken language where names and forms are fully separated. The normal population mainly resides and uses the vaikhari and madhyama vani. It is the siddhas that have gone beyond everyday sound that operate from the pashyanti vani. Here whatever is said has the power to manifest in the relative world, hence the powerful blessings and curses of the Rishis and Munis. One who operates in pashyanti vani sees visions materialize. Maheshbhai spoke from the source of pashyanti and this was the secret of his success in his undertakings. Unknown to us, we had a siddha working amongst us which we now realize has left for the next abode.

1. Men refers to both men and women of all ages without regard to race, color, or other manifestations.



Dr. Mona and Vishwanath Khaitan are long time supporters of VHPA. Mona Ji's maternal grandparent's house in Prayagraj was donated to VHP. Her parents were family friends of Sw. Ashok Singhal Ji and Sw. Rajju Bhaiya (former Sarsanghchalak.) She is the president of Merrimack Valley, NH chapter of VHPA.

The VRAJ of the Western World

51 Manor Road Schuylkill Haven, PA 17972

570-754-7577, www.Vraj.org

All the members of Vaishnav Samaj of North America and Devotees who comes for the Pilgrimage at Yatra Dham Shrimad VRAJ, extend heartfelt condolences on the sublimation of Param Shraddheya Murabbi Shri Maheshji to the abode of the Ultimate Divine Param Brahm.

May his legacy forever instill 'Pride of being Hindu' among not just Swayamsevaks but also entire Sanatan Srishti at large.

Respectfully submitted by

Chairman, Kirit Sheth

President, Vijay Shah

Paramarshak, Daas Pramod Amin

VRAJ OF THE WESTERN WORLD



Maheshbhai with Shyam Tiwari, Gaurang Vaishnav, Umesh Shukla at a wedding

A short Report of Online Shradhhanjali to Maheshbhai Mehta held on January 22, 2022 by Prakash Waghmare followed by select online comments

Yesterday, a well-attended virtual श्रद्धांजली event for Dr Maheshbhai Mehta took place...AND what an extraordinary turnout of iconic personalities was for it! The Prime Minister Narendrabhai Modi paid eloquent tributes. P.P. Sarsanghchalak Mohan Bhagwat Ji (RSS Chief), Dr Subramanyam swami, Sadhvi Ritambharaji, Dr Ved Prakash Nanda (American Zone Sanghchalak), Dr. Vinod Prakash (IDRF), Shri Saumitra Gokhale, International Coordinator, HSS and representatives of scores of organizations like Sewa International, Ekal-USA, etc. Subhash Gupta Ji paid a nice tribute on behalf of EKAL. For those who do not know, Maheshbhai's pioneering efforts were mainly responsible for establishing VHPA, FISU, EKAL-USA, HSS, OFBJP, IDRF, Sewa International, Hindu Students Council (HSC), United States Hindu Alliance (USHA), etc. in the U.S. He was the most highly regarded 'Karmayogi' in the Hindu diaspora in modern times and a sought-after speaker as a scholar of social issues. When 'emergency' was declared in India, Maheshbhai not only gave refuge to political leaders at his home in Old Bridge, NJ, (those who had managed to escape to U.S.), but also, arranged their speaking tours across U.S. to restore the 'constitution of India.' He had been a mentor and an inspiration to scores of volunteers, social workers all over, including so many in this group. (Maheshbhai passed away on Dec 14, 2021)

After listening to all speakers, I admire shree Maheshbhai's achievements. I personally did not know Shree Maheshbhai but I am impressed. Very good suggestion from Dr Swamy, to set up Integral Humanism studies at JNU in honor of Maheshbhai. May Lord Krishna bless all supporters and give strength to his family. A truly a great Hindu Om Shanti.

Very good and professional tribute to Shree Maheshbhai, I wish great success to Ajaybhai and others to follow on the footsteps to shree Maheshbhai.

Please pass on my admiration for the wonderful Krishna Bhajan sung by this young lady, I did not get the name. Great Bhajans, great voice and great artistic skills.

Thank you, great tribute, let us keep in touch in future and advance our Hindu Dharma.

Lajpat Rai Parasher, Toronto, Canada

Our tribute to great soul of Maheshbhai.

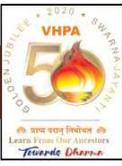
Bharat & Pragna Patel, East Brunswick, NJ

Hari Om Our Pranams to the family of Maheshbhai. We recall our found memories during the World Hindu Conference in 1995 at the Divine Life Society in Reservoir Hills South Africa.

Pradeep Ramlall, Cape Town, South Africa

My Shraddhanjali to this great soul who was a guide, friend and philosopher to the Hindu Society. Om Shanti. Thank you to Honorable PM Modi for his great Shraddhanjali for our Maheshbhai Ji.

Swami Brahmswaroopananda, Trinidad



Blessed to be part of the auspicious journey. Aum Shanti

Somanjana Chatterjee, San Jose, CA (Global Indians for Bharat Vikas, Media Coordinator)

There are lot of memories of Maheshbhai for last year of association with last forty years association with VHPA. It was always a pleasure to see him whenever he came to California. Many times, when he came to California for his professional work in Orange County or for VHP work he stayed at my home. There were VHPA GC meeting sessions at my home. Last time I saw him person was in Ekal Vidyalaya Parinam Kumbh in Dhanbad in Bharat. I will always cherish those memories with great respect. May his soul rest in peace. Om Shanti, Shanti, Shanti.

Uma Gulani, Irvine, CA (Former VHPA Governing Council Member)

Raginiben, We as VHPA team will work on Shri Maheshbhai's guidelines to for Hindu and Humanity cause.

Keshavlal Patel, La Palma, CA (VHPA Los Angeles Chapter President)

Thank you Gaurangbhai and Girishbhai and others for giving opportunity to express feeling and memory of Maheshbhai to all of us.

Dinesh Modh, Syosset, NY (VHPA Governing Council Member)

Excellent program arrangements! Namasthe to all of you.

Dr. Sujatha Reddy, Atlanta, GA

Many Thanks To Girishbhai, Gaurangbhai, Ajaybhai, Tejalben and others who managed this entire program so well!

Jayesh Mehta, Voorhees, NJ

Dear Gaurangbhai, Dr. Ajaybhai, Girishbhai and VHPA team.

Thanks for this well-organized Shraddhanjali program for Shri Maheshbhai.

Keshavlal Patel, La Palma, CA (VHPA Los Angeles Chapter President)

Namaste All. I wish to thank the Karyakartas of Vishwa Hindu Parishad of America for organizing this special Shraddhanjali for Swargiya Maheshbhai Mehta.

Gokul Kunnath, Norcross, GA (former VHPA Governing Council Member; President, United States Hindu Alliance (USHA))

VHPA Executive Board meeting that we had at our home in CT in early days of VHPA is still so vivid in my memory.

Shree Maheshbhai was a unique Hindu human being. Work carried on by all in VHPA and VHP is real श्रद्धांजलि to Shree Maheshbhai. Cause for Hinduism is the cause for humanity. That is what Shree Maheshbhai promoted and practiced. Such a great tribute to Shree Maheshbhai by Hon PM Shree Narendra Modi ji.

Dilip Shah, Tracy, CA

भारत माँ के श्रद्धेय सपूत श्री महेशभाई महेता जी की आत्मा को विनम्र श्रद्धांजलि.

Prashant Soni, Glastonbury, CT

I remember the exuberance of 1984 (10th Hindu Conference.) Let us strive on to finish the work.

Sushim Mukerji, Newark, DE (Former VHPA Governing Council Member, Founder, Support A Child program)

Remembering Dr. Maheshbhai since he inaugurated VHP chapter in Wilmington, Delaware chapter at our home in 1977. Met him for many years in VHP Activities. Our heartfelt condolences to All in VHP families. He was a great contributor in building character of many second generation children. God Bless his soul with Eternal Peace. Om Shanti Shanti.

Vinod & Suvarna Shah, Tampa, FL

प्रकृतिम स्वामवष्टभ्य विसृजामि पुनः पुनः।

भूतग्राममिमं कृत्स्नमवशम प्रकृतेर्वशात!

भावार्थ : हम आपके और आपके परिवार के लिए प्रार्थना करेंगे, कोई भी भाग्य से पहले नहीं आया है, इस बार उसने एक दिव्य आत्मा को अपने चरणों में आश्रय दिया है, कि वह मृत आत्मा मोक्ष प्राप्त करे।

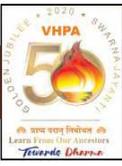
Pandit Gyan Prakash Upadhyay, Dacula, GA

Swa. Maheshbhai was a firm and action oriented, leader, deeply devoted to the Hindu cause. He left a legend behind for us to serve. May Bhagwan offer SADGATI to his Immortal Atman.

Shrinarayan Chandak, Bloomington, IL (Former VHPA Governing Council Member)

As echoed by everyone, let us all of carry the legacy of Maheshbhai of our unique skills for our Sanskriti by giving all we can, receive all we need and become all we can!

Dr. Vimal Patel, Indianapolis, IN (Former Member of VHPA Governing Council)



Maheshbhai was topmost pioneer of Hindutva movement in USA and in abroad. As an RSS Pracharak, he participated in Acharya Vinoba Bhave's Bhoodan movement at Surat. He was a founder of VHP in USA. He was a founder member of Friends of India Society International during anti Emergency struggle. He encouraged various karyakartas to various channels like Ekal Vidya US, Hindu University of America, IDRF. He was moving spirit behind Hindu conference 1984 at Madison square garden at New York which was described by New York Times as the largest non-Caucasian meeting (nonwhite) in New York and Global Vision 1993 to celebrate centenary of Swami Vivekananda speech at Chicago 1893. Under his inspiring leadership, Maheshbhai innovated Hindu temple conference and Bal Vihar. He organized international conference at Europe and Nepal, in Singapore.

Maheshbhai was one of RSS best Pracharak organizer. His moto was giving new program every seven years, otherwise organization become stagnate.

Shridhar Damle, Villa Park, IL

Shri Ram Radhe ji give place in their heart to Mahesh ji. A lot of learning I can adopt in our life.

Anit Gupta, Southborough, MA (Asst. National Treasurer, VHPA)

Bhav Purna Shraddhanjali to Swargiya Maheshbhai Mehta. He was and will always be an inspiration. Tan, Man and his entire jivan was samarpit to samaj work. Today as we remember his contributions and how many lives he has touched; it gives us all a new energy & inspiration to continue to walk on the path of Dharma. Om Shanti Shanti Shanti.

Udgit Mankad, Shrewsbury, MA

विहिष/विहिष के लिए महेश भाई का योगदान अतुलनीय है। भगवान उनकी आत्मा को शांति प्रदान करें!

Dr. Ashwini Mishra, Shrewsbury, MA (VHPA Boston Chapter Treasurer)

Respected Maheshbhai! You left us but who has the Power to send you back to Earth, request that Power to do it quickly, so that you can continue your Spiritual journey by encouraging - Inspiring young Generation to carry the Torch of Hindu Cause. It is a great Honor to really meet you, work with you and follow your mission. Hope to meet you again Wish for your onward and upward Spiritual Journey We had the opportunity to meet you and Raginiben personally in your Home in Ahmadabad with Rohitbhai. Raginiben, May God grant you the courage to carry on Maheshbhai's Mission. Let us know if we can be of any help. we are in Vadodara now. Om Shantih Om Namah Shivay Om -

Sudhir & Niru Parikh, Goffstown, NH (Satsang Center, Woburn, MA)

Mahesh ji is here in our heart and guiding us.

Rekha Singh, North Dartmouth, MA (Life Member)

Tribute to Selfless Service of Maheshbhai to Hindu community. OM SHANTI.

Gajanan Joshi, Cherry Hill, NJ (President, South Jersey Chapter)

Hardik Shradhhanjali to Pujya Maheshbhai Mehta.

Maheshkant Vasavada, Monroe, NJ

Indeed, he was a living emblem of Hindutva. Whatever He Did for Hindus at large was without Any expectations except to create an awareness of Oneness among different sects (panths) To be on one platform Of Santana Dharma.

I met him twice briefly and those memories are still with me.

OM shanti, shanti, shanti.

Vinay B. Dogra, Staten Island, NY

On behalf of myself, devotees of Surya Narayan Mandir, Federation of Hindu Mandirs, USA Pandits Parishad and the entire West Indian community, we extend our sincere condolences to the family, friends and entire VHPA group. A great leader is a special gift from Bhagwan. May Bhagwan Shri Ram continue to inspire him in his future endeavors.

Pandit Ram Hardowar, Spiritual Acharya, Shri Surya Narayan Mandir, Queens, NY

Shraddhanjali to Maheshbhai the Father of Hindu Movement in USA.

Jagdish Sewhani, Upper Brookville, NY

I went on a tour of southeast, Australia and New Zealand with Maheshbhai. Spending almost three weeks with him was a blessing for me. His knowledge, speaking skills, and humility affected the audiences everywhere. I was blessed with his company for such a time. In many regards I consider him as my Guru, second only to Shri Krishna.

Dr. Basant Tariyal, Indian Land, SC

I am fortunate to have my path crossed with Maheshji. Wholehearted Shraddhanjali for the great soul. Jai Sreemannarayana. Om Shanti Shanti Shanti.

Wonderful message Sanjay Mehta Ji, as always. A Hindu is a true Hindu when he/she practices Hinduism. May the inspirations from many here lead many more leaders like Maheshji to lead generations to come.

Srinivas Bolisetty, Frisco, TX (VHPA Governing Council Member)

ओम आत्म शांति परम शांति

शांतिश्च प्रति पादएत एवं ध्यात्वा महादेव स्वर्ग लोकम गतस्तदा ॥

ओम शांति

Acharya Krishna Pandey, Austin, TX

Hari Om Heartfelt condolences to the VHP family for the departure of one of our stalwarts. We remember Maheshbhai, his dedication and personal sacrifices for building institutions for future generations of overseas Hindus- Hindus for America. my respects to Maheshbhai. Kindly forward my condolences to the family. He will be remembered forever in his achievements.

Kardamamuni Das

कोटि कोटि नमन, राष्ट्र के प्रति सम्मान और जागरुकता बनी रहे और सब मिलकर काम करे।

Bina Israni

प्राग्देहकृतकर्मफलोपभोगार्थं सानुशयस्यैव प्रस्तुतत्वान्न जीवन्मुक्तेर्व्यभिचारः।

तस्मादेवमपरिहार्यं!

बहूनि में व्यतीतानि जन्मानि तव चार्जुन।

तान्यहं वेद सर्वाणि न त्वं वेत्थ परंतप!

Ramesh Morkhandikar

ओम शांति ! He is living in the hearts of all who participated and are listening!

Shaila Shroff

Dear Gaurangbhai and all karyakartas, thank you for this well arranged program. We deeply appreciate it.

Swami Brahmswaroopananda, Trinidad



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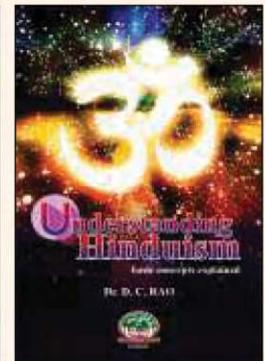
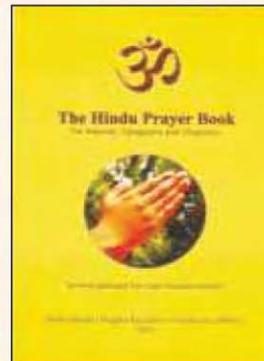
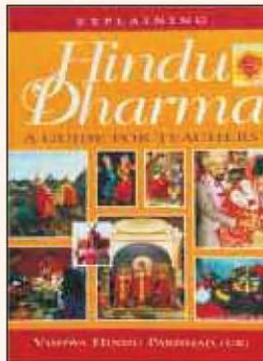
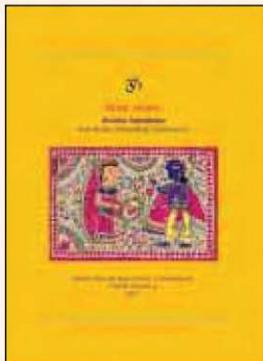
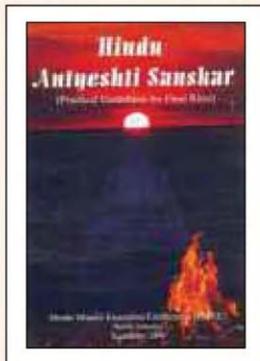
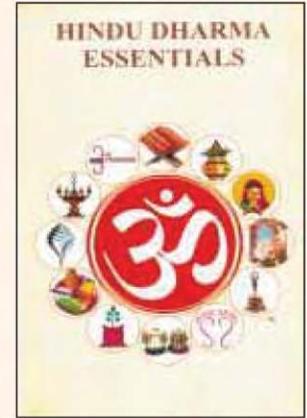
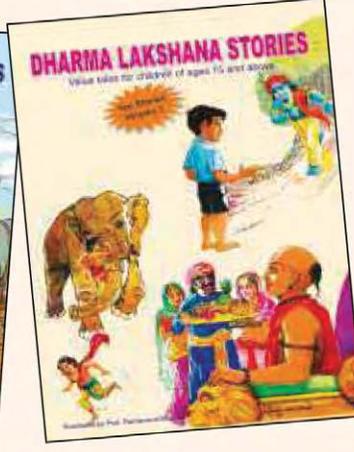
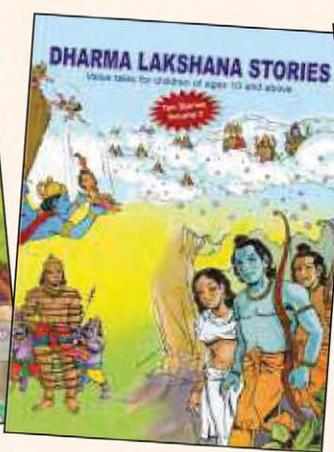
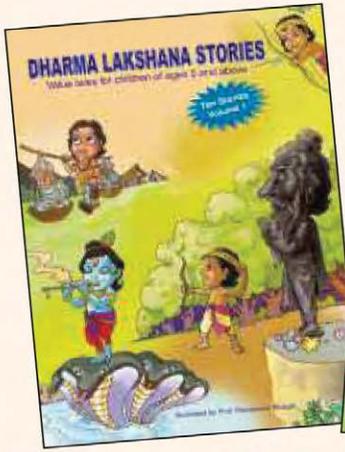
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Om, Asato Maa Sad Gamaya; Tamaso Maa Jyotir Gamaya Mrityor Maa Amritam Gamaya

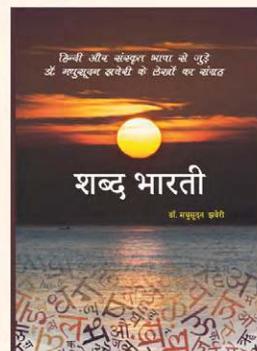
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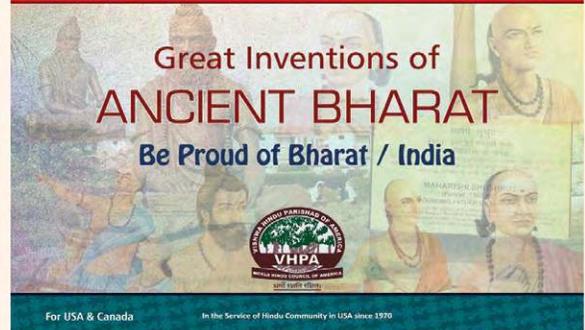


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